

Official Report

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION (2015-2016) OF THE ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA HELD IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BRICKDAM, GEORGETOWN

33RD Sitting

Monday, 22nd February, 2016

Assembly convened at 1.14 p.m.

Prayers

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Adherence to the court ruling pertaining to Members Felix and Scott

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, as a result of the information regarding a decision by the Supreme Court in relation to the sitting of two of our Members, the Hon. Winston Felix and the Hon. Keith Scott, they will not be occupying their seats today.

The Hon. Anil Nandlall, this morning, did send me a copy of the decision which was written in the matter. It proved useful, though I must tell this honourable House that I had determined, as of yesterday, that the information which was available in the newspapers was sufficiently reliable for me to act on and that I would today have requested the Hon. Members not to occupy their seats.

The position is, therefore... I can find no other way by which one must respond to a decision of the court other than by respect and submission. There can be no equivocation or pretence at acceptance of a decision of the court which must be unequivocal at all times. The Hon. Members

are not here but I believe that I owe it to Members of this House to understand their absence. Whatever views may exist in relation to decisions of the court at any time, the first obligation is to obey those decisions and then we proceed from there.

I thank the Hon. Members.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following Paper was laid:

The Procurement (Amendment) Regulations 2016 – No. 2 of 2016. [*Minister of Natural Resources*]

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS INCLUDING POLICY STATEMENTS

ATTORNEY GENERAL ASSURED THE RETURN OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs [Mr. Williams]: Mr. Speaker, I rise to say to this honourable House that two of our brothers, Members of Parliament, and certainly on the Government side, are now without their seats in the National Assembly because of the order of court that you referred to and we wish to say on the part of the Government, and me personally, as an experienced counsel, that court orders are obeyed until discharged or set aside. I do not think I need to give you the case of Robinson to substantiate that because you are quite familiar with that order. Sir, this is in keeping with the entire approach of A Partnership for National Unity and the Alliance For Change (APNU/AFC) Government which we seen from the advent of this very Parliament.

We, on this side, have decided that the constitutional commissions must be independent as they were designed to be and we passed the legislation for those things. We did that, on this side, and we have said that we would make things regular in this country that have been hitherto irregular, and so we will uphold the rule of law in Guyana. We can assure you that we will leave no stone unturned to restore our brothers, Mr. Felix and Mr. Scott, to their rightful places, Sir, in this honourable House.

I thank you Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the Hon. Minister for his statement. Just one point of correction Hon. Members, I should tell you that I have not been served with a court order but I am aware of the decision of the court.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

TRANSPORT PROVING OWNERSHIP OF LAND

Mr. Damon: On the last sitting of the National Assembly, I took the responsibility to bring to this House a transport to show that Tim Duncan is the owner of the land in which Hon. Member Mr. Bulkan said it was a reserve. I would like to hand over this document to this honourable House.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the Hon. Member for his statement. Hon. Members, Hon. Member Mr. Damon is arranging for a document which he had said he will present to the Hon. Minister of Communities and I give leave for it to be done. Hon. Minister of Communities, a document is being brought to you and I hope you will receive it.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MOTION

MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF THE ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 2016

“WHEREAS the Constitution of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana requires that Estimates of the Revenue and Expenditure of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana for any financial year should be laid before the National Assembly;

AND WHEREAS the Constitution also provides that when the Estimates of Expenditure have been approved by the Assembly an Appropriation Bill shall be introduced in the Assembly providing for the issue from the Consolidated Fund of the sums necessary to meet that expenditure;

AND WHEREAS Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana for the financial year 2016 have been prepared and laid before the Assembly on 2016-01-29.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly approves the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 2016, of a total sum of two hundred and twelve billion, nine hundred and sixty-three million and one hundred and thirty-two thousand dollars (**\$212,963,132,000**), **excluding seventeen billion and seventy-three million, three hundred and ninety four thousand dollars (\$17,073,394,000)** which is chargeable by law, as detailed therein and summarised in the under mentioned schedule, and agree that it is expedient to amend the law and to make further provision in respect of finance.” [*Minister of Finance*]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, we will resume our consideration of the Estimates.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply

In Committee of Supply

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we commence our considerations.

Agency: 54 Ministry of Public Security

Current Expenditure

Programme: 541 – Policy Development and Administration - \$712,063,000

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees: It appears as though there is an increase of \$26 million under this line item. Could the Hon. Minister inform the Assembly who are these contracted employees, their designations and their respective salary?

1.29 p.m.

Vice President and Minister of Public Security [Mr. Ramjattan]: Head of Coordinative Task Force and Narcotic Drug and Elicit Weapons - \$567,000, Co-ordinator of Task Force and Fuel Smuggling and Contraband - \$507,000, Director Guyana Forensic Lab - \$377,000, Head of Sort

Unit - \$332,000, Head of Research Unit - \$362,000. Those are the names that I have. This is the answer I have to that question.

Mr. Rohee: As I pointed out initially, there appears to have been an increase of approximately \$26 million under this line item. I would be happy if the Minister could explain how this \$26 million has come about and how it is to be accounted for.

Mr. Ramjattan: It is accountable to the fact that it is catered for through a 5% increase plus the \$5,000 increase in salaries.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister inform the Assembly where these buildings are and what work is being conducted in these buildings?

Mr. Ramjattan: It will be the electrical works in the secretariat building at Brickdam for \$1 million, painting of the fence at Brickdam - \$850,000, repairs to ceiling roof and plumbing system at the building at Brickdam - \$2.5 million, repairs to all washrooms - \$2 million, installation of grill works - \$2 million, plumbing works to the forensic lab - \$200,000; plumbing works to building used for Citizen Security Programme - \$150,000, plumbing works to Juvenile Holding Centre - \$300,000, installation of grills to cells at the Juvenile Holding Centre - \$948,000, construction of concrete cupboards at Juvenile Holding Centre - \$400,000, construction of shelves at Ministry's secretariat - \$150,000 and routine maintenance - \$77,000. These come up to \$10,575,000.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6261, Local Travel and Subsistence: I discern an increase of \$1.4 million. Could the Hon. Minister tell us, the honourable Assembly, what the specific activities are, which are envisaged here, and could he offer an explanation for the increase to the Assembly?

Mr. Ramjattan: It is for travelling for the Ministry's engineer to conduct inspection of building projects, field auditor to conduct verification of records and items to be disposed of, as well as travelling of other officers to conduct official duties, including officers of the forensic lab. The increase here, which seems to be about \$4 million, is accountable because the \$1 million revised is really for that last three or four months of last year. The \$5 million here is, it is not really an increase for the entire 12 months of 2016.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister inform this Assembly what the current staff strength is at the forensic lab and whether all positions and posts are filled?

Mr. Ramjattan: The staff strength is 19. What was the other question? Did you want their salaries?

Mr. Rohee: It is whether all the positions are filled at the forensic laboratory.

Mr. Ramjattan: I understand all the positions, as presently required, are filled.

Mr. Gill: Could the Hon. Minister explain the increase...?

Mr. Ramjattan: What is the line item?

Mr. Gill: It is line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricants. Could the Hon. Minister explain the increase from \$4.9 million in 2015, of which only \$1.9 million was spent, to an increase to \$8.5 million, despite the significant drop in fuel prices?

Mr. Ramjattan: I want to make it clear to the Hon. Member that the \$1,965,000 was for that four-month period for last year, and that is approximately \$2 million for the entire year 2016, we multiply by four and you get the \$8 million there. It is not any increase as such.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6265, Other Transport, Travel and Postage: Could the Hon. Minister explain to the Assembly how is it that \$1.5 million was spent in eight months in 2015, but no money was spent apparently in the last four months, yet the Assembly is being asked to approve \$2.2 million for 2016?

Mr. Ramjattan: This increase is to facilitate, payment of overseas postages and DNA deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) delivery for the forensic laboratory, air and other transport for officials of the Ministry's secretariat conducting official duties across the country. That is why there is now from a zero revised in 2015 to \$2.2 million for the next 12 months.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6284, Other: Could the Hon. Minister inform the Assembly on what are the goods and services that are procured under this line item?

Mr. Ramjattan: Other, here, includes payment for advertisements, advisories, internet services, the increase to facilitate payment for software upgrades and renewal of the software licence subscription.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6272, Electricity Charges: Could the Hon. Minister explain to the honourable Assembly why there is an increase of over \$29 million and for what is this increase being catered for?

Mr. Ramjattan: The line item caters for payment for the Ministry's secretariat, Juvenile Holding Centre, office for Citizen Security Programme, forensic lab and heads of the task forces. Shortfall under this line item had to be paid by the Ministry of Finance and the shortfall is generally in that sum that which it has been increased. That increase is now catered by that amount that the Hon. Member is asking about, so that we need not go back to the Ministry of Finance.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6294, Other: Could the Hon. Minister inform the Assembly what are the goods and services that are intended to be procured under this line item?

Mr. Ramjattan: This caters for expenditure for the office for Citizen Security Programme, the Juvenile Holding Centre, community policing groups, fire advisory board, State Emergency Response Team (SERT), Strategic Management Department and the Ministry's secretariat. There is a decrease actually here and it is as a result of some of the expenditure for the Stray-catching Unit being shifted to another line item. If I may say, there is a decrease rather than an increase.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister inform the honourable Assembly as to how many community policing groups are there at this point, across the country? How many vehicles do they have assigned to them and at which community policing group locations?

Mr. Ramjattan: Is it the same line item?

Mr. Rohee: It is the same line item.

Mr. Ramjattan: There are 244 groups nationally with a membership of some 4,840 people. The question as to how many vehicles they have, it will be submitted to the Member. I do not have

that as to how many vehicles right now, but there are scores of vehicles, quite frankly. I will submit it to him later.

Programme: 541 - Policy Development and Administration – \$712,063,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 542 – Police Force – \$9,095,608,000

Mr. Chairman: If the Hon. Member will allow me for a moment, Hon. Minister, it would prove helpful if you are sitting in the place assigned to you.

1.44 p.m.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees: There is one additional contracted employee, but it appears as though this particular employee is earning a whopping salary. Could the Hon. Minister tell us what position this person is holding and what is the salary per month and per year?

Mr. Ramjattan: I understand that the appointment is for a Financial Investigator for the Special Organised Crime Unit (SOCU). The position was created by the former Minister of Home Affairs at a salary of \$425,000 per month.

Mr. Rohee: I would prefer if we stick to consideration of the Estimates because if the Minister wants to go in that direction...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, let us not.

Mr. Rohee: That is precisely what I am trying to avoid, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, let us

Mr. Rohee: I think that the caution should be directed to the other side of the House. The Hon. Member has no evidence, whatsoever.

Mr. Chairman hit gavel.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, we will not be able to deal with all of the items on the Estimates if we make speeches which are not related to the Estimates. This applies to both sides of the

Committee of Supply.

Mr. Rohee: I am referring to the line item where the Minister said that I appointed...

Mr. Chairman: What is the line item and the question that you asked?

Mr. Rohee: The line item is 6116 - Contracted Employees. We are discussing the employment of one individual. The Hon. Minister said that...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, we cannot have that. You asked a question. Allow the Minister to answer the question. If the question has been answered, then you could ask a follow-up question. I will not allow this kind of thing.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, it is an inaccuracy that I am speaking about.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, there is a way to address it. I cannot tell you the way; you know it. You should do it that way and let us not do this.

Mr. Rohee: I am speaking about line item 6116. The Hon. Minister informed the honourable House that the salary is for a Financial Investigator.

Mr. Chairman: You have had the answer then.

Mr. Rohee: That is what the Hon. Minister said. He said that I employed the person. I want to move on.

Mr. Ramjattan: I withdraw that statement. Let us move on.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6133 - Benefits and Allowances: Could the Hon. Minister inform the House what is to be procured under this line item and, if anything is to be procured, from where will it be procured?

Mr. Ramjattan: It is for payment for salary-related allowances and for the purchase of uniform materials for members of the Guyana Police Force (GPF). It is also to cater for an increased allowance for the new recruits.

Mr. Rohee: On the same line item, could the Hon. Minister inform this House whether these uniforms are to be sole-sourced?

Mr. Ramjattan: The purchase would be partially sole-sourced and tendered.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister inform the House from which source the uniforms would be sole-sourced?

Mr. Ramjattan: It is a British company called Marva Flairs.

Mr. Gill: Line items 6111, 6113, 6114 and 6115: Could the Hon. Minister say whether the budgetary allocation, which has increased from \$2.4 billion, in 2015, to \$4 billion this year, includes the 20% salary increase that has been promised to our men and women in uniform?

Mr. Ramjattan: There is no 20% increase as was mentioned by the Hon. Member. This allocation is to cover the 5% increase for last year and the \$50,000 that was given at the end of the year.

Mr. Gill: A follow-up: That 5% has already been paid out in the \$2.4 billion from last year's Budget. I am referring to the \$4 billion increase that the Police Officers are getting this year. I want to know whether the Ministry has made allowance for the 20% that the Government had promised our brave men and women in uniform.

Mr. Ramjattan: That has not been catered for. The 5%, which the Hon. Member mentioned, was only catered for from July last year. It had to be catered for from January. That is the reason for the increase.

Mr. Hamilton: I am seeking a clarification to the response that was given in relation to wages and salaries. The Minister indicated that catered for in the \$4 billion-odd is the \$50,000 bonus. Are we to accept that there will be a \$50,000 bonus for policemen in 2016?

Mr. Ramjattan: I cannot say at this stage.

Mr. Hamilton: The Minister, in response to the question, had indicated that included in the \$4 billion were the 5% increase that was given to policemen and the \$50,000 bonus that was given in 2015. I am seeking to clarify whether, in the approximately \$4 billion, there is an allocation of \$50,000 bonus for policemen and women in 2016.

Mr. Ramjattan: It does not appear so, Sir.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6272 - Electricity Charges: Could the Hon. Minister explain to the Committee of Supply the components that are listed under this line item?

Mr. Ramjattan: The increase is as a result of the payment of the electricity bill for the Guyana Police Force – the police stations, buildings and other offices. Indeed, it is a high sum.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister inform the House whether the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) is catered for under this line item?

Mr. Ramjattan: It is not catered for in this line item.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6282 - Equipment Maintenance: There is an increase of approximately \$9 million. Could the Hon. Minister tell us why the increase and what items are responsible for the increase?

Mr. Ramjattan: There is an increase as a result of the payment to contractors for servicing typewriters, adding machines, fax machines, printers, photocopiers, computers and the maintenance of the passport issuing system. The increase is also due to the increase in the number of computers, photocopiers, printers and typewriters.

Mr. Hamilton: Line item 6224: Could the Hon. Minister indicate to the Committee of Supply why this sum has increased from \$17.4 million to \$434 million?

Mr. Ramjattan: It is due to the moneys that have to be paid to the Canadian Bank Note (CBN) Company for passports books.

Mr. Hamilton: A follow-up: Could the Hon. Minister indicate to us how much of the \$434 million is to purchase passport books from CBN Company? Secondly, how much will be utilised for print and non-print materials within the Guyana Police Force?

Mr. Ramjattan: Some \$159 million is for print and non-print materials and the balance of the \$434 million is to purchase passport books from the Canadian Bank Note Company.

Mr. Hamilton: I was seeking to have the Minister advise us, in dollars-terms, of the sum for the Canadian Bank Note Company and the sum to be utilised for the activities of printing within the Guyana Police Force.

Mr. Ramjattan: I will do the Math for the Hon. Member. Some \$159 million is for printing activities and \$275 million is for the Canadian Bank Note Company.

1.59 p.m.

Mr. Chand: I would like to seek clarification from the Minister regarding an answer that he had given. Minister, you advised us that members of the Police Force got an increase from the 1st January, 2015. May I ask if members of the Prison Service and Fire Service also received an increase from January of last year?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you would see that Programmes 543, 544 and 545 all relate to the Ministry of Public Security. Two of those agencies that you mentioned are to be considered later on. If you can withhold your question until then, you can raise it at that time.

Mr. Gill: Line item 6261- Local Travel and Subsistence: Could the Hon. Minister say whether the \$921.5 million allocated in this year's budget covers transportation allowance to police officers who are transferred to regions away from their homes? If not, are there any immediate plans to have this rectified?

Mr. Ramjattan: The amount budgeted includes what the Hon. Member talked about as part of the transportation allowances.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6284 - Other: There is an increase of approximately \$16 million. Could the Hon. Minister inform the House what are the goods and services to be procured under this line item and what is the cost for each good or service?

Mr. Ramjattan: I am somewhat embarrassed to have forgotten the items and the amount of money for each, but the items include the cost of payment for internet fees, rental of radio sets, laundering services, and security related matters. I can give the breakdown for those five heads as soon as we are finished here.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister inform this House whether the Data Entry Clerks under the Integrated Crime Information System (ICIS) are catered for under this line item?

Mr. Ramjattan: They are not paid from allocations to the Police Force but from the Ministry's Secretariat.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6294- Other: Could the Hon. Minister offer an explanation as to why the Force overspent in this area and is the sum being asked for adequate? What are the goods and services that are being requested here?

Mr. Ramjattan: We have not overspent. As a matter of a fact, we have reduced the spending, this year, by \$2.9 million, a minus 5%. This line item caters for the payment of services rendered for the handling, transportation and storage of dead bodies and the cost of sending radio and television messages to their families of the deceased. That has been reduced by 5%.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister state whether the remains of the Lindo Creek Massacres individuals are still stored at this location?

Mr. Ramjattan: I understand that the remains are not being stored anymore. The investigations have been completed.

Mr. Gill: Line item 6242- Maintenance of Buildings: There is an increase in this line item from \$85.4 million, in 2015, to \$176 million in 2016. Could the Hon. Minister advise if this amount includes repairs to the Blairmount Police Station? If not, could the Hon. Minister say whether there is a provision in this budget for the repairs to this building and the refurnishing of the police station?

Mr. Ramjattan: I do not think that there is an increase. That \$82 million is the revised amount for the latter part of 2015 and the \$176 million is for the entire 2016. Which police station did you mention?

Mr. Gill: The Blairmount Police Station.

Mr. Ramjattan: The Blairmount Police Station has not been prioritised for this year, but there are some moneys from the Citizen Security Programme.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister inform the House how many breathalysers and radar guns the Guyana Police Force intends to procure in the year 2016?

Mr. Ramjattan: Those are budgeted for under the capital programme and I am going to answer the question when that is being considered.

Mr. Gill: Line item 6224 - Print and Non-Print Materials: There has been an increase of \$21 million in this year's budget from \$373 million to \$434 million. Could the Hon. Minister explain this increase at a time when the Police Force should be looking at computerisation of the documents and, of course, the ticketing system?

Mr. Ramjattan: I answered this question just now. Some \$159 million is going the Canadian Bank Note Company for the passport books and \$275 million for print and non-print materials.

Mr. Gill: I apologise, Mr. Chairman. I must have been distracted at the time by another Member.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I must ask you to give some more attention to the answers you are getting because in my notes, as occurred last week, some questions were repeated by Hon. Members who did not hear the answers given to the questions previously. The acoustics, I believe, in the Chamber continue to be helpful. So, let us try to pay attention to the questions when they are asked.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, I wish to crave your indulgence. Before we move off from the Guyana Police Force, could the Hon. Member, in keeping with the trust that was adumbrated during the course of the debate, state whether the Special Organised Crime Unit (SOCU) operatives are catered for under contracted employees?

Mr. Chairman: Do you have a line item for that?

Mr. Rohee: It is line item 6116- Contracted Employees.

Mr. Ramjattan: The one employee of the SOCU that is catered for under that line item is the Financial Investigator whom I had previously alluded to.

Programme: 542 –Police Force - \$9,095,608,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 543 – Prison Service- \$1,486,544,000

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6116- Contracted Employees: Provision is made for an additional three persons. Could the Hon. Minister state who the three persons are, what are their assignments, and what are their salaries?

Mr. Ramjattan: They are three janitors and their salaries are \$50,000 plus.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6133- Benefits and Allowances: I take it that this line item caters for uniforms for the Guyana Prison Service.

Mr. Ramjattan: That is correct.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister say, if he has the information, what percentage of the uniforms will be procured from Marva Flairs?

Mr. Ramjattan: Approximately 20% and these would be the shoes, the buttons, and the other parts of the uniform that comes from Marva Flairs.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6242- Maintenance of Buildings: It appears that there has been an increase of approximately \$33 million. Could the Hon. Minister inform the Committee of Supply where these buildings are and what they are being used for?

Mr. Ramjattan: The increase caters for 13 buildings and the rehabilitation of the electrical systems at all prisons. It is a lengthy list. It includes painting, renovation of the ground floor - medics' quarters, renovation of the Deputy Director of Prisons (DDOP) residence, male bachelors' quarters, spinsters' quarters, officers' sports club and living quarters. The estimated amounts are also listed. There is also renovation of living quarters B-10, that is the Mazaruni Prison, renovation of living quarters B-18, Mazaruni living quarter B-66, and building of the external walls at the infirmary at the Mazaruni Prison. If you would like more particulars as to what we are spending on each that I mentioned, you could to get it. There is also going to be renovation of the ceiling of the Administrative building at Timehri and renovation of interior prison at the Prison Headquarters.

Mr. Chand: Line item 6116- Contracted Employees: There is an increase of three. The increase from last year totals \$34 million. Could the Hon. Minister give an account of why there is this massive increase, although there is just an increase in staff of just three persons?

2.14 p.m.

Mr. Ramjattan: Although I mentioned that it was three janitors, the increase is substantial. It caters for the 5% increase in salaries, plus an additional \$5,000 in 2015. It is a mere 4.31%

increase, as against last year. The amount for contracted employees is \$51 million, \$18.7 million was paid for by the Ministry of Public Security and \$32.47 million was paid under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Mr. Chand: Line items 6111 – Administrative, 6113 – Other Technical and Craft Skilled, 6114 – Clerical and Office Support and 6116 – Contracted Employees: The Minister spoke about the second 5% increase. Did members of the Prison Service also enjoy that increase? When was the second increase paid out?

Mr. Ramjattan: It includes both and the second one was paid late last year.

Mr. Gill: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): Could the Hon. Minister say if the budgetary increase from \$7,530,000, in 2015, to \$30 million, this year, includes substantial rehabilitation and education for prisoners that would assist them in readjusting into society and would make them more marketable so that they could gain gainful employment when they are released?

Mr. Ramjattan: That is precisely the purpose of it all.

Mr. Rohee: I would like to move on to line item 6284 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister provide to the Committee of Supply a breakdown of the full sum, the \$15 million, that is requested and the items included in that breakdown?

Mr. Ramjattan: There is \$3 million for development of a jail classification system in the Guyana Prison Service. There is a further \$3.5 million for the harmonisation and alignment of the legislative framework for the Guyana Prison Service and local, international and regional conventions and agreements. There is \$4 million for rationalisation and rehabilitation for securing the existing prison facilities. There is \$2 million for the development of a Management Information System (MIS). Whatever is the remainder is for advertisement and internet charges.

Mr. Rohee: A follow-up question on that same line item. Could the Hon. Member say whether those sums of moneys are to be obtained from the Citizen Security Programme or from budgetary resources?

Mr. Ramjattan: This is from our budgetary resources and not from the Citizen Security Programme.

Mr. Rohee: Since that is the case, could the Hon. Member say whether the intention is to advertise for consultancies to be procured to facilitate the work that was just mentioned?

Mr. Ramjattan: Yes, indeed Hon. Member.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6294 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister explain to the House what are the good and services that are to be procured under this specific line item?

Mr. Ramjattan: This line item caters for the baby chicken, feeds for poultry and certain other agricultural items that are needed for agriculture and the livestock development at the prison.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6292 – Dietary: Could the Hon. Minister inform the House how much it costs the State to feed each prisoner and to provide uniform and other amenities to each prisoner?

Mr. Ramjattan: The approximate cost for feeding a prisoner is \$485,000 per annum. The uniform is catered for under line item 6133 – Benefits and Allowances and one suit costs \$2,500.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6292 –Dietary: Since it is such a huge cost to the State, could the Hon. Minister inform the House whether it is the intention to move to self-sufficiency in provisions for the prison system?

Mr. Ramjattan: Certainly. That is the whole policy behind the agriculture and livestock programme.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I would allow three questions after Mr. Gill's question and then I would put the question.

Mr. Gill: This is a follow-up question to the questions asked under line item 6292 – Dietary. Could the Hon. Minister explain why, at a time when prisoners are being released on a regular basis and at a time when the police force ought to be...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, let us try to move it a little faster.

Mr. Gill: I am doing so, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: You are setting it up.

Mr. Gill: At a time when prisoners are being released on a regular basis and also at a time when the Force should be focusing more on crime prevention, they should be more proactive, could the Hon. Minister explain why there is an increase of \$25 million, which is an increase from \$235 million, last year, to \$350 million this year?

Mr. Ramjattan: Well, we are saving actually, Hon. Member. The allocation under the Ministry of Public Security is \$349 million for 2015 and the Ministry received \$350 million in 2016. Although the previous amount was for a shorter period last year, we are going to manage with the \$350 million. In any event, we have to ensure that the prisoners are taken care of. We are going to do our best, while at the same time trying to get the agriculture and livestock programme underway in order to become self-sufficient.

Programme: 543 – Prison Service – \$1,486,544,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 544 – Police Complaints Authority – \$42,341,000

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister inform the House whether the Complaints Authority has its full complement of investigators and whether there have been any changes in the investigators that were hired by his predecessors?

Mr. Ramjattan: It has its full complement and there have been no changes.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6261: Local Travel and Subsistence: Could the Hon. Minister inform the House for which locations visits are envisaged? Could he provide a breakdown of the visits that are envisaged by the Complaints Authority?

Mr. Ramjattan: It is visits by the Chairman his team to rural areas. As to where visits would be conducted this year, we have not [*inaudible*]. It is just a \$1 million allocation for those visits to the rural areas.

Mr. Rohee: Just one more question on the same line item. Could the Hon. Member tell the House what are the determining factors that lead to the visits? What are the criteria used by the Chairman to visit the various locations?

Mr. Ramjattan: The criteria are at the discretion of the Chairman and they are based on the complaints that he received.

Programme: 544 – Police Complaints Authority – \$42,341,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 545 – Fire Service – \$924,159,000

2.29 p.m.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6222 – Field Materials and Supplies: According to my calculations of the last eight months, \$10 million was spent by the Guyana Fire Service and it is envisaged that \$33 million will be spent in four months. Could the Hon. Minister say what the \$33 million will be spent on?

Mr. Ramjattan: Mr. Chairman, \$44 million was spent, last year, and \$45 will be spent this year, and that is to facilitate the purchase of foam concentrates for vehicles, fire fighting suits, raincoats, respirators and cartridges.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: It appears to be a significant increase under this line item. Could the Hon. Minister provide the House with a breakdown of the buildings and the cost associated with each building?

Mr. Ramjattan: It is associated with continuing efforts to improve its stations and buildings: changing zinc sheets on the roof on the northern section of Anna Regina Fire Station - \$1.4 million; construction of a canopy on building at the Linden Fire Station - \$875,000; changing of the roof and installation of windows at central headquarters - \$2 million; rehabilitation of plumbing system at Leonora Fire Station - \$3 million; repairs to New Amsterdam Fire Station barrack room - \$4.7 million; repairs to two officers' quarters inclusive of painting at New Amsterdam Fire Station - \$2 million; painting of entire building and electrical work at Timehri Fire Station - \$2 million; painting of entire building, repairs and absorption area and cupboards at Rose Hall Fire Station - \$1.5 million; installing of mosquito mesh to windows, painting of building at Ogle Fire Station - \$350,000; construction of cubicles, installing of ceiling fans, repairing of plumbing system at central headquarters - \$3 million; and repairs of facilities at

central general office, ceiling included, and the abolition area - \$200,000, all giving a total of \$22.2 million.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6294 – Other: An increase of \$3 million is envisaged under this line item. Could the Hon. Minister say what the goods and services that will be procured are and the cost for each of the goods or services?

Mr. Ramjattan: This is for five auxiliary units in the hinterland area – Kwakwani, Mahdia, Mabaruma, Port Kaituma and Lethem. The increase will be used for the payment of stipend to the auxiliary members of the Service, along with payment for crossing of the Berbice River Bridge, stipend for work study students and members of the recruitment board and personnel attending the Caribbean Association of Fire Fighters and other services.

Programme: 545 – Fire Service - \$924,159,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 546 – Customs Anti-Narcotics Unit - \$158,451,000

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: It appears that there is an increase of approximately \$20 million. I would be happy if the Minister could explain how \$39 million could be spent in eight months and whether \$39 million can be spent in four months? Is it a question of increased salaries or is it a question of increased staff?

Mr. Ramjattan: It is a question of increased salaries and an approved structural increase effective from January, 2015.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister inform the House where the buildings are located and what purpose are they maintained for?

Mr. Ramjattan: This line item caters for the capping and tiling of the bottom flat of the present building and repairs to roof and reinforcing of the gate at Customs Anti-Narcotics Unit (CANU) Headquarters at Homestretch Avenue.

Mr. Rohee: Under the same line item, I noticed the Hon. Minister mentioned CANU Headquarters at Homestretch Avenue. Is there another headquarters somewhere else?

Mr. Ramjattan: No.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6294 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister inform the House what the goods and services to be procured under this specific line item are and what the costs associated with each of the good or service to be procured are?

Mr. Ramjattan: This increase is for the facilitation of increase in operational exercises and it caters for special intelligence operations and the payment of confidential sources.

Mr. Chand: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Under Staffing Details, in 2015, there is zero and, in 2016, it is zero. How will this last sum be expended - \$99,902,000?

Mr. Ramjattan: If the Member would know the practice in relation to these specialised units, for security reasons, we do not state the contracted amount. Please, you have been in the House long enough.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, let us try to avoid gratuitous comments.

Mr. Ramjattan: Okay, I withdraw that statement. For security reasons, over the years, it has never been there.

Programme: 546 – Customs Anti-Narcotics Unit - \$158,451,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 541 – Policy Development and Administration - \$451,960,000

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister say whether this sum is associated with the technical cooperation programme with the Government of Guyana?

Mr. Ramjattan: What project code is the Member referring to?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, do you have a project code?

Mr. Rohee: Project code 1216500 - Citizen Security Strengthening Programme: Could the Hon. Minister inform the House whether there are police stations that are to be rehabilitated under this project code and in which Divisions the stations are located?

Mr. Ramjattan: Nine police stations will be rehabilitated under this project code but they have not yet been identified. We want to know, from the budgetary allocations, what to do first because we do not want duplications.

Mr. Gill: Follow-up: This is an Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) funded programme for \$3.1 billion, of which \$2 billion was spent last year. In view of the significant increase in violent crime and murders, can...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, do not take advantage of the Chairman's leniency in this regard. On the last occasion, the setting up did not contribute, if I may say so, to the question you asked. It is taking up time that we need for other purposes. Please cooperate.

Mr. Gill: I will, Mr. Chairman, but there is an increase in crimes. In view of the increased crime rate that we are experiencing, could the Hon. Minister give us a breakdown of what the \$2 billion was spent on last year and what will the \$250 million be spent on this year?

Mr. Ramjattan: The provision for Citizen Security Strengthening Programme from the IDB only came into being this year. It was earlier this year that there was a disbursement, so I do not know where \$2 billion was spent.

Mr. Neendkumar: The Description of Project for the same line item states:

“The project entails provision for:

Community crime and violence prevention.

Strengthening the capacity of the Guyana Police Force in crime prevention and investigation.

Strengthening the capacity of the Guyana Prison Services in rehabilitation and social reintegration.”

Could the Hon. Minister tell us how much will be spent and be specific?

Mr. Ramjattan: It is broken down into some components: component one – community, crime and violence prevention - US\$149,000; component two – strengthening the Guyana Police Force in crime prevention and investigation - US\$1,001,000; and component three - strengthening the

Guyana Prison Services in rehabilitation and social reintegration -US\$100,000. I hope that helps the Hon. Member.

2.44 p.m.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Member indicate to this honourable House whether consultancies have to be procured for each of these projects under this particular programme and whether advertisements are to be made in respect to each of them?

Mr. Ramjattan: Both, yes. It will be tendered out and advertisements will be done.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Member indicate to this House what is the process envisaged for the hiring of the consultants at the end of the advertising process? What is the process envisaged to qualify the consultancies for the job to be done?

Mr. Ramjattan: The criteria we understand is under the Terms of Reference (ToR) and those will be used. These will be scrutinised by the IDB.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Member say whether the ToRs are to be formulated by the Ministry of Public Security alone or together with the consultant(s) from the IDB?

Mr. Ramjattan: It will certainly be with the consultants from the IDB.

Mr. Gill: I have a follow-up to my earlier question. Project code 1216500 - Citizen Security Strengthening Programme: In Volume 3 of the Estimates on page 222, there is a full description of this project here. It states that the project financing amount is \$3.12 billion and amount spent before 2016 was \$1.941 billion.

Mr. Ramjattan: That spending was for the...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, I do not know that the question has yet been asked.

Mr. Gill: Mr. Chairman, the Minister denied that this money was spent.

Mr. Chairman: Are you asking a question, Hon. Member?

Mr. Gill: I am asking the Hon. Minister to explain what this money, the \$2 billion which the Minister said was not spent, was spent for?

Mr. Ramjattan: There was a first phase of this Citizen Security Strengthening Programme that ended before we could have gone on to the second phase that has these components to them. That first phase was completed some time ago under the People's Progressive Party/Civic's (PPP/C) Administration. The disbursements for the second phase are now under this Administration, as of last month. The \$1.941 billion can be more properly accounted for at that first phase and designing this phase, literally designing and doing a number of studies as to what should be the components, as far as I understand.

Mr. Neendkumar: Project code 1216600 – Buildings: I see there is \$7 million and the Legend states “Provision for building and cubicles”. Could you tell us which buildings will be extended and where cubicles will be provided?

Mr. Ramjattan: The building is the Ministry of Public Security at \$4 million as estimated cost and provision of cubicles to the Ministry of Public Security at \$3 million.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, could we move on to project code 12166700 - Citizen Security Programme II?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, you may.

Mr. Rohee: Thank you. Under this project code, provision is made for skills training. Could the Hon. Member inform this House what the criteria to be used for identifying the communities where persons are to be trained in certain skills are? That is the first question, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Ramjattan: The criteria will be based on the crime rates within the areas.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Member inform the House whether a consultant will be procured to identify these communities and whether a sum of money had been identified for the payment of this consultant to carry this particular survey and designing of the project?

Mr. Ramjattan: I understand it is in collaboration with the IDB and the crime observatory that will be doing the selection of the consultant.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister inform the House whether Community Action Councils are envisaged as well as the hiring of Community Action Officers to advance this particular skills training project?

Mr. Ramjattan: Certainly, that will be so.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister indicate and inform this House whether the Ministry of Public Security did advertise for the procurement of the Project Coordinator, how many applications were received and how the coordinator was chosen - whether there was a panel for the selection of the coordinator from among other applicants?

Mr. Ramjattan: I understand that there was a panel from the Ministry of Public Security and there were persons who made the applications and they were sent to the IDB. That is how the unit was comprised. The IDB gave the final approval.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister inform this House whether the Project Coordinator is *in situ* at this point in time?

Mr. Ramjattan: Yes, he is *in situ* right of me.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, with your permission, could the Hon. Minister inform the House whether a procurement officer and an accountant, in respect to this particular project, have already been selected and whether advertisements have been made before these persons were selected?

Mr. Ramjattan: There were advertisements, applicants and a selection process and they have been made, both the Procurement Officer and the Financial Officer.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, a follow-up question: Could the Hon. Member say whether either of these two Officers have relatives at the Ministry of Public Security?

Mr. Ramjattan: No; there are not, to my knowledge, any relatives.

Mr. Gill: Project code 2405800 - Land Transport: Could the Hon. Minister say how many vehicles will be purchased with the \$10 million allocated, what kind of vehicles and where they will be stationed?

Mr. Ramjattan: I understand that there are two vehicles to be purchased for the Ministry of Public Security with this \$10 million and they are two pickups.

Mr. Gill: Where will they be stationed?

Mr. Ramjattan: They will be stationed at the Ministry of Public Security.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, there was an additional question. Mr. Gill, are you satisfied with the answer you have received?

Mr. Gill: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, with your permission, the project entails the purchase of vehicles. Could the Hon. Minister inform the House what vehicles are envisaged here to be purchased and for whom?

Mr. Ramjattan: That is what I said - two pickups at \$5 million apiece.

Mr. Rohee: Is there a brand name for the pickups?

Mr. Ramjattan: It is Jaguar, I think.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister inform the House who are the beneficiaries of these pickups?

Mr. Ramjattan: This land transport is coming not from the citizen security project. This is coming from the Government side and one is for the forensic laboratory and one for the Ministry's secretariat.

Mr. Neendkumar: Project code 1216700 - Citizen Security Programme II: I noticed that there is \$160 million. The Description of Project states:

“The project entails provision for:

Institutional strengthening and modernisation of administrative structures of the security sector.

Skills training.”

Could the Hon. Minister tell us how much money will be spent in these two areas and if he could elucidate in any way to us?

Mr. Ramjattan: It will be the modernisation of the Ministry of Public Security structure; the outreach to isolated communities; and strengthening of subvention agencies like the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC), the Guyana Police Force and the Guyana Prison Service. Training at risk youth is another component of that. The project coordination, evaluation and audits and other contingencies make up that.

Bishop Edghill: We have to get the cost.

Mr. Ramjattan: Well, I can make a copy of this to give to you.

Mr. Neendkumar: Project code 2609100 - Community Policing: Hon. Minister, I see there is \$4,460,000 for the purchase of vehicles and engines but the Description of Project states:

“The project entitles purchase of outboard engine and ATVs.”

Could you explain that? It is really a mere sum for community policing when we have this big crime rate.

Mr. Ramjattan: Indeed, it is a small sum but I must say that it is for some boat engines. Notwithstanding the small sum, that is what we got from the Community Policing Group. Of course, this year, I would have to give back the Community Policing Groups some of the vehicles that the Police are going to bring, what was taken from them last year.

2.59 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: I will allow two more questions before I put the question.

Mr. Neendkumar: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister tell us whether he will strengthen and develop, further, the Community Policing Group in this country?

Mr. Ramjattan: Certainly.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, with respect to the forensic laboratory, could the Hon. Minister say whether there is a business plan?

Mr. Ramjattan: At this stage, no. We do not have a business plan, as far as I am aware.

Programme: 541 – Policy Development - \$451,960,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 542 – Police Force - \$897,189,000

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, provision is made here for the floating base at the Waini River. Could the Hon. Minister say whether this is the same floating base that the Prime Minister referred to that will be located in the Pomeroun River?

Mr. Ramjattan: Well, it is not the one at Pomeroun. This is going to be \$6.5 million for the one going to Waini River, Tamakay.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, I wanted to ask the Minister whether he would be prepared to have an audit done with respect to the sums of money already disbursed for this floating police base.

Mr. Ramjattan: Mr. Chairman, certainly.

Mr. Gill: Project code 2608300 – Equipment - Police: Criminals are now better armed than our police who still have World War II relics as side arms and we cannot or should not ask our...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you are to ask.

Mr. Gill: I am coming to that, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: If you do not, I will not allow you to be on the floor. We cannot continue like this. We have to, at least, respect the rules by which we all operate in here. You have the floor, sir.

Mr. Gill: Could the Hon. Minister say whether the \$235 million budgeted in this year's Budget is adequate to upgrade the police from the World War II relics that they are now using, Sir?

Mr. Ramjattan: The Police Force will utilise whatever is useful for them in the process and what is provided in the Budget. New arms and ammunition will constitute, from that sum, \$47.8 million.

Mr. Neendkumar: Mr. Chairman, project code 1216800 – Police Stations and Buildings: I see a hefty sum of \$427,189,000. Mr. Chairman, the Description of Project clearly states that it will be for:

“1. Payment of retention.”

Could you tell us which project and how much money will be paid for retention?

Mr. Ramjattan: The retention will be \$136,490,000.

Mr. Neendkumar: Which project is that for?

Mr. Ramjattan: Well, the projects are going to be the rehabilitation of the Tactical Services Unit (TSU) arms store - \$25 million; Officers Quarters at Port Kaituma - \$7 million; the rehabilitation of the Special Branch Administration building - \$24 million; and there are a number of others. If you want the list, I will give you. The rehabilitation of Mounted Branch Stable - \$31 million; the rehabilitation of living quarters, Mahaicony; the rehabilitation of East La Penitence Police Station; Enmore outpost, Leonora Police Station and TSU western Administration building.

Mr. Rohee: Project code 2405900 – Land and Water Transport - Police: Provision is made here for vehicles, motorcycles, engines, boats and bicycles. I noticed no provision is made here for an aircraft for interior policing. Could the Hon. Minister say how soon provision will be made for an aircraft for interior policing, which has been touted quite a lot within recent times?

Mr. Ramjattan: It will be as soon as we can afford it.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, over the years - I am speaking with respect to vehicles, trucks motorcycles, outboard engines, bicycles and boats - with respect to equipment and furniture, there are provisions for fax machines, *et cetera*. These items are quite repetitive within each Budget, under capital expenditure, for the past five years, owing to the research I have done. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister if it has ever dawned upon him that an internal audit might be required to establish the use of these items and the procurement, year after year, of the same items in order to determine where they are going and what they are being used for. It strikes me

as unusual that, in every passing year, the same items would be required on an annual basis and we...

Mr. Chairman: I thank the Hon. Member.

Mr. Ramjattan: Well, I think that that is a good suggestion and we are going to work on it. There is a unit set up for that purpose, I understand.

Mr. Neendkumar: Mr. Chairman, I go back to project code 1216800 – Police Stations and Buildings. I see that, with respect to the same \$427,189,000, the Description of Project states:

- “2. Completion of armoury, quarters, administrative buildings, police stations, outpost and stable.
3. Construction of police station at Parfaite Harmonie, stable at Lethem and lock-up at Georgetown.
4. Rehabilitation of police stations at New Amsterdam and band room and building at Georgetown.
5. Provision for floating base – Waini River.”

Could the Hon. Minister give us a breakdown of how this total of \$427 million will be spent in these specific areas?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we will await the Minister’s return. The Minister has to leave for two minutes. I crave your indulgence while the Minister treats with that matter.

Mr. Ramjattan: I will be back, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, the Standing Order will not give us any direction when we have to suspend for two minutes. But, in our improvising, we will always remember the existing standing orders.

[Mr. Ramjattan left the Chamber.]

[Mr. Ramjattan entered the Chamber.]

Hon. Members, I thank you for your forbearance. Hon. Minister, there is a question from the Hon. Neendkumar. You would have heard the question before you left.

Mr. Ramjattan: Could it be repeated, Sir?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, indeed.

Mr. Neendkumar: Project code 1216800 – Police Stations and Buildings: There is a sum of \$427,189,000.

The Description of Project states:

“2. Completion of armoury, quarters, administrative buildings, police stations, outpost and stable.

3. Construction of police station at Parfaite Harmonie, stable at Lethem and lock-up at Georgetown.

4. Rehabilitation of police stations at New Amsterdam and band room and building at Georgetown.

5. Provision for floating base – Waini River.”

How much will be spent on these four items and tell us when you expect the completion?

Mr. Ramjattan: We might complete by the end of the year. For the rehabilitation of the Central Police Station at New Amsterdam, Region 6 - \$60 million; construction of the stable at Lethem - \$20 million; construction of the Brickdam lock-ups, Region 4 - \$20 million; rehabilitation of quarter master - \$60 million; rehabilitation of the band room - \$74 million; these are headquarters; rehabilitation of Anna Regina Police Station - \$20 million and construction of a new police station at Parfaite Harmonie - \$30 million, which is estimated at \$290 million.

Mr. Neendkumar: Mr. Chairman, I do not see anything about Anna Regina in this project description. Furthermore, the Waini River is massive. Could the Minister tell us where in the Waini River we will be having this floating base?

Mr. Ramjattan: It will be at the mouth of the Waini River. The rehabilitation of the Anna Regina Police Station is included and that is \$20 million.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I will allow two other questions and I will put the question after that.

3.14 p.m.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, in keeping with the benefits of the project which is for improved operational efficiency of the force, could the Hon. Minister say whether it is the intention of the Ministry of Public Security to introduce integrity testing at the officer level of the force to improve the operational efficiency of it?

Mr. Ramjattan: That is not on the cards for 2016.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister indicate where, under capital expenditure, the breathalysers and radar guns are provided for as he had earlier indicated?

Mr. Ramjattan: Just to help the Member, it is under equipment, police force, \$235 million.

Programme: 542 – Police Force – \$897,189,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 543 – Prison Service - \$462,747,000

Mr. Rohee: Project 1216900, Buildings – Prisons: Could the Hon. Minister say what would be the time or period envisaged for the completion of the brick prison, how many prisoners will be held at this prison and what category of prisoners?

Mr. Ramjattan: The completion is projected to be by the end of July. It will be done this year, Phase 4, this with the addition of \$52 million. Approximately 325 prisoners, this brick prison, upon completion, will hold.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister say what category of prisoners are to be housed at this brick prison?

Mr. Ramjattan: It will be all the high-profile prisoners, robbery and the serious crimes.

Mr. Rohee: With respect to the purchase of vehicles, tractor and trailer, project 2406000, Land and Water Transport, could the Hon. Minister say at which prison location are these two are to be assigned and what type of vehicles are anticipated to be purchased?

Mr. Ramjattan: It is for the purposes of emptying the massive rubbish build-up at the prisons. The vehicle will be stationed at the Georgetown prison. The tractor and trailer will cost \$25 million.

Mr. Rohee: Is it not more economical to outsource these services rather than the prison itself engaging in the disposal of garbage?

Mr. Ramjattan: The difficulty, which we had with those private companies, was that their equipment was not passing through the gate. We had to get a special tractor and trailer to do that job.

Mr. Neendkumar: Project 1216900 has \$371 million. I see the legend has “Completion of brick prison”; Construction, rehabilitation and extension of headquarters, kitchen, living quarters, male prison block and buildings”; and “Provision for cell locks and cubicles.” Could the Hon. Minister give us a breakdown of how much of this \$371 million will be spent in the different areas?

Mr. Ramjattan: Completion of the brick prison at Georgetown, the new one - \$136 million; construction of the front kitchen, Georgetown - \$20 million, extension of prison headquarters - \$20 million, construction of old capital building - \$22 million, construction of administrative building - \$60 million, construction of Officer-in-Charge quarters, Lusignan - \$11 million, cubicles - \$4 million, 35 cell locks - \$6.3 million. The estimated total cost is \$371 million. The Member can have this if he wishes to itemise the amounts.

Mr. Rohee: We are moving on to project 2608900, Tools and Equipment. Could the Hon. Minister state whether the tools and equipment are to be used in the trade shops?

Mr. Ramjattan: Yes. They certainly will be.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister state how many inmates are located at each prison location on remand and committed?

Mr. Ramjattan: I do not know if this is the proper project, but I can provide the answer to that general question tomorrow.

Programme: 543 – Prison Service - \$462,747,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 544 – Police Complaints Authority - \$1,300,000

Programme: 544 – Police Complaints Authority - \$1,300,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 545 – Fire Service - \$265,516,000

Mr. Rohee: Project 1217000, Fire Ambulances and Stations: A station is to be completed at Lethem. Could the Hon. Minister state what is the frequency of fires at Lethem and what are the types of buildings usually affected which would require a station?

Mr. Ramjattan: The answer is that they are very rare and exceptional but because Lethem is going to be made into a township we are making the provision for the construction of the fire station.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister say what are the facilities to be completed at Leonora specifically?

Mr. Ramjattan: I understand that the firefighting simulator at that training centre is in the final phase.

Mr. Rohee: Project 2406100, Land and Water Transport: I notice provision is being made for the purchase of motorcycles and a trailer. Could the Hon. Minister say what the motorcycles are to be used for as well as the trailer, and what is the cost?

Mr. Ramjattan: It is for the dispatcher at the Central Fire Station and the foam trailer is for the aerodrome.

Mr. Rohee: Project 2608800, under Communication Equipment, since the items here are being procured for improved communication, could the Hon. Minister state the number of emergency

calls that were, fire investigations that were made and the number of arson attempts that were recorded?

Mr. Ramjattan: I am in no position to give that information. I did not come prepared with those things but they will be provided.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, are you saying that this information will be provided later?

Mr. Ramjattan: Yes, the information will be provided later. I do not have all the reports made and the emergency calls made, and all of that.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, if I may with your permission, the idea of questioning, not in a course of law, is to get a picture of the efficiency of the fire service. That information will help me to get that.

3.29 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I believe that the Hon. Minister indicated that he would let you have that information.

Mr. Rohee: I will hold him accountable.

Programme: 545 – Fire Service - \$265,516,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 546 – Customs Anti-Narcotics Unit - \$37,000,000

Mr. Rohee: A sum of \$37 million has been provided for in relation to building, furniture and equipment. Could the Hon. Minister say whether it is envisaged that a completely new building would be constructed to house Custom Anti-Narcotics Unit (CANU) or whether it will be relocated of its present location?

Mr. Ramjattan: There is some concern about its relocation to accommodate a certain Ministry. The decision is still to be made and if that is made by Cabinet we will definitely have to make a new building but this \$29 million for the construction of a building is for, in the compound, there, another section to that building that is there.

Mr. Rohee: I am concerned about that, given the security related matters *vis-a-vis* CANU and the fight against drug trafficking. In addition to that my question on this same subject of improving the efficiency of CANU is whether it is envisaged that CANU and the Guyana Police Force Narcotics Unit will be merged or whether it is envisaged that CANU maintains its independence or autonomy as a fully fledged anti-narcotics body.

Mr. Ramjattan: CANU will maintain its full autonomy and it will be separate and apart from the Guyana Police Narcotics Unit.

Mr. Rohee: It is a final question, Mr. Chairman. Is it envisaged that the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) will be housed in the same building as CANU?

Mr. Ramjattan: Absolutely not. The DEA will be housed in the American Embassy's compound.

Programme: 546 – Customs Anti-Narcotics Unit - \$37,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 49 Ministry of Social Protection

Current Expenditure

Programme: 491 – Policy Development and Administration - \$249,584,000

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, I noticed under line item 6111, Administrative, there is a reduction of staff. Could you say under what circumstances those staff were lost and how could you explain that increase under that line item?

Ms. Lawrence: Actually those two persons were promoted. One was promoted to the Regional Democratic Council of Region 4 and other one, the Senior Personnel Officer, was promoted to the Assistant Chief Recruitment Officer.

Dr. Persaud: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees: I note an increase there. Could the Minister say when were these employees appointed, what are their designations, their emoluments and where are they based? Could you also say, Hon. Minister, if there are Advisers who fall under this line item?

Ms. Lawrence: Yes. The two persons referred to here would be the Personal Assistant to the Minister who was appointed on the 25th May, 2015 and a Project Coordinator who was appointed on the 29th June, 2015. With regards to the question of advisers, yes, there is one ministerial Adviser who falls within that line.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, it is a follow-up to that. What are the emoluments paid to these persons?

Ms. Lawrence: The Personal Assistant would be paid \$350,000 per month and for the Project Coordinator it will be \$200,000.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, could you say what are some of the responsibilities of these two individuals?

Ms. Lawrence: I would attempt to give an abbreviation of their responsibilities but the Personal Assistant is one who mans the secretariat of the Minister. Hence he or she is responsible for all matters pertaining coming into and going out of the secretariat and everything with regard to the Minister. The Project Coordinator, the Ministry has just started a Special Project Unit that can assist us to go out there and find funding to support our projects and so this person is there to coordinate that and also we have placed the Woman of Worth (WOW) Unit within that department, so that person can be able to monitor and so provide those persons who are applying with the necessary services.

Ms. Manickchand: It is just a follow-up on this particular issue before we move off. Would the Hon. Minister be in a position to say if Personal Assistants across the board, across Government, are being paid the same salary because it is the same responsibility?

Ms. Lawrence: It is the same responsibility but there is a range from which could be used to decide the emoluments of that person and based on the qualifications and experience.

Mrs. Chandarpal: Under line item 6111, Administrative, I note that in 2015 there were nine persons and in 2016 there are seven persons and there is a reduction of two, and yet when I look at the emoluments there is an increase of \$11.7 million. Could there be an explanation to this please?

Ms. Lawrence: Hon. Member, the increase caters for the 5% increase and also the \$5,000 which was given.

Mr. Chand: Line item 6112, Senior Technical: We saw the same size of staff, yet there is an increase of budgetary allocation by 331% from 784,000 to \$2.528 million, 331% increase. Would the Minister state how is there such a huge increase with the same staff complement?

Ms. Lawrence: Hon. Member Mr. Chand, your observations are corrections but your interpretation is not. Let me just apologise to the Ministry of Finance. There was a misprint here, in terms of the staffing details, in which it states 2015. It should have read one. One staff is added which is the appointment of the Superintendent of Works, who was appointed, and hence there would have been the increase in the line item, in terms of the numbers, since his salary is about \$81,000 per month.

Mrs. Chandarpal: I am looking at line item 6114, Clerical and Office Support. Could the Minister explain why there is a high increase when we are noting here that there is just an increase of one person? The explanation of the 5% somehow seems to me as if it is not correct because the amounts, which is stated here, is too much for one person.

3.44 p.m.

Ms. Lawrence: Just let me respond to the last question. The increase in that line item, given the increases under salaries, last year, would be approximately \$1.4 million. If the math is done, one will see that it is not incorrect. With regard to line item 6114, one person from this particular line item was reassigned to Programme 3.

Dr. Persaud: Line item 6133, Benefits and Allowances: Hon. Minister, could you say what benefits and allowances are being paid and to whom?

Ms. Lawrence: Hon. Member, that line item refers to all pensionable employees. It will cover their pension and also their vacation allowances.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, under line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies, could you say, with the increase, who will benefit and what drugs and medical supplies would be included here?

Ms. Lawrence: Hon. Member, this particular line item caters for the first aid kits in the various departments. This year, as I have said, the Ministry has added two new departments, the Special Projects Unit and a Public Relations (PR) department.

Dr. Persaud: Line item 6224, Print and Non-Print Materials: Hon. Minister, are you going to be designing any new campaigns? What materials are you planning to use, if there are any new campaigns? What is entailed under this line item?

Ms. Lawrence: In terms of the printing of brochures, it will fall under the individual programmes. Most of them will be seen in either Programme 2 or Programme 3 and also Programme 4, but this here is for newspapers for the various departments and other printing materials which the Ministry will contribute to from time to time.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, could you specifically say what other material, other than newspapers, if I may ask?

Ms. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, may I ask the Hon. Member to allow me to present this to you because it is a lot of small things?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, the information, which you sought, will be presented in written form.

Mrs. Chandarpal: Line item 6211, Expenses Specific to the Agency: Could we get the breakdown of the sums that have been allocated to this sub head, in terms of some details, that is, equipment supplies? We would like to have information, a breakdown on that.

Ms. Lawrence: There is zero under that line item. I think you meant another line item, Hon. Member.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, could you say under line item 6264, Vehicle Spares and Service, if there were any new vehicles purchased? If so, where will they be placed?

Ms. Lawrence: Okay. For this particular line item, this captures the cost for the present fleet which is there for maintenance.

Dr. Persaud: Line item 6272, Electricity Charges: Could you say where these charges will be applied, in terms of the Ministry and its buildings?

Ms. Lawrence: Hon. Member, this pertains to the Ministry's main office at Lamaha and East Streets and also its office at Cornhill and Water Streets.

Mrs. Chandarpal: Line item 6281, Security Services: Could we be advised as to which are the security services and we would like to know what was the process which had led up to these security services having got the job?

Ms. Lawrence: Hon. Member, this amount pertains to security services provided by the Special Constabulary for the Ministry's buildings at East and Lamaha Streets and Cornhill Street, and for the Minister's residence. I must make note here that the Minister has given up this provision for security services.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, under line item 6284, Other, could you itemise what is under this headline or line item?

Ms. Lawrence: Hon. Member, the items are payment to a consultant for strategic plan. We are paying \$8 million; rental of photocopiers - \$950,000, internet fees - \$1.5 million, Sanitact Unit - \$900,000 and configuration of computer networks and internet services - \$1.6 million. I may also add washing of curtains, towels and mats, \$600,000 is provided to cover all of the buildings and payment for the annual report from the consultant - \$700,000. Sir, this particular strategic plan is a liability which we inherited and so we are trying to clear it off.

Dr. Persaud: The \$8 million, to which the Minister referred – it is a follow-up question - what is the strategic plan that you speak of and where is this consultant from?

Ms. Lawrence: This consultant was taken on by the previous Minister to do a strategic plan for five years for the Ministry in conjunction with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). Notwithstanding that, the package, which was presented to the Ministry, was not accepted by the previous Minister but this Government is left with the bill, so we are trying to clear it off the books.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, under line item 6294, Other, could you say what constitutes the sum allotted there?

Ms. Lawrence: Among the list of things would be the production of identification cards for our staff, stipends for work study students, and now the Ministry is also having persons coming to us as alternative sentencing. Those persons who come within the Ministry, it will provide them with a stipend. There are other activities within the Ministry, such as the hosting of receptions or round table discussions, donations, and miscellaneous activities such as Christmas cards, wreaths, sympathy cards, get well cards, and others.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, under line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, could you say if any local organisations would have been added to the previous list? If so, which one, and would there have been an increase in the allotments to these local organisations listed here?

Ms. Lawrence: There has been no increase. We have not added anyone or any other agency to this list. This pertains to the Friends of the Needy, the Red Cross, the Women Environment, the Guyana Fire Relief Council and the Amerindian Handicraft Association. Whether we are going to add, there are lots of requests coming in for assistance for all the various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and homes that persons are now setting up to assist the social issues which we have but we will have to take them by a case by case basis, and also, it depends on our ability to be able to have more moneys expended in these areas.

Mr. Charlie: Line item 6255, Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Hon. Minister, could you say if in this budgetary allocation, under this line item, if any provision is made for the Probation Officer's office to be upgraded in Lethem?

Ms. Lawrence: Hon. Member, I am very happy that you asked that question because yesterday and the day before I was in Lethem and I did have a talk with the Regional Executive Officer (REO), in which I asked him to identify a space or a building for us because we need to expand our services in that particular region. He did invite me to view a few buildings and we are hoping that we can work on them. Before the end of the year the Ministry will have Labour Officers and Child Protection Officers added to the office with Probation Officer who is in Region 9. This line item does not cater for that.

Programme: 491 – Policy Development and Administration – \$249,584,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 492 – Social Services – \$12,548,811,000

3.59 p.m.

Mr. Chand: Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees: There is a decrease in the staff complement. Last year, it was 160; this year, it is 155. Yet, there is a massive increase of 443% in the allocation. Could the Minister explain why there is such a massive increase, although there is a reduction of the staff complement?

Ms. Lawrence: Hon. Member, the first thing that I want to point out to you is that what is catered for under the Ministry of Social Protection is for one period. If the Hon. Member looks at a few pages prior, he would see, under Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security, the other portion for the first half of the year. The two have to be added. There has been no massive increase. As a matter of fact, as regards to the five persons, I am happy to report that these persons are now confirmed on the permanent establishment. They have not been dismissed.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, under the same line item 6116, could you state if anyone has been employed as an Adviser or would that be catered for under line item 6111 - Administrative where there are three additional staff?

Ms. Lawrence: There are no Advisers. It caters for the five persons who are now on the permanent establishment.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, are you saying that no Advisers were employed by the Ministry under Line item 6111?

Ms. Lawrence: If the Hon. Member is asking under line item 6116, no Advisers were employed under this Programme.

Dr. Persaud: I would like to congratulate the Minister for having no Advisers. Therefore, there are no Advisers to the Minister in that Ministry.

Ms. Lawrence: May I repeat that under this Programme, 492 - Social Services, the Ministry of

Social Protection do not have any Advisers.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, under which Programme would we find those Advisers?

Mrs. Lawrence: I did mention that, under Programme 491, there was one Adviser.

Dr. Persaud: Under Line item 6113 - Other Technical and Craft Skilled, I see that six persons have been employed. Could you say where they will be based? Is this number adequate to fill the vacancies that exist under this Ministry? If not, how many other vacancies are there?

Ms. Lawrence: These persons are based in Regions 6 and 10. As to whether we will be able to fill all of the vacancies that we have, there are 12 and I am certain that we will be able to fill them shortly.

Dr. Persaud: A follow-up to that question: Has the Ministry budgeted for those vacancies? Do they include Social Workers? I know that there is a dearth of Social Workers across the country. There is a huge deficit. Have you made any provision in the Budget for such?

Ms. Lawrence: The vacancies will be filled and catered for by the Ministry of Finance. These would be for Probation Officers. As you would have heard in my report to the National Assembly during the Budget debate, we would like to have several more Probation Officers, but we cannot at this time. Hence, we are entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the University of Guyana (UG) so that its 3rd and 4th year students could do their internship with the Ministry. That will help us in terms of the workload and the number of persons that we need to assist us.

Mr. Chand: Line item 6321: Could the Hon. Minister advise on the names of the local organisations that will receive this massive sum of \$72,628,000 and whether trade unions are included?

Ms. Lawrence: Hon. Member, if you could turn with me to page 581, you will see, at Agency Code 49, the breakdown for each organisation. There are no trade unions listed among those.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I would allow two more questions before I put the question.

Mr. Chand: A follow-up question: Would the Minister confirm that this is another election

promise that has been betrayed?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Komal Chand, at a time when we are pressed for time, you ask a question like that. We are not really working as if we want to get this done.

Ms. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, I can put the mind of the Hon. Member to rest. He is looking at the wrong programme. Trade unions would fall under Programme 493 - Labour. We do keep our promises.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, under line item 6284 – Other, could you say what constitutes the \$120 million? Is the Women of Worth (WOW) programme catered for under this line item? If yes, I would like to ask some follow-ups on that.

Ms. Lawrence: That programme does not fall under this line item

Dr. Persaud: What falls under that line item?

Ms. Lawrence: Under Probation and Social Services, there is capacity building and institutional strengthening - \$4 million; community talks, seminars, parenting workshops, television programmes to assist persons with social issues, including suicide, alcoholism and substance abuse, *et cetera* - \$3 million; youth camps - \$4 million; agency fees for the Guyana Post Office Corporation (GPOC) - \$49 million.

Under the Gender Affairs/Domestic Violence Policy Unit, there is capacity building and institutional strengthening - \$4 million; awareness sessions with boys and girls - \$600,000; working groups with women and men - \$400,000; gender and development policy consultations and implementation - \$13.2 million; and suicide prevention, domestic and sexual violence advertisements - \$6 million.

Under the Hugo Chavez Centre, there is \$3.2 million for fish food. Hon. Members heard me talking about self sufficiency, *et cetera*. For the fish project there is \$3.2 million; for the chicken project there is \$2.1 million; for the gardening project - green houses – there is \$650,000.

For the Palms Geriatric Institution's burial of residents, there is \$1.6 million. For other services, such as cutting of hair, taking them on tours, *et cetera*, there is \$957,000.

For the Mahaica Hospital for burial of patients there is \$260,000; for the nstallation of internet and the monthly service there is an allocation of \$120,000; for Administration in terms of development and operationalisation of automated pension and social assistance system there is \$25 million.

Dr. Persaud: A follow-up on that same Line item: Could the Hon. Minister say whether the Hinterland would benefit from any of the listed programmes?

Ms. Lawrence: Yes. I have mentioned the awareness programmes, the youth camps, the policy development consultation, *et cetera*. All of those will be taken across the 10 Administrative Regions.

Dr. Persaud: I have two more questions. Line item 6321: Where would the Guyana Women's Leadership Institute be located? I do not see it listed. Does it fall under this Programme or is it separate?

Ms. Lawrence: This is no longer seen as a local organisation separate from the Ministry. It is now encapsulated within the Programme of the Ministry.

Dr. Persaud: Could you say under which Programme and how much is allotted to the Guyana Women's Leadership Institute?

Ms. Lawrence: It is under this very Programme. The capacity building programmes that are catered for include the Guyana Women's Leadership Institute. They would have submitted their budget like the other Departments and it was collapsed into one.

If you like me to tell you exactly what some of the programmes are, I invite you to visit me at my Office so that we can go through all of those programmes and have a discussion on the way forward.

Dr. Persaud: A number of young women have been trained there for many years. I am very interested in knowing how much money is allotted specifically to this institute. Hon. Minister, while I would love to visit and all of that, I would like for the purpose of this House, if we can have that information.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, could you respond?.

4.14 p.m.

Ms. Lawrence: If the Member insists, certainly we will provide that breakdown.

Dr. Persaud: Could the Minister say how soon the House can get that information?

Line item 6284 - Other: I know that the Hon. Minister said that Woman of Worth (WOW) programme is not under this line item? Could she give me a little more detail on the WOW programme?

Ms. Lawrence: It is under the line item 6343.

Dr. Persaud: Line item 6343 is Old Age Pension and Social Assistance: The WOW programme is a partnership with the bank. Could the Minister say how much money her Ministry will be giving towards this initiative? We do know that when WOW programme was started some money was injected into this project - \$50 million. Could the Minister say how much, if any, would be injected?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, we are having a speech.

Dr. Persaud: No.

Mr. Chairman: Please ask the question.

Dr. Persaud: Would any money be injected into this project on behalf of the Government, knowing that the banks ultimately give to this project?

Ms. Lawrence: The present programme is being run with Government's money. This year, for 2016, we are going to inject \$40 million more into this programme.

Dr. Persaud: What about the bank's involvement in this? How many persons do you envisage will benefit? Would there be a reduction in the number of persons who will benefit as opposed to how many benefitted previously?

Ms. Lawrence: Our reputation with the bank under this programme has tarnished our ability to be able to convince the bank to put up its seed money. That is why the Government, last year, insisted on having this programme. It was because we noted the importance of it, and the

Government injected its own funds to get this programme up and running, and it has continued to do this. In terms of how many persons will benefit, that is not a figure that we can realise now because persons are coming to us with different projects. It depends on the projects that they are coming to us with and so it will vary from person to person. At the end of this year, we will have some statistics with which to work and then, perhaps, next year we will be able to gauge how many persons we will be able to help. With regards to whether this programme will just be one for the coastland, I want to say to you that the answer is no. As a matter of fact, we are waiting for the House to vote on this budget line item so that we can get our staff from Regions 9 and 1 to meet those women who are waiting on us.

Ms. Teixeira: My understanding of the WOW programme is that the Ministry did not handle the money. The agreement with the bank and the Ministry, on behalf of the Government, was that the money went into...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, are we all going to make speeches? Is that what we are doing or are we asking questions?

Ms. Teixeira: Sir, I am trying to get to the question. The Hon. Member said that \$40 million would be injected into the WOW programme and that the reputation of the Ministry was bad with the bank. I am asking how that happened. The money from the WOW programme went to the bank. The bank issued the money.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, what is the question?

Ms. Teixeira: How is the reputation of the Ministry bad at the bank? The money was never handled by the Ministry.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, what is the question?

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, a question was asked by my Hon. Colleague under line item 6343. The Hon. Minister pointed out that the WOW programme fell under line item 6343. The Hon. Minister then said that \$40 million is going to be injected into the WOW programme because the Ministry's reputation was very bad with the bank. I am asking, as a follow-up, how the Ministry got a bad reputation when the money was never handled by the Ministry; the money went to the bank.

Ms. Lawrence: Firstly, I want to establish in this House that, under the previous programme, the seed money came from the bank. Secondly, 76% of that portfolio was never honoured and, as result, the bank lost on its investment. The present Government has gladly injected several million dollars into this programme and, as I have said before, we are going to continue this programme, since we understand its relevance and importance, by injecting some \$40 million in 2016.

Ms. Teixeira: From what the Minister said, it was not the Ministry that defaulted; it was the persons who had loans from the bank who defaulted. Am I correct in interpreting that, Minister?

Ms. Lawrence: As far as I am informed, the Ministry had a responsibility to ensure that it monitored those persons who received those loans because those persons were recommended through a process by the Ministry. The Ministry was supposed to monitor those loans. However, staffing was not sufficient in order for the Ministry to do that. As a result, one can assume that persons, not being checked on, decided not to honour their commitments.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, based on your experience and your explanation given, could you say if there would be a change in the criteria? If yes, what would be the new criteria and outer limits? I also remember that, in your budget speech, you had said that this would be changed towards gender bias. Is there going to be a quota? Would some women benefit and not others?

Ms. Lawrence: To the Hon. Member, I did say that the WOW programme would continue and we are now adding the People of Worth Entrepreneurial Resources (POWER) programme, which would apply to those persons who are not single parents. They can be male or female. Some of them may have had a marital relationship that is now severed. They also would be provided the opportunity to access. With regard to that particular programme, we are now seeking funding to support it. Once that programme comes on stream, as I said, it would be opened to all of those persons who are seeking the help in order to improve the status of their lives. With regards to the criteria, I can lay that for you, on Friday, in the House.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we will end this after another three questions.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, could you clarify for me if those criteria would have changed? You did say that \$40 million were injected and now you are saying that you need funding. I am a bit unclear about that. Under line item 6292- Dietary, could you explain the \$115 million budgeted?

Ms. Lawrence: Let me be very clear in what I said. I said that \$40 million will be injected, in 2016, into the WOW programme, not POWER. I said that we are now seeking funding for POWER. With regard to the \$115 million budgeted, it caters for the dietary needs of: the Hugo Chavez Centre - \$20 million; the Palms Geriatric Institution - \$45 million; the Night Shelter - \$41.8; and the Mahaica Hospital - \$8.1 million.

Programme: 492 –Social Services - \$12,548,811,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Sitting Suspended at 4.26 p.m.

Sitting Resumed at 5.35 p.m.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply.

In Committee of Supply

Programme: 493 – Labour Administration- \$445,301,000

Dr. Persaud: Line item 6116- Contracted Employees: I have seen an increase. Can you tell this Committee of Supply what are the designations for the new persons under this line item, what are their emoluments and where they would be based? Were any new persons employed in the Trafficking in Persons Unit to complement that department, if it is still there?

Ms. Lawrence: None of the three persons are for the Trafficking in Persons Unit. However, the persons were employed as Chief Recruitment Officer, Personal Assistant to the Minister within the Department of Labour and Administrative Assistant.

5.39 p.m.

The Chief Recruitment Officer was employed on 15th July, 2015 and the other two persons were employed on 1th October, 2015.

Dr. Persaud: A follow-up question: Could the Minister give me the emoluments for these persons?

Ms. Lawrence: The Recruitment Officer's emolument is \$189,313; the Personal Assistant (PA) to the Minister's emolument is \$400,000; and the Administrative Assistant's emolument is \$71,397.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, could you say what are the qualification of this Personal Assistant to the Minister to warrant a salary of over \$400,000?

Ms. Lawrence: I am informed that this person, who worked with the former Minister within the Ministry, holds a Master's Degree.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I apologise for any distraction that you may see up here. I am simply trying to afford Hon. Members a passage to their seats. A camera is in the way and I am, without disturbing our proceedings here, trying to request the person responsible for that camera to move it back so that the Members of Parliament (MPs) could pass without tripping over it. Apparently, no one owns the camera but we could settle that.

Please proceed, Hon. Member.

Ms. Persaud: Line item 6113 - Other Technical and Craft Skilled: There is an increase by one person and an increase from \$8,385,000, in 2015, to \$23,705,000. Could the Hon. Minister give us the designation and salary of the additional person.

Ms. Lawrence: With regard to the number, Hon. Member, you need to add the two - the one for the first period under the Ministry of Labour, Human Service and Social Security and also the figure shown here in the revised column under the Ministry of Social Protection. You would be able to see that there is no big difference in terms of what is noted here. It is approximately \$2 million. With regard to the person who was appointed, it is a Recruitment and Manpower Officer for Region 5 who earns \$80,287 a month.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, could you say if any new staff were employed under line item 6113 – Other Technical and Craft Skilled for the Trafficking in Persons Unit?

Ms. Lawrence: Hon. Member, that Unit does not fall within the Programme. It is in Programme 492.

Ms. Persaud: Line item 6291 – National and Other Events: The sum of \$1,100,000 is budgeted. Could the Hon. Minister say what these events would be and if any for the 50th anniversary celebration is budgeted for under this line item?

Ms. Lawrence: There are several events and the observance of the 50 years of Independence is listed amount those.

Ms. Persaud: Line item 6261 – Local Travel and Subsistence: Could the Hon. Minister say what the sum of \$5 million would be used for?

Ms. Lawrence: This allotment would be to carry out inspections and investigative work at the various work sites and facilitate visits interior locations.

Mr. Croal: Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: On page 581, there is a list of the local organisations. There is a line item that caters for support to other trade unions.

Could the Hon. Minister give us an indication of which are the other trade unions and how much the allocations for those trade unions are?

Ms. Lawrence: I do not have a list here, but I could provide a list of all the trade unions, with the exception of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Guyana (FITUG) and the Guyana Trade Union Congress (GTUC), which would benefit from the \$8 million. This \$8 million is to assist them with their training programmes. We are not giving them a 100%. We would assist them with their programmes and so the moneys allotted to them would vary. As you would have noted, FITUG and the GTUC would have their own allotment.

Mr. Croal: So, in addition to the list, you would also provide how much support you intend for those unions. Is it on a *first come, first served basis*?

Ms. Lawrence: I could give you the list, but to give you the allotment at this time would not be feasible. It is because not all of the trade unions would come forward, but those that come

forward with training programmes, we would look at what the cost are and then we would allot this money across the board, depending on how large they are.

Ms. Persaud: Under that same line item, as it regards the disbursement of the moneys to these unions, could the Hon. Minister say whether there would be criteria for the unions to be able to know which type of training programmes they would be able to get funding under?

Ms. Lawrence: It is specifically for training programmes.

Ms. Persaud: Is the Hon. Minister saying that any type of training programmes, once submitted, would be receiving funding?

Ms. Lawrence: These training programmes, of course, must be for the workers.

Mr. Chand: Under the same line item, Cde. Minister, you could not give the names of the unions because it depends upon the unions submitting their educational programmes. Could you give the list of those unions that submitted their programmes last year? This is so that we would have a guide as to the unions that would come forward this year.

Ms. Lawrence: I do know that we would use that as a guide. Last year, when the budget was presented and this particular item was noted, there was a very short time for the money to be accessed before the 31st December, 2015. This time, there is a whole year. So, we could very well see more trade unions coming forward to access this fund. But we would be very happy to give you those that did access it last year.

Mr. Dharamlall: I am invoking programme budgeting. Could the Hon. Minister please state how the Government or Ministry would address the possible labour fall out as a result of the closure of the Wales Sugar Factory?

Ms. Lawrence: With all due respect, I believe that this procedure is that the Hon. Member has to state the line item.

Mr. Dharamlall: I was advised by the Hon. Minister of Finance last year that we would invoke programme budgeting. It is in that respect that I ask the question. I would be grateful for an answer.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, could you contribute to this?

Ms. Lawrence: I did not have any such discussion with this Hon. Member and I think that if he spoke with the Minister of Finance he should direct that question to him.

Ms. Persaud: Under line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, with respect to what the Hon. Minister would have stated about the disbursement of the moneys being to unions for training programmes, could the Hon. Minister say if individual unions would be able to apply or would it be done under the umbrella organisations?

Ms. Lawrence: When the Ministry of Finance, last year, introduced this particular line it was for all of the unions with the exception of the two listed here. All of the unions, individually, could apply, but what I could tell you that, last year, we had a few unions that applied under one umbrella organisation.

Ms. Persaud: Is the Hon. Minister aware that there are certain criteria which govern unions being able to access funding as it relates to them submitting their returns? Would that be used as a yardstick to give these unions the funding that is available?

Ms. Lawrence: This particular allocation is to benefit the workers. We are dealing with the unions with regards to the other requirement that they have to meet differently, but we would not subject the workers to not participate in sessions which would enhance their knowledge.

Dr. Persaud: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): A lot of the money which was allotted in 2015 was returned. Could the Minister say what training would be opened and to whom?

Ms. Lawrence: This allocation would be to facilitate payment for staff attending training in occupation, health and safety and workplace practice at the Institute of Distance and Continuing Education (IDCE) and to provide training in the other regions for staff.

5.54 p.m.

Also, we would like to do some training on the Anti-Money Laundering and Countering and Financing of Terrorism Act, as well as, training with employers, in-house training with the

recruitment staff and several other training to deal with labour trafficking and child labour, *et cetera*.

Dr. Persaud: Follow-up: Could you give me a little more clarity on the anti-money laundering training that your Ministry will be doing.

Ms. Lawrence: The training, I am informed, will be specifically for the co-op officers; it is to allow them to be aware of the Act and the various issues that may be encountered in terms of their work with the various co-ops and friendly societies.

Ms. Persaud: With regard to line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations - and the Minister saying that they will not hold unions to the fact that they have to submit returns to access this fund, and I did ask the question whether the Hon. Minister was aware that they had to, would it not be setting a precedent to have unions by step the fact that this is a legal requirement of them because they accept moneys as union dues, and so it is a part of the transparency and accountability of the trade union movement and the laws of Guyana for these returns to be submitted so that they can remain legitimate unions?

Ms. Lawrence: Thank you to the Hon. Member. My response remains the same. We are aware but it is not a criterion. This is for the enhancement of the workers.

Ms. Persaud: To the Hon. Minister, would it not be a risk that we are opening a cesspit for persons to be unaccountable and not transparent as it regards the finances of those organisations under which wellbeing the very members, to which the training is open to, would be at risk?

Ms. Lawrence: To the Hon. Member, as I said before, we are aware of the criteria which the unions must meet and we are working with them to ensure that they meet those criteria but I would like to inform the Member that these training programmes are monitored by the Labour Department. I do agree with you that there must be accountability and transparency. We are monitoring these programmes, so it is not that someone is giving us a paper and we give him or her a fat cheque.

Programme: 493 – Labour Administration - \$445,301,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 494 – Child Care and Protection - \$471,677,000

Dr. Persaud: Under line item 6111 – Administrative - could the Hon. Minister say what the designation of the single staff taken on is, whether the person is another personal assistant and what the salary or emolument is?

Ms. Lawrence: I am quite certain that the Director of the Childcare and Protection Agency (CPA) would be happy to have a personal assistant, but this particular addition to line item 6111 – Administrative – is a Manager for the Early Childhood Programme. The emolument is \$175,000.

Dr. Persaud: Could the Hon. Minister give the designations of the five persons taken on under line item 6112 – Senior Technical – state where they will be placed and what their emoluments are? Would any of those persons fill the void that exists in terms of senior councillors, psychologists and any of those people who are so necessary for the Childcare and Protection Agency?

Ms. Lawrence: Hon. Member, the persons taken on here are Senior Probation Officers and they have actually been promoted. Their salaries are \$118,502 and they are placed in Regions 3, 4 and 6.

Dr. Persaud: Under line item 6113 – Other Technical and Craft Skilled – could the Hon. Minister say what the designations are of the additional staff taken on there and where they will be placed? Could the Minister also say whether there are more vacancies existing across the region and, if so, how soon will they be filled?

Ms. Lawrence: These are Junior Probation Officers and they have been assigned to Regions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. There are five vacancies, two of which were filled recently and they are placed in Regions 3 and 4. The emolument of these Officers is \$81,400.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, could you say whether there are plans to increase the number of Social Workers and other skilled persons who specifically deal with child issues relating to abuse and other instances, and say whether there are plans to expand the complement of staff?

Ms. Lawrence: Certainly, we would like to fill as many vacancies as we can. We await the Public Service Commission to fill the vacancies which the Ministry presently has. Also, we have requested the creation of some other positions so that we can have persons fill them to assist this important Agency.

Dr. Persaud: Follow-up: What other positions do you plan on creating?

Ms. Lawrence: Those positions we are seeking to have established are child councillors, licensing officers for the Early Childhood Department and also some probation officers for Regions 8 and 9.

Dr. Persaud: Follow-up: For the Early Childhood Department, I know that this is on the cards but do you have the requisite staff to deal with that area and are there a significant number of vaccines existing in that Department?

Ms. Lawrence: Presently, there are five persons in total - the Manager, the Executive Officer and three other staff members. Now, we are moving to create those positions for licensing officers and that will give us our complement.

Dr. Persaud: Follow-up: Would that be across the region? Is that small number enough to fulfil the mandate of that Department?

Ms. Lawrence: To the Hon. Member, we believe that this is a number that we can start with, given the fact that most of the centres are on the coast; we will be able to manage with this complement as a start and then we will move on.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, that is a special skill that is required so I would like to see trained persons placed in those areas. So, to start with that small number, really, to me, does not fulfil what you are trying to do.

Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Minister say what the designations are and emoluments, under this line item, because I see two new members of staff have been taken on?

Ms. Lawrence: To the comment by the Member, I would like for you to big up our complement of staff that we have there because it is just three of them and they have been able to identify

some 264 day-care centres across the country. They are working and we are satisfied that, with the licensing officers coming on board, they will be able to do the work that is expected of them.

With regard to the two persons, one is a House Service Supervisor at the Mahaica Children's Home and that person's earning is \$117,859. The other is a House Service Supervisor at the Drop-in Centre and that person's emolument is the same.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, could you say what additional organisations, locally, will benefit from subsidies under line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations?

Ms. Lawrence: To the Hon. Member, we do not have any new persons but, once again, we have a list of persons who would like to speak to us about supporting them and receiving subsidies.

6.09 p.m.

Dr. Persaud: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): With the number of programmes envisaged in this year, I noticed the sum of \$12,130,000. Is that enough for what is required to execute all of these programmes that are planned for 2016 and who will benefit from this, if you have that information?

Ms. Lawrence: You asked whether the amount of \$12,130,000 will be enough. We would like to do a lot of things but we did budget for this and I am happy that the Minister of Finance gave us what we asked for. With this \$12 million, we will look at building capacity for staff, for parents and also for the caregivers. Not to mention, we do get assistance from other agencies.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, could you say where these persons are who will benefit? You gave an idea of who will benefit but is it going to be countrywide? How are you going to determine who should benefit? That is why I asked if it were enough.

Ms. Lawrence: The answer is yes. The caregivers are countrywide; there are various homes and so on. The parents will be those persons who are in the programme of taking care of our children not only the adoption, but also the persons who are enrolled in our Foster Care Programme.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, through the Chairman, there are a number of institutions where caregivers are placed to take care of children who come from very disturbed environments. Are

there enough caregivers in the institution for the number of children so that you have sufficiency again in this amount?

Ms. Lawrence: To the Hon. Member, due to the small amount of time that was given in the Budget presentation, I did not get to elaborate that one of the things that we are looking at is setting up standards for these various institutions so that we can be able to address all of the needs in terms of the services that they provide.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, I was asking if there is adequacy in terms of caregivers to children in some of the institutions that fall under the Childcare and Protection Agency. There is the Sophia Care Centre and the New Opportunity Corps (NOC). There are a lot of gaps in those institutions as they relate to how the children are cared for. Much of what you said is already in the legislation that exists. Are you going to provide for those things through that?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we are getting close to the point where I will have to limit the number of speakers. This is a very important issue but there are many others to be dealt with too, including the Capital Expenditure for this very Agency.

Ms. Lawrence: To the Hon. Member, that is why we have proceeded to have positions created so that we can be able to meet the needs in terms of all the various homes. Presently, we have all of the persons that we need.

Dr. Persaud: Mr. Chairman, this is my final question. Line Item 6294 - Other: Could the Minister say what comprises the number given there under that line item?

Ms. Lawrence: The operation of the halfway home, which I spoke about, including sanitation services - \$4 million; for the purchase of shoes, clothing, linen and kitchen utensils, we have allocated \$21.4 million; for the screening process for potential foster parents, we have allocated \$500,000; maintenance of the Guyana Adoption Board - \$570,000; support for the advocacy centres around - \$1.5 million; and for media awareness campaign to stop child abuse - \$7 million.

Programme: 494 - Child Care and Protection - \$471,677,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 491 - Policy Development and Administration - \$36,200,000

Dr. Persaud: Project 2405700 - Land Transport: the Legend reads, “Purchase of vehicles”. Could you say what the make or type of vehicle is, who will be using this vehicle and where it will be based?

Ms. Lawrence: This allocation here was to purchase a vehicle for the Minister but we are seeking virement to this to purchase vehicles for the Administration Office, for the Public Relations Department and for the Childcare Protection Agency.

Mr. Dharamlall: Project code 4504400 - Technical Assistance: Could the Hon. Minister please state what the scope of the social protection strategy is, as funded by the IDB?

Ms. Lawrence: This is an allocation from the IDB and we are presently looking at a strategy for the Ministry and at some protocols.

Dr. Persaud: Project 2509400 - Equipment: Hon. Minister, I noticed video equipment and monitors are to be purchased. Could you say where these will be placed?

Ms. Lawrence: This will be for the Public Relations Department.

Mr. Chand: Project code 2405700 – Land Transport: Could the Minister give the specification of this vehicle and indicate whether it is a new vehicle?

Ms. Lawrence: We are thinking about a Nissan X-Trail, a Toyota HiAce and a Nissan Frontier 4x4.

Mr. Chand: Are they new?

Ms. Lawrence: No, not with that little money. It is just \$12 million, so we are talking about reconditioned vehicles.

Mr. Chand: I understand that the Minister is saying that they are not new vehicles for that money but I think the project title speaks to new. The status is new.

Mr. Chairman: What is the question, Hon. Member? Could you tell us the question?

Mr. Chand: No; it is okay. I am not going to bother. I withdraw the question.

Programme: 491 - Policy Development and Administration - \$36,200,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme 492 - Social Services - \$83,000,000

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, under project code 1216400 – Buildings - I noticed the Domestic Violence Centre will be built in Cornelia Ida. Has the project been awarded to someone and what was the process through which this was awarded, if so? And what will be the whole idea behind this building? What services will it offer?

Ms. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, I am hoping that, when the Hon. Member votes this evening, we will be able to put out this contract for \$40 million to have the construction of the domestic violence home, a place where we will be able to give shelter to persons who would have suffered abuse.

Dr. Persaud: As you know, I had asked for you to get more money so that is not going to be a problem because I feel more money is needed for this sector. However, for this building, is this the complete cost of the building that you are projecting here?

Ms. Lawrence: No. We are anticipating that this will cost us somewhere around \$60 million. Fortunately for us, we had a very good person who left, in her estate, \$12 million so we will be adding it to this \$40 million, which will take us quite some way.

Dr. Persaud: A follow-up question: Hon. Minister, is this a new building or is this an addition to an existing building?

Ms. Lawrence: It will be a new building.

Ms. Persaud: A follow-up to the same question: Could the Hon. Minister state if it will just be the victim, the one person, or if, in the case where there are mothers, children would also be accommodated? What type of programmes will there be to assist them out of this situation?

Ms. Lawrence: The home that we are building will make accommodation for persons with their families.

6.24 p.m.

With regards to the programme, this year, in the Budget, we have also indicated that we will be setting up the Domestic Violence and Sexual Offences Department, so, as soon as that comes on stream, we will be able to sit and work out the programme for this particular home.

Dr. Persaud: A follow-up question: What is the capacity of this shelter, home or centre?

Ms. Lawrence: We are catering for 10 families.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, project code 2405700 – Land Transport: Could you say what vehicle will be purchased and for whose use? Thank you.

Ms. Lawrence: To the Hon. Member, this is to purchase a 12-seater minibus for the Night Shelter.

Programme: 492 – Social Services - \$83,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 493 – Labour Administration - \$39,200,000

Ms. Persaud: Mr. Chairman, project code 1216400 – Buildings: There is a sum of \$20 million allocated for the provision for building, fence, driveway and compound, and I am seeing that the Description of Project states:

- “1. Completion of driveway.
2. Rehabilitation of building - Cornhill Street.
3. Construction of fence and resurfacing of compound - Brickdam.”

Could the Hon. Minister give us a breakdown as per item?

Ms. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, to the Hon. Member, with regards to the construction at Brickdam, the driveway is a rollover project and so we have \$1.7 million, this year. The construction of the fence is \$2 million and the resurfacing will be \$4 million. In terms of the construction to the northern wing at Cornhill Street, we have allocated \$12.2 million.

Ms. Persaud: Project code 2405700 – Land Transport: Could the Hon. Minister say where this vehicle will be located and who would get the use of it? Where would it be assigned?

Ms. Lawrence: To the Hon. Member, we are looking at Regions 1 and 8 and we are looking at purchasing some all-terrain vehicles (ATVs).

Ms. Persaud: Could the Hon. Minister give us an amount? How many ATVs will be purchased?

Ms. Lawrence: We are looking at three, Sir.

Programme: 493 – Labour Administration - \$39,200,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 494 – Child Care and Protection - \$50,500,000

Dr. Persaud: Project code 1216400 – Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister say what buildings will be rehabilitated, extended, and who is going to be paid retention?

Ms. Lawrence: With regards to the retention, this is the rollover project for the construction of a reservoir at the Mahaica Children Home. The other works that will be done will be the extension of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Secretariat in Broad Street, rehabilitation at the Drop-in Centre and the Sophia Care Centre.

Dr. Persaud: Mr. Chairman, project code 2509400 – Equipment: Could the Hon. Minister say where the surveillance system and networking system and generator will be placed?

Ms. Lawrence: To the Hon. Member, the cameras will be at the Drop-in Centre; the computer system will be at the CPA Secretariat; and the generator will be for the Mahaica Children Home.

Programme: 494 – Child Care and Protection - \$50,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 43 Ministry of Public Health

Current Expenditure

Programme: 431 – Policy Development and Administration - \$1,148,757,000

Minister of Public Health [Dr. Norton]: Mr. Chairman, could you kindly permit me some time to get my helpers around here?

Mr. Chairman: You have that time, Hon. Minister.

Dr. Norton: Thank you very much.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Minister say why there is an increase in contracted employees and could he tell us the designations and salaries for this category of workers?

Dr. Norton: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you very much for the question, Hon. Member. The increase is due to the appointment of one Pharmacy Board Assistant and seven Vehicle Drivers, the Manager of the Material Management Unit (MMU), nine Stores Attendants, one Storekeeper, one Data Entry Clerk, one Handyman, one Accounts Clerk, one Accounts Clerk II, one Monitoring and Evaluation Officer and the transfer of eight Data Entry Clerks, one Statistical clerk II and two Statistical Clerk II from Programme 432 to Programme 431.

Dr. Anthony: Could you say whether or not the administrator for the New Amsterdam Hospital is hired under any one of these headings?

Dr. Norton: To let the Hon. Member know, for the New Amsterdam Hospital, while it is not reflected under this Programme, there is a Chief Executive Officer and not an administrator.

Dr. Anthony: Hon. Minister, could you say whether the Chief Executive Officer of the New Amsterdam Hospital is under line item 6116? If it is, what is the salary?

Dr. Norton: That category is not under this Programme.

Dr. Anthony: Mr. Chairman, my original question to the Minister earlier was for the designations and the salaries. I would accept if the Minister could lay over that document so that we can have it for our records. I move on to line item 6221.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, the Hon. Member understands that you are willing to lay over a document for him. Would that be correct?

6.39 p.m.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, I have the salaries and I can give the Hon. Member if he so desires, but in the question of time we can lay over the document. I have the salaries available.

Mr. Chairman: You will lay over the document.

Dr. Norton: Yes Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Minister say to us how much will be spent on drugs and how much on medical supplies?

Dr. Norton: Under this programme, food and drugs would be reagents for the Food and Drugs Department and it caters for that specific programme.

Dr. Mahadeo: Line item 6293, Refreshment and Meals, \$8.2 million: Could the Hon. Minister say if this would be just for the Ministry of Health, the administrative section?

Dr. Norton: Under this programme line item 6293, Refreshment and Meals, caters for staff meetings, water and tea stuff and for senior officers who would be on coffee breaks.

Dr. Mahadeo: Line item 6284, Other, \$38.9 million: Could the Minister elaborate?

Dr. Norton: This is for advertisement, health promotion and public awareness.

Dr. Mahadeo: Hon. Minister, Equipment Maintenance, \$19.7 million. What equipment are we talking about?

Mr. Chairman: The line item please.

Dr. Mahadeo: It is line item 6282.

Dr. Norton: This line item is for general maintenance of forklift, generator, office equipment and air conditioners.

Dr. Mahadeo: Hon. Minister, through the Chairman, \$14.2 million under line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships), could you say how many scholarships if any and what sort of is it training? Is it medical or administrative?

Dr. Norton: Just to inform the Hon. Member that this line item does not cater for scholarships even though it is mentioned there. It is only for internal training.

Dr. Mahadeo: Just to follow-up. What kind of training Minister, if you may?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, it is for training all the staff, as in Programme 1, from the different departments, in public education.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6294, Other: Could the Minister tell us what the \$190 million will be purchasing and it is if he could give us a disaggregation?

Dr. Norton: This line item caters for a number of persons who are assisted with medical treatment locally and overseas.

Dr. Mahadeo: Line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: I note on page 839 that there is the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC). I notice that there are other subsidies to the GPHC. Could the Minister indicate, of the \$20.9 million, which aspect is subsidy direct to the GPHC?

Dr. Norton: It is just to inform the Hon. Member that GPHC does not fall under this line item in this programme.

Dr. Mahadeo: Could the Minister please advise which local organisations will be receiving \$20.9 million from the Ministry of Public Health?

Dr. Norton: To the Hon. Member, there are the Central Board of Health - \$2.532 million, Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association - \$6.251 million, Medical Termination of Pregnancy Board - \$1.750 million, Presidential Commission on Non-Communicable Disease - \$3.271 million, Red Cross Convalescence Home for Children - \$6.992 million, St John's Ambulance Brigade - \$200,000.

Dr. Ramsaran: Back to staffing details, under line item 6112, Senior Technical, there is a slight increase from \$24 million to \$26 million. Could the Minister indicate what the two positions are? Are they Advisers, for example? What are the salaries per person?

Dr. Norton: The increase is due to the appointment of one Analytical Scientific Officer with a salary of \$144,570 and a Food Inspector with a salary of \$89,110.

Dr. Ramsaran: Line item 6111, Administrative: I notice there is no movement, but then again the Minister might want to recall that this Ministry was created late in the year. Could you say, at the creation of the Ministry, if there was any change in staff? Are the same 17 people under the new Ministry? Have they been brought forward from the old Ministry of Health?

Dr. Norton: The increase is due to the appointment of the Deputy Permanent Secretary and one Administrative Assistant and the increase in salary in July 2015.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6294: Could the Minister say what criterion is used to determine how persons can access medical health?

Dr. Norton: It is on the recommendation through the Chief Medical Officer who would be so advised by the physician who is seeing the patient in the highest capacity.

Dr. Anthony: The quantum here is limited. What I am seeking from the Minister: How does he prioritise how this help would be given among the people who need help?

Dr. Norton: This is done by the Welfare Department of the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation. It makes the recommendation.

Dr. Anthony: I understand the process the Minister is elaborating. What I am trying to get is that there is \$190 million and there might be a number of patients who need that assistance. Maybe someone needs an operation that would cost \$20 million and another person might need an operation that would cost \$10 million. How do you decide, among the priorities, how much money would be allocated per patient? In a lot of cases the amount of money, which is budgeted, is not enough.

Dr. Norton: Here, again, that means test is done by the Welfare Department of the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation, taking into consideration whether the person is a beneficiary from the National Insurance Scheme or whether that person is in a position to make a contribution on his or her own part.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you are going to ask a question this time and not make a speech.

Dr. Anthony: Yes Mr. Chairman. Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Could the Minister say to us whether the Presidential Commission on Non-Communicable Diseases has been fully constituted and who are the members?

Dr. Norton: This commission has been fully constituted but I would not be able to give the name of the members at this point in time.

Dr. Anthony: I will be happy if the Minister can lay over the members. I will ask the same for the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Board, who are the members of that board? For the Central Board of Health, would \$2.5 million be sufficient for it to carry out its duties over the year?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, to the Hon. Member, we will be happy to give you the names of those persons who are on those two boards. We are also confident that the sum would be sufficient for the running of that board.

6.54 p.m.

Programme: 431 – Policy Development and Administration - \$1,148,757,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 432 – Diseases Control - \$1,453,015,000

Dr. Anthony: Could the Minister state, from line item 6111 right down to line item 6117, how many persons are employed here by the Vector Control Unit?

Dr. Norton: It is quite a long list and we would not be able to give all the names, right now. For instance in line item 6113, Other Technical and Craft Skilled, here, there are the Microscopists as well the Inspectors, that is, the charge Operator Inspectors and the tuberculosis (TB) outreach workers, and so on, who are there in Vector Control Unit. There are some others as you did mention in other line items. We can give those to you.

Dr. Anthony: I was trying to get a sense of how many people are employed by that unit? It is if Minister would be kind enough just to give me an approximate number.

Dr. Norton: It is just a question of counting the numbers now but we can give that very shortly.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Minister state what would be bought under this line item, and perhaps it is to disaggregate it by the various programmes?

Dr. Norton: What there is here is the absorption of some cost previously funded by Global Fund which ended in 2015 for the TB, National AIDS Programme Secretariat (NAPS) and the vector control programme. For example, the TB drugs and medical supplies, the Government of Guyana is requested to fund second line medication for seven patients, in the NAPS' position, and there are eight patients on a particular medication along with another ten with a specific medication. It is anticipated that the Global Fund will support ten other patients. Over the next three years this amount will increase to support more than the three patients. The Government of Guyana will try to absorb all of these costs by the end of 2018. With respect to the National AIDS Programme Secretariat, the transforming of the funding for the antiretroviral for the national programme these costs are as follows: Global Fund - \$54, 758,130, U.S President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) - \$61,090,260. Additionally cost for the procurement of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) rapid testing kits and consumables for the nutritional programme which covers the Prevention Mother To Child Transmission PMTCT and the Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) programmes.

Dr. Anthony: Could the Minister tell us, under the same line item, how much money would be spent on the programme for malaria?

Dr. Norton: It is roughly about \$220 million will be spent on that.

Dr. Anthony: Perhaps we can get an idea as well as to how much will be spent on filarial and dengue and are we spending moneys from this programme for diabetes as well.

Dr. Norton: We are spending money on this from most of the chronic diseases but to exact amount for dengue and the other diseases, which he asked about, we will need some time to give to him that figure.

Dr. Anthony: I will be happy to get, maybe, a breakdown of this amount. I am particularly interested in diabetes, since one of the things in the budget was to deal with chronic non-

communicable diseases. I am wondering how much money has been allocated for things such as glucometer, strips and perhaps insulin for patients who are diabetic.

Dr. Norton: The actual cost for the medications for the diabetes programme would be roughly \$100 million but the strips and the glucometers are under a different programme. When we get there we will give you the exact figure of how much we have allotted to those.

Dr. Mahadeo: Hon. Minister, would \$773 million be enough to cover for the drugs and medical supplies needed under this programme or would moneys be taken from the region also?

Mr. Chairman: Is there a line item that you mentioned, Hon. Member?

Dr. Mahadeo: It is line item 6221, Drug and Medical Supplies. If it would be, how would be done?

Dr. Norton: This particular line item, under this programme, does not cater for that kind of medication that will go out. This is only locally, here at the Georgetown central head office.

Dr. Mahadeo: Even the medications for the chronic diseases, would those be just for the Ministry of Health?

Dr. Norton: Drugs is covered in Programme 4. That is where more exact figure will be given, with regard to the cost of the medication.

Dr. Mahadeo: I guess Minister that this will address all the shortages that we are facing. To move on to line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, could Minister indicate to us what are the organisations and how much? It is \$13.682 million?

Dr. Norton: There is the Cancer Board, which was allotted \$10,282,000, the Guyana Cancer Society was allotted \$250,000 and the Guyana Chest Society was allotted \$3,150,000.

Dr. Mahadeo: Line item 6302, Training (including scholarships): If there is any scholarships, how would they be awarded for \$39.8 million?

Line item 6291, National and Other Events, \$25.8 million: What events are we looking at there?

Dr. Norton: Under training, line item 6302, there will be in-house training for staff for suicide prevention and non-communicable diseases.

The National and Other Events would have the sensitisation and awareness activities under various activities of the programme and this will split between the Government of Guyana and Global Fund. With the translation of activities greater funding is required for the programme and it caters for health fairs and health walks. In addition to observation participation in many international weeks such as Leprosy Week, World Tuberculosis Day, Malaria Week, Caribbean Health and Wellness Week, and many other observations, such as Republic Day activities and National Week of Testing.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies: In 2015, we noticed \$282 million and in the revised budget we saw \$190 million. Are we to infer that \$292 million went back to the treasury?

Dr. Norton: This figure, here represents, an unpaid sum for 2015.

Dr. Anthony: I am a bit confused because the revised in the budget is stating very clearly that at the end of 2015 \$190 million was spent of the \$482 million that was allotted. My understanding is that the rest of the money went back and that is perhaps what is creating the shortages of drugs that we are having.

7.09 p.m.

Dr. Norton: We are going to remind the Hon. Member that what he needs to do is to add Agency 47 to Agency 43 and he will arrive at the correct figure that will be for 2015. It would not get that amount that he is claiming is the raise from last year to this year.

Dr. Anthony: Could the Minister kindly tell me how much money was sent back under line item 6221?

Dr. Norton: The unpaid sum is \$178,053,482.

Dr. Anthony: May I enquire how we are dealing with this? It is because my understanding is that at the end of each year the accounts close and whatever moneys remain they are sent back.

Could we get an explanation as to how is this outstanding sum being treated? Are there cheques that are cut and being held or what is happening?

Dr. Norton: I want to assure the Hon. Member that no cheques were cut but this was an unspent balance.

Dr. Anthony: Again, line item 6221, could the Hon. Minister tell me about the procurement system for medical drugs and supplies?

Dr. Norton: If the Hon. Member can remember carefully in my budget presentation I did, in no uncertain term, explain to the honourable House that the procurement of drugs and medical supplies remains substantially a centralised process with the exception of minor purchases for emergency supply. The allocations have been distributed across the regions by the Ministry of Finance, as a first step in improving the programme budgeting of health cost at a regional level, even as work is advancing on a costing exercise to determine the total cost of drugs expended in each region to address the disease profile of a particular region. This is based on what is referred to as essential drug list, which we were able to produce only recently. We hope that the region could procure.

Dr. Anthony: Under the same line item, procurement of drugs and medical supplies, could the Minister say to us whether in procuring drugs and medical supplies, the method, whether it is going to be sole sourcing, whether there is going to be three quotes, competitive bidding? What are the systems which will be used? Has there been, over the last year, any sole sourcing of drugs and from whom?

Dr. Norton: There is a combination of all these different sources. What we can, however, assure the House is that it will be based primarily on open competitive bidding. Yes, to answer the second question, there was a case where we did involve in sole sourcing but that is something we want to leave behind and go towards a system of more even opportunities.

Dr. Anthony: I want to thank the Minister. Am I to understand that, in the future, for procurement, say for the \$773 million, there will be no sole sourcing?

Dr. Norton: We cannot give that assurance.

Dr. Anthony: We would like to encourage open competitive bidding, as the Minister was saying. I do not understand, we are at the start of the year, why is it that the Minister cannot give this Assembly the assurance that there will be no sole sourcing? We have enough time to go out to open competitive bidding.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we are not going to do this tonight, please. It may be of interest for Hon. Members to know that many times the same question is asked more than once.

Dr. Norton: I would just like to repeat what the Member has just said, that that question was answered before.

Mr. G. Persaud: It is a follow-up to line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies. The allocation in 2015 was \$482,095,000. The revised was \$250,171,000. My question to the Hon. Minister is that if we did not have the capacity in 2015 to spend the allocation, which is somewhat about 40% of what is now being requested \$773,622,000 in 2016, what has changed to allow us to spend this amount requested in the budget?

Dr. Norton: This is not a question of capacity. It is that we are changing a process that existed for many years.

Programme: 432 – Disease Control – \$1,453,015,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 433 – Family Health Care Services – \$906,362,000

Dr. Anthony: Could the Minister tell us what will be procured under line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies?

Dr. Norton: Here we will procure new vaccines – chicken pox, meningococcal, pneumococcal and the HPV vaccines. We will also procure rota virus, PCV and PCV 13. We will also increase in dental supplies, hemocues and microcuvettes to facilitate increase services in schools.

Dr. Anthony: Could the Minister tell us how much of this \$360 million would be used for the procurement of vaccines and how much specifically would be used for measles, mumps and rubella (MMR)? If we look at the appendix, we are seeing that some of the vaccination rates are dropping. It is whether that was due to a shortage of vaccine. I am not sure, but perhaps the

Minister can tell us. It is whether this year's allotment would be enough to deal with those shortages.

Dr. Norton: I must say that the figures, which the Hon. Member is using, are not complete but as a result of that, the reflection, there is not because of a shortage of vaccines.

Dr. Anthony: Part of my question was not answered, and that is, how much of this money will be used for vaccines and what else would be bought under this line item?

Dr. Norton: I had already said that it is the dental supplies, hemocues as well as microcuvettes, about 40%, which will be used for the accumulation of vaccines, which was somewhere about \$300 million.

Dr. Mahadeo: Could the Hon. Minister say whether all the vaccines, which will be used in Guyana for approximately the 15,000 average births, which will be for the year, would be purchased by the Ministry of Health? If not, what percentage will be Ministry be purchasing and could the Minister guarantee us that there will be no shortages of vaccines in the year 2016?

Dr. Norton: While it was a fact that the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) purchased most of our vaccines before, the Government of Guyana is taking over that responsibility, and even before the end of the year we will be purchasing all of our vaccines.

Dr. Mahadeo: Minister, I had asked more than one question but just to remind you, would we be having adequate supplies of the vaccines in 2016?

Dr. Norton: I can guarantee the Hon. Member that we will be having adequate supplies of vaccines.

Dr. Mahadeo: I am very happy to hear that. Line item 6292, Dietary, \$20 million: Could the Minister advise what this entails and where will it be spent?

Dr. Norton: I am happy to inform the Hon. Member that, particularly to the HIV positive mothers who are breastfeeding, this would be specifically for breast supplements.

7.24 p.m.

Dr. Mahadeo: Could the Hon. Minister indicate how many mothers they would be buying breast

milk supplement for? If he does not have the information now, it can be provided later.

Dr. Norton: With all pleasure, I will supply that information to the Hon. Member.

Dr. Mahadeo: Line item 6291 - National and Other Events: Could the Hon. Minister indicate, from a family healthcare services perspective, what events would be catered for?

Dr. Norton: We would be observing awareness days and weeks, for example, Vaccination Week. We will be focusing on awareness and information sharing on healthy practices, for example, breastfeeding. This would be done through greater involvement of the national and international events such as World Breastfeeding Day, adolescent health fairs for children and Oral Health Month.

Dr. Mahadeo: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships) - \$71.1 million: Are any scholarships catered for here and, if there are, how will they be awarded?

Dr. Norton: I must inform the Hon. Member that all of our training will be done locally.

Dr. Ramsaran: Line item 6221 - Drugs and Medical Supplies: This is not a repetition of a previously asked question, but I am asking for more details. Regarding the Gavi Medical Supply Inc. slice of vaccines that are being replaced, what method of procurement would be used to procure the vaccines?

Secondly, since the Gavi Medical Supply Inc. was major in supplying vaccines to our robust programmes, what percentage of that slice is the Ministry taking over? Is it all or is it a significant percentage?

Dr. Norton: We will be taking over all. We would be using practically the same method except, instead of the Gavi Medical Supply Inc., we will be using the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization ((PAHO/WHO).

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6282 - Equipment Maintenance: Could the Minister give us the disaggregation of what would be done under this heading? Does the amount include fixing some of the broken cold chains that are there?

Dr. Norton: The answer to the second question is yes. We will be fixing some of the broken

cold chains. Apart from that, there would also be maintenance of scanners, page meters, televisions, air conditioner units, x-ray units, portable dental chairs, *et cetera*.

Dr. Anthony: Could the Minister provide us with the disaggregation? How much is for what? I am particularly interested in how much money would be spent on the cold chains because what we have been hearing is that there are a number of health centres and health posts that are having problems with their cold chains.

Dr. Norton: Until we are through with our assessment of all of the broken cold chains that are there, as well as the other equipment that we plan to maintain, only then would we be in a position to disaggregate sums to the different areas.

Dr. Mahadeo: Line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: Were any moneys returned at 31st December, 2015? If yes, how much was returned? Line items 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants and 6264 – Vehicle Spares and Service: How many vehicles would be catered for under these line items?

Mr. Chairman: I am advised that the sound we are hearing is from an electronic device, more specifically a cell phone. It is causing some interference. Of course, Hon. Members know that cell phones should not be used in the Chamber.

Dr. Norton: The sum that was returned was \$26,964,560. Could you repeat the other question?

Mr. Chairman: This is the last question, Dr. Mahadeo.

Dr. Mahadeo: Line items 6231 and 6264: How many vehicles would be catered for under these line items and what is the condition of these vehicles?

Dr. Norton: In addition to general maintenance, major works are expected to be completed on three Toyota Land Cruisers. Two of these were purchased 15 years ago and one was purchased 11 years ago.

Programme: 433 - Family Health Care Services - \$906,362,000 agreed and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I know that it is just after 7.30 p.m. I believe that it is a good

time to take the suspension, since what remains to be done to complete current expenditure could probably, at the speed we are going, last another hour at least.

Assembly suspended at 7.30 p.m.

Assembly resumed at 8.17 p.m.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply.

In Committee of Supply

Programme: 434 - Regional and Clinical Services - \$11,879,828,000

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister explain why there is an increase by 70 employees? Could he give us the designations and salary scales of these employees?

Dr. Norton: While I am able to give the Hon. Member the designations, I am not in a position to give him all of the salary scales. I would supply the Hon. Member with what I have and if he so desires the others, then I can supply that at a later date, maybe on Wednesday.

There are 92 doctors at a salary of \$228,464 each per month; and 37 medical officers will receive on-call allowances. This is what we have for the Doctors.

Dr. Anthony: I look forward to seeing the list. Lines items 6111, 6112, 6113, 6114, 6115, 6116: Under which one of these line items is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the New Amsterdam Hospital catered for?

Dr. Norton: Please let the Hon. Member be informed that that information could be found under line item 6116.

Dr. Anthony: Could the Hon. Minister kindly tell us what the qualifications and salary for the CEO of the New Amsterdam Hospital are?

Dr. Norton: The CEO of the New Amsterdam Hospital is enjoying a salary of \$612,754.

Dr. Anthony: A part of my question was about the qualifications for this job.

8.23 p.m.

Dr. Norton: We would gladly provide the qualifications of the CEO to the Hon. Member tomorrow.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, unless there is a private arrangement between yourself and the Hon. Dr. Anthony, I suspect that tomorrow may not be convenient. Would you wish to deliver it another day?

Dr. Norton: I would prefer to deliver that information to the Hon. Member on 26th February, 2016.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I take it that that day is convenient for you.

Dr. Anthony: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Very good. Thank you.

Dr. Anthony: As I understand it, the position of CEO of the New Amsterdam Hospital is an established position. We would very much like to know what is in the terms of reference (ToR) and the qualification because, as we understand it, the person who is currently occupying that job does not have any...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I interrupt you at this stage to say that you have made a request for two bits of information. Let that suffice, unless you have another question, other than that reflecting on the holder of the position.

Dr. Anthony: I would move on from that for now. Lines items 6111, 6112, 6113, 6114, 6115, 6116, 6117: Under which of these line items are the Regional Health Officers (REOs) catered for?

Dr. Norton: I am pleased to inform the Hon. Member that the Regional Health Officers are not catered for under the Ministry of Public Health.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6284 - Other: Could the Minister tell us what would be procured by the \$130 million that is budgeted and could I get a disaggregation of the sum? It is because a lot of

times we ask and we get some items, but we are not told how much money would be spent on those items.

Dr. Norton: This is payment for the return and departure of doctors, including the Chinese and Cuban doctors, and advertisement for petty contracts.

Dr. Ramsaran: I would like to go back a bit to the staffing details. Line item 6116- Contracted Employees: Are the 97 doctors who returned Cuban-trained graduates and are they part of the larger contingent of 300 to 350 doctors who have returned during the past four years? If this is so, does the Minister now have enough doctors to put in practically every primary healthcare facility, as that programme of training had intended? Would this be a good source for RHOs? How many Regional Health Officers' posts are filled? How many are not filled?

Dr. Norton: Could I ask that Hon. Members just ask one question at a time? It would avoid asking them to repeat the other questions.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, would you repeat?

Dr. Ramsaran: My apologies. I would ask the questions separately. Are these 97 doctors, under line item 6116, part of the 300 to 400 who came back from Cuba?

Dr. Norton: Yes.

Dr. Ramsaran: Having this large number of primary healthcare trained doctors, would the Minister ensure that practically every primary healthcare facility in the country has the coverage of at least one doctor?

Dr. Norton: Of course, that would be our ultimate aim, but those doctors who have just returned would need further training in order to be placed, particularly in health centres located long distances from other more experienced and qualified doctors, who they would seek help from at some times.

Dr. Ramsaran: There are 97 now. Prior, there were about 300 to 350 of the so-called *Jagdeo scholars*. Are they now going to be available to fill these positions? From that number, would you be able to draw to fill positions for the primary healthcare facilities?

Dr. Norton: There are primary healthcare physicians in this country who might have been here for more than three years and who would be quite app to fill the positions which I referred to before. However, I probably am not as informed but I have never heard of the *Jagdeo scholars*

Dr. Ramsaran: Dr. Norton is not informed all of the time. Further to that, are the 10 positions for Regional Health Officers filled? Would the addition of these 97 doctors, plus the few 100 who returned before, give you the capacity to fill these positions with qualified personnel?

Dr. Norton: The Hon. Member would know that the position of RHO has a specific qualification, according to the statues. Even though there are physicians who would have had some amount of experience and who are brilliant clinicians, they are not suitable to fill that position. Hence, while in each of the region there is such a person, they are not, according to the rules and regulations, suitably qualified. However, we have made efforts to get them so qualified so that, in the very near future, we could fill those positions.

Dr. Ramsaran: That is an acceptable answer. How many of those vital positions are vacant? In the past, there were acting positions and those physicians were used since they were the only persons who were qualified. How many are vacant and what is being done in the mean time?

Dr. Norton: Nine of these positions have persons who are acting and one is substantially filled. We are far away from the situation in which there were persons occupying such a position for decades, for instance in Region 7.

Dr. Ramsaran: When would the next RHO meeting be held and when was the last RHO meeting held?

Dr. Norton: That meeting would be held in March, 2016.

Dr. Ramsaran: Before I take my seat, the other part of the question was: when was the last such meeting held?

Dr. Norton: The last meeting was held in December of last year.

Dr. Mahadeo: Line item 6116- Contracted Employees: Hon. Minister, could you guarantee that those who are employed by the Ministry of Health as contracted employees are qualified to fit the positions in which they are employed?

Dr. Norton: Could the Hon. Member be a little more explicit in his question?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, the Minister is asking for explicitness.

Dr. Mahadeo: If someone is employed as the head of a hospital, it comes with certain qualifications, a Medical Degree with years of administrative experience. Could you guarantee me that those who were employed by the Ministry of Public Health meet the qualifications for the jobs that they were given?

Dr. Norton: Once again, I answered that question before. While some might not be sufficiently qualified, in the very near future this Government is going to make certain that all are qualified.

Dr. Mahadeo: I thank the Minister for that answer because we will be getting some information so I will follow that up later.

Line item 6221- Drugs and Medical Supply: Could the Hon. Minister advise this Committee of Supply of how much of the money that was allocated in 2015 was returned on 31st December, 2015?

Dr. Norton: It was just about \$1 million.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6321- Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisation: There is an allocation of \$7.2 billion for the Georgetown Public Hospital. Last year, \$2 billion was allocated and \$1.9 billion was spent. Could the Hon. Minister say: with such a gigantic increase, from \$1.9 billion to \$2.2, representative of 55% of the entire budget of programme 434, what has contributed to this increase of almost \$6 billion for the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation?

8.38 p.m.

Dr. Norton: The Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation has now become a subvention agency. That did not exist before.

Ms. Teixeira: A follow-up question: The Georgetown Public Hospital, according to the documents we have, was assigned \$2 billion in 2015. The budgeted amount now is \$7.2 billion. Whether it was under a programme or a subvention, the issue is that there is an increase of

almost \$6 billion for the Georgetown Public Hospital. I asked you what has contributed to this increase.

Dr. Norton: Once again, I thank the Hon. Member for the question, but I would like to advise the Hon. Member to do the addition. This time it is from agency 46...along with the amount from 2015 would give the difference.

Ms. Teixeira: Hon. Member, on page 311 of the Budget document the revised amount for 2015 is \$2 billion. Some \$1.9 billion was spent. Some \$7.2 billion has now been budgeted. Whether we are quibbling over \$2 billion, I am saying that, mathematically, there is an increase that is astronomical for the Georgetown Public Hospital. If you are saying that it is now \$4 billion or \$5 billion, sir, the issue is: what has contributed to an increase to the value of \$7.2 billion for the Georgetown Public Hospital? What is the Ministry doing in terms of increasing the amount for the Georgetown Public Hospital?

Dr. Norton: If the Hon. Member could check on page 275, there is figure is \$4,010,772,000. If that is added to the two-odd billion, the figure would be calculated.

Ms. Teixeira: Again, Hon. Member, the \$4 billion added to the \$2 billion gives a total of \$6 billion. It has been increased to \$7.2 billion. Could you please explain to the Committee of Supply what this increase is to cover? Would new parts of the hospital be built? What does the amount represent? I do not agree with your submission, by the way, because page 275 states what is supposed to be the revised amount for 2015.

What we are being told to add is not correct. When we come to Parliament, we look at the figure in the columns. Unless there is a note telling us which figures to add, we have to, as Members of Parliament on this side of the House, to assume that the figures in the Revised 2015 column are the correct figures that we are dealing with. I am suggesting to the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Health that in the future... I do not need, as a Member of Parliament, to be adding and subtracting between sections. This is the Budget, and these are the Budget documents. There is still an increase of \$1.2 billion...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Gail Teixeira, the question still remains the same. Would you like to repeat the question for the Minister?

Ms. Teixeira: I think my Hon. Comrade has gotten the gist of my question.

Dr. Norton: I am happy that the Hon. Member recognises that is under \$2 billion that we have to account for. That we could do by referring to the increases in salary for different categories of workers and increases in services.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Could the Hon. Minister tell us how much money would be spent on materials, equipment and supplies for the Georgetown Public Hospital?

Mr. Chairman: Could the Hon. Member repeat the line item, please?

Dr. Anthony: It is line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations and where the Georgetown Public Hospital is listed.

Dr. Norton: We would ask the Hon. Member to take into consideration the cost for drugs and medical supplies, the field materials and supplies, print and non-print materials and office supplies.

Dr. Anthony: Three billion dollars is allocated to that line item. I am asking for a disaggregation to understand how much money the Georgetown Public Hospital would be spending on supplies, perhaps on drugs, because we understand that persons went to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and said that out of 184 items...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I am sure that it is relevant, but could you ask the question?

Dr. Anthony: Yes. Out of the 184 items, I understand that 180 items were short. I just want to ascertain how much moneys are to buy drugs for the Georgetown Public Hospital.

Dr. Norton: That sum of money is \$2,840,536,000.

Dr. Anthony: A follow-up question: The hospital has been doing a great job in terms of specialised care and it recently started to do transplants of kidneys but many of those patients are not getting their drugs. [Ms. Ally: How do you know that?] I know that for a fact. Would this provision be able to provide those patients with adequate supplies of their

medications? Also, would the cancer patients be able to access their medications from the Georgetown Public Hospital?

Dr. Norton: I can assure the Hon. Member that this sum is sufficient to provide the necessary medication.

Mr. Damon: Line item 6113 – Other Technical and Craft Skilled, 6115 – Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled and 6116 – Contracted Employees: there is a total of 250 contracted and extra employees. Could you say if these vacancies were advertised and in which newspaper they were advertised? I want to know what the emoluments are.

Dr. Norton: These vacancies were not advertised in newspapers, but at the level of the Public Service Commission (PSC).

Mr. Damon: A follow-up question: Hon. Minister, you claimed that these vacancies were advertised at the level of the Public Service Commission. Could you say on what date they were advertised?

Dr. Norton: The Public Service Commission has got its own remit and emoluments as well.

Dr. Mahadeo: Line item 6292 – Dietary: Could the Hon. Minister advice where the \$27,917,000 million would be going?

Dr. Norton: This caters for the Linden and Kwakwani hospitals.

Dr. Mahadeo: Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Under recurrent revenue there are fines and fees for the total of \$17.5 million. Could the Minister advise?

Dr. Norton: My own memory tells me that I answered this before, but I could mention it to the Hon. Member. There are the Georgetown Public Hospital Cooperation and the David Rose Health Centre.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, that question was answered, if not four times, at least three times for certain. I really do believe that we are not doing ourselves justice if we do not listen to the answers and to the questions which is given by an Hon. Member.

Dr. Mahadeo: That was not the question that I had asked. If I would refer the Minister to page 839 of this Budget document, it has moneys budgeted for recurrent revenue – fees and fines, *et cetera* \$17.5 million. What are the fees and fines that are referred to here?

Dr. Norton: Does the Hon. Member want the items separated or does he want the sum total of the revenue collected?

Dr. Mahadeo: I am repeating the question: What are the fees and fines that would amount to \$17.5 million in revenue?

8.53 p.m.

Dr. Norton: While I am quite familiar with all of the fees and fines of the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC), I would very much ask the Hon. Member for me to supply this information on Friday because it is a long list.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Dr. Mahadeo, you will receive the information on Friday, if you are so minded.

Dr. Mahadeo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have one other question: under line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants – how many vehicles are assigned to this Programme to use up \$29,039,000?

Dr. Norton: Just to verify, is it the subvention that the Hon. Member is referring to?

Dr. Mahadeo: It is line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, just so that we are clear, we are considering line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants and no other right now. Is that correct?

Dr. Mahadeo: Yes, Sir. I am just asking how many vehicles will use this amount of fuel and how many vehicles are attached to this Programme?

Dr. Norton: It is provision for an additional minibus, one Toyota Hilux 4x4 for Linden and one generator for Linden.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I will have to give us a chance to ask questions on another Programme after the next two questions.

Dr. Anthony: Under line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations - for the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation, I see that other goods and services are to be purchased and that, this year, \$406 million will be utilised in doing so. Could the Minister explain what the other goods and services are?

There is also rental and maintenance of buildings that will amount to \$138 million. Could the Minister explain which buildings will be rented?

Under the regional programme, could the Minister say where the mental health programme is located?

Dr. Norton: Just to ask the Hon. Member to verify that line item 6321 is a subvention.

Dr. Anthony: If the Minister can go to page 839, he would see that there is a breakdown of a number of things and among them are goods and services to be purchased at \$406 million and rental and maintenance of buildings at \$138 million. I am seeking clarification as to what goods will be purchased and what buildings will be rented and maintained.

Dr. Norton: This increase reflects the addition of two apartments. I can give the address, if the Member so desires. There is one additional apartment and I can give the cost also of these apartments that house Cuban personnel. Additionally, the increase of these same apartments...

Dr. Ramsaran: Under line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships) – could the Minister say what is catered for with the money allocated and for what type of training?

More particularly, does it cater for the professional progression of the Regional Health Officers (RHOs) who you intend to bring to full-fledged managers?

Thirdly, will they have the opportunity to benefit from the Masters of Public Health (MPH) Programme at the necessary level?

Dr. Norton: Scholarships fall under the Ministry of the Presidency, under the Public Service Commission.

Mr. Dharamlall: Under line item 6321 - Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations – going back to the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation, as part of the \$7.2 billion

subvention, Hon. Minister, you indicated earlier that it is to improve and enhance services provided by the Hospital. Could you, therefore, state what specific systems you will put in place to ensure there is a reduction in maternal deaths as well as a reduction of the mishandling of babies? As you are aware, late last year, there were a number of maternal deaths as well as the case where one of the babies was damaged whilst being birthed.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, it is not so difficult to stay on the question. Is it?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, the line item is 6321 - Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, just ask the question, please.

Mr. Dharamlall: Hon. Minister, that is the first question.

The second question is: would the Government be amenable to compensating victims or patients who have been affected in that way?

Dr. Norton: I gather that one of the most important areas that the Hon. Member is interested in is the efforts that we are making to correct a bad situation that we met with respect to maternal and child health. We can assure the Hon. Member that, very shortly, in weeks, there will be a 50-bed maternal unit with a 16-bed neonatology to take care of the children, functioning at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation.

We are also undertaking regular training of the midwives as well as post graduate training of physicians in the department of gynaecology and obstetrician and we are engaging other international agencies, like the Inter-American Development Bank, which are prepared to finance efforts that this Government is making to increase the efforts for preconception care, which is before pregnancy, especially in the area of a comprehensive sexual education.

We will also be concentrating on antenatal care where we will include the testing of pregnant mothers for sickle cell, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis B, whole-cell/recombinant B subunit (WC/rBS), for instance. We will go on to do perinatal care, that is, the delivery of every mother by skilled attendant. We will continue to do postnatal care with services in place for post natal emergencies.

I can go on to say that we have the proposed budget for that where there will be the training of nannies...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, is that the answer to the question that was put to you?

Dr. Norton: That is part of the answer.

Mr. Chairman: I see. There is one question remaining.

Dr. Ramsaran: Basically, it is going back to the same lime item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships). The query was what training is being offered, regardless of whatever category under this, and would the MPH be offered to the RHOs, regardless of how it is sourced - from Public Service Ministry (PSM) or so on. Would you be upgrading the RHOs, giving them the opportunity? Do you recognise that it is the Ministry of Public Health that would have to initiate this process and not the PSM?

Dr. Norton: The training in the Masters in Public Health Programme is not budgeted for under the Ministry of Public Health. However, the Ministry of Public Health has been making successful efforts to obtain scholarships for our physicians to go and do the post graduate training in Masters of Public Health at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation, and we have managed to get either five full scholarships or ten partial scholarships.

Programme: 434 – Regional & Clinical Services - \$11,879,828,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 435 – Health Sciences Education - \$607,875,000

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6292 – Dietary: Could the Minister explain why there is such a big increase?

Dr. Norton: There is increase in the number of interior and riverine students. The numbers continue to increase due to the expansion of the recruitment in these areas.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6302 - Training (including Scholarships): Could the Minister tell us what training will be done and where?

Dr. Norton: This involves the stipend for nurses training, which includes the auxiliary training and part-time tutors.

9.08 p.m.

Dr. Mahadeo: I am going back to line item 6292 – Dietary: What has been the increase in the number of students that would create this increase in Dietary?

Dr. Norton: Even though we plan to increase that to the amount that is practically possible, we still have not finished with our intake. We are in the process of doing so. We are in a difficult position to give the exact number at this point in time.

Dr. Mahadeo: A follow-up question: Hon. Minister, could you identify which category of students we are talking about here?

Dr. Norton: Apart from the nurses that we have mentioned before, also included in this group are the Community Health Workers (CHWs).

Dr. Mahadeo: A follow-up to that: Do we have more than the regular number of Community Health Workers training programmes? Basically, every year, there will be Community Health Workers training programmes. Are there more programmes or are the numbers just increasing and by how much, if you do not mind, Minister?

Dr. Norton: We are increasing in the numbers, particularly of the CHWs.

Dr. Mahadeo: Could the Hon. Minister advise whether there are any vehicles attached to the Health Sciences Education Programme? I refer to line item 6231 - Fuel and Lubricants.

Dr. Norton: One vehicle is attached to this Programme.

Dr. Mahadeo: Could the Minister confirm that \$605,000, for the vehicle, for the year would be adequate to fulfil whatever requirements in this Programme?

Dr. Norton: The answer is yes.

Programme: 435 - Health Sciences Education - \$607,875,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 436 - Standards and Technical Services - \$679,284,000

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6221 - Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Minister tell us what drugs and medical supplies will be bought here?

Dr. Norton: The answer is laboratory supplies and the reagents.

Dr. Anthony: Could the Minister give us a disaggregation of how much drugs, how much reagents, in broad categories?

Dr. Norton: We will be most pleased to provide the Hon. Member with that list on Friday.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, does this satisfy you?

Dr. Anthony: That is okay.

Dr. Mahadeo: Line item: 6221 - Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Hon. Minister advise this House whether the medical supplies, reagents and so on that will be bought under this line item would be for the entire country or for a particular area?

Dr. Norton: I am pleased to inform the Hon. Member that it is for the entire country.

Dr. Mahadeo: Line item 6292 - Dietary: A sum of \$3 million has been allocated. Could the Minister advise on who will be the beneficiaries of this line item?

Dr. Norton: Provision has been made by the National Blood Transfusion Services for dietary supplements for 10,000 donors. Each donor would be given snacks, as is the regulatory requirement.

Dr. Mahadeo: Good to hear, Minister. I presume that that will be for the whole country.

Dr. Norton: Yes.

Dr. Mahadeo: May I direct the Minister's attention to line item 6261 - Local Travel and Subsistence at \$10,905,000. Could the Minister advise what this will be used for?

Dr. Norton: In light of the fact that a donor has removed funding from the National Blood Bank to conduct blood drives, there is an increase in the need for the Government of Guyana to

increase funding under this line item to ensure these blood drives are more effective in the collection of blood.

Dr. Mahadeo: Hon. Minister, could you advise, on the line items 6111 to 6117, if the National Blood Bank, since the National Blood Bank comes under this Programme, is fully staffed?

Dr. Norton: While I can assure the Hon. Member that, while every effort is being made by us to fulfil the vacancies that exist, it is not, at this moment, completely filled.

Dr. Mahadeo: Could the Minister please advise whether these vacancies will be advertised publicly so that the best persons could get the jobs?

Dr. Norton: I am pleased to inform the Hon. Member that these vacancies have already been advertised.

Dr. Mahadeo: Could you please advise where?

There is another question. Line item 6282 - Equipment Maintenance: Will this entail equipment maintenance across the country for the biomedical equipment? If so, do we have the capacity or will we need to outsource the maintenance of the biomedical equipment?

Dr. Norton: Once again, I wish to inform the Hon. Member that these vacancies will be advertised at the level of the Public Service Commission. With regards to the equipment, yes, they will be maintained across the country.

Dr. Mahadeo: The second part of the question: Do we have the capacity to repair the biomedical equipment or are we going to outsource?

Dr. Norton: In the purchase of equipment, particularly under this new Government, it is done with a condition of maintenance by the company that we are buying this equipment from.

Dr. Mahadeo: Is the Minister telling me that the equipment that were in the system, before this new Government, will be discarded or will not be repaired?

Dr. Norton: I am pleased to inform the Hon. Member that the maintenance of those equipment will be outsourced to a competitive bidding process.

Mr. Chairman: I thank the Hon. Minister. I will permit two other questions.

Ms. Teixeira: A follow-up to the Hon. Member in relation to the point he raised about advertising for the vacancies: I just want to ask the Minister a hypothetical question because he is answering the same thing in the same way. Could I just ask, Hon. Member, and it is with due respect to you, if the country has 300 doctors, 400 nurses, 100 technicians and you actually need 500 doctors, 700 technicians and 700 nurses, in what way will you fill these vacancies by advertising within the public service, which means internally? You are trying to manufacture what is not there. In other words, you have to go outside of the Public Service Commission.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, there must be a question somewhere.

Ms. Teixeira: I am asking a question.

Mr. Chairman: Please ask the question.

Ms. Teixeira: I am asking the question.

Ms. Teixeira: I am saying, with due respect to the Hon. Member, who is a doctor...

Mr. Chairman hit gavel.

Ms. Teixeira: ...who I know, personally, for 20 odd years, when you are talking about filling vacancies, which he has said several times in response...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member...

Ms. Teixeira: I think everybody in the press has heard it and the public, Sir. If the Minister does not want to answer it, it is okay with me.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you ask your question and then you, dare I say, reclaim your seat. We are getting a speech. One speech, it seems, deserves another and that is what happens in this Chamber. I am trying to avoid the other speech. Let us have the questions and let us try to get the answers.

Ms. Teixeira: I asked a very simple question.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you are going to ask the question now.

Ms. Teixeira: How could you be advertising in the Public Service Commission, internally, for vacancies which you do not have the technical skills within the public service at this point? These are specialised skills you are talking about. That is the question.

Dr. Norton: I must let the Hon. Member know that we are a proactive Government and, if after advertising through the Public Service Commission such a vacancy is not filled, then we will seek to fill that vacancy elsewhere.

Programme: 436 - Standards and Technical Services - \$679,284,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

9.23 p.m.

Programme: 437 – Disability and Rehabilitation Services - \$320,533,000

Dr. Anthony: Mr. Chairman, line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Could the Minister tell us whether the allocation for the Ptolemy Reid Centre is adequate and how it was determined?

Dr. Norton: I thank the Hon. Member for his question. I would not need to let the Hon. Member know that this was a subvention and the Budget was prepared by this agency itself, but we take it that the agency knows what it is about.

Dr. Mahadeo: Line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Minister advise what kind of drugs will be used in the disability rehabilitation services that will be specialised for this area?

Dr. Norton: While it states “Drugs and Medical Supplies”, in this case, it is more medical supplies than drugs. As a result, you will have prosthesis, hearing aids and all of that.

Dr. Mahadeo: I take it, Minister, that that will be for all the Rehabilitation Centres across the country.

Dr. Norton: It is good to know that we have these services across the 10 regions and we can assure the Hon. Member that, yes, this would be across all 10 regions.

Dr. Mahadeo: Line item 6264 – Vehicles Spares and Service: Could the Hon. Minister advise how many vehicles are attached to this department?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, to inform the Hon. Member, there are five vehicles in this department.

Dr. Mahadeo: Hon. Minister, I direct you to line item 6292 – Dietary - \$3,191,000. Could you advise who will be the beneficiary?

Dr. Norton: To inform the Hon. Member, the *[inaudible]* would be the beneficiary of this allocation.

Mr. Chairman: Is there another Member who wishes to speak? I am not inviting a speaker. I thought I saw a light there and I wondered.

Dr. Ramsaran: Mr. Chairman, you missed my intervention, so would you allow me for one minute.

Mr. Chairman: You have that, sir.

Dr. Ramsaran: Mr. Chairman, this Programme is a key and critical area which, sometimes, is overlooked. In the light of that, I would like to ask the question concerning line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships). There is a modest sum of \$6.976 million. In view of the fact, I am suggesting that this might be a little bit low for this Programme. The Minister might want to comment on that. Similarly, in the area of line item 6261 – Local Travel and Subsistence - since I have already said it is a key and critical Programme in the Ministry of Public Health and it is right across the country, \$2.803 million might be a bit modest. I do not know if the Minister would like to comment on that.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, I quite agree with the Hon. Member and I am very happy because, certainly, this is a very important Programme that might have been neglected over the years. We can assure you that we have been receiving quite a lot of support from donor agencies, and, in order to cut down on expenses, we tend to do it in groups so that we can benefit from the economies of scale. Thank you very much.

Programme: 437 – Disability and Rehabilitation Services - \$320,533,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 431 – Policy Development and Administration - \$57,210,000

Programme: 431 – Policy Development and Administration - \$57,210,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 432 – Disease Control - \$370,790,000

Dr. Anthony: Could the Minister give us a breakdown on project code 1216200 – Ministry of Health – Buildings? I note that it is for provision of mental health secretariat and some other things. Could we get a disaggregation?

Dr. Norton: We have a parking lot and television vehicles within the compound - a 50x50 in Region 4. In the Georgetown Public Hospital Cooperation compound, a screen has to be built in the treatment room of the Vector Control Services and the establishment of the Mental Health Secretariat in Quamina Street, Region 4. Sorry, I forgot that he wanted the figures. For the parking lot, it is \$2.4 million; for the screen to be built in the treatment room, it is \$500,000 and the establishment of the Mental Health Secretariat in Quamina Street is \$16, 350,000.

Dr. Ramsaran: Mr. Chairman, this is a move in the right direction. It has been coming and been prepared in the past. Could you tell me what you mean by “the Secretariat”? What would be the structure?

Dr. Norton: I imagine the Hon. Member is asking for the organogram of the Secretariat. That we can provide for him on Friday.

Dr. Ramsaran: In the meantime, could you give us a quick idea of how many people would be there?

Dr. Norton: I must say that with the emphasis that is being placed on mental health and particularly suicide prevention, offers have been on the increase of qualified persons seeking employment in this particular area. It would be difficult for us to say off-hand what our strength

would be. We know we need to increase our employment in this area to the maximum and we have all intentions of doing so.

Dr. Ramsaran: I will wait for an organogram, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Mahadeo: Project code 2405600 – Land and Water Transport – entails the purchase of vehicles, trailer and engine. Could the Minister advise what kind of vehicles, trailer and engine and where they will be placed?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, the 20-foot aluminium boat and trailer is for the Vector Control Services and it will be at a cost of \$510,000.

Dr. Mahadeo: Project code 2509100 – Equipment: There are equipment, fume hood, cabinets, x-ray view boxes, *et cetera*. Could the Minister advise where these equipment would be going, if it has already been identified?

Dr. Norton: The x-ray view boxes would be for the National Tuberculosis Programme at the Georgetown Chest Clinic in Region 4 at a cost of \$400,000.

Dr. Mahadeo: Project code 4402700 – HIV/TB/Malaria Programmes: Project entails provision for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria interventions. Could the Minister advise what interventions are we talking about here?

9.38 p.m.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, to the Hon. Member, this is for the programme for HIV/TB/malaria.

Dr. Mahadeo: Maybe Minister, I did not put the question properly. I read here about the intervention for TB and malaria. Could you advise what the intervention is for? If it is not possible now, it could be provided later on.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, do you have the answer?

Dr. Norton: Yes, the intervention or activities of this programme would involve technical assistance and training, health products and health equipment, medicines and pharmaceutical products, procurement and supply cost, infrastructure and other equipment, monitoring and evaluation along with human resources.

Dr. Ramsaran: Dr. Norton, Hon. Minister, under the items mentioned, could you indicate if specially treated nets, spray cans and similar items will be purchased particularly for the interventions for malaria?

Dr. Norton: It is unfortunate that the Hon. Member waited until we are in capital expenditure to ask.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, could you answer the question?

Dr. Norton: Certainly, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Then could you assist us, please.

Dr. Norton: We do have nets involved. I can tell the Member that now our stock has reached 75,000 treated mosquito nets. That is after we have distributed.

Dr. Ramsaran: I will like to remind the Hon. Minister that three years ago 50,000 nets were distributed free of cost, so 75,000 is way below what we would be. I have a similar question since he mentioned nets and the distribution. His indication is that the Ministry will continue to distribute the nets. When did it start to distribute the nets?

Dr. Norton: The 75,000 nets, which I referred to, were left over after distributing. As the other activities we have against the mosquitoes, which carry the different viruses, we will continue. It was an ongoing process and the Hon. Member would be in a better position to know exactly when that started.

Programme: 432 – Diseases Control – \$370,790,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 433 – Family Health Care Services - \$28,635,000

Dr. Anthony: Project 4504300, Technical Assistance: Could the Minister explain exactly what the IDB will be funding? Is it a consultancy to look into maternal and infant mortality?

Dr. Norton: Here we go with the highlighting of the need to intensify our efforts with the IDB. Here we would have the preconception care, the antenatal care, the perinatal care and postnatal care along with training of nannies in obstetrics and obstetrics emergencies, community

campaigns, health education campaigns, support obstetric outreaches in the hinterland and purchasing of equipment.

Dr. Anthony: All those things are quite laudable, but, as I understand it, there is, for this year \$10 million allocated. My question: Is this for consultancy services? Is the IDB providing us with funds to hire a consultant to do a study? That is what I want to know.

Dr. Norton: To answer the question no, but I can give the Member the breakdown of the \$10 million. There is the study tour which is \$800,000; training of nannies - \$500,000, printing of materials - \$2.5 million, communication campaign - \$4.2 million and purchase of medical equipment - \$2 million. That gives the total of \$10 million you spoke of.

Dr. Mahadeo: It is a follow-up to the question that asked by my colleague. On the training of nannies, nannies meaning the people from the street, as we know it to be, people with no qualifications, to assist with delivery, or is there another definition? I thought midwives were going to be trained.

Dr. Norton: The training of nannies in obstetrics and emergency obstetrics, according to the primary health care report, in the hinterland, especially in Regions 1 and 9, is that there is still a large amount of deliveries being done by nannies. In Region 9 for instance, in Sand Creek where there is a hospital, the doctor reported that he still has difficulties in knowing when the villagers are pregnant and that they only come after delivery. This programme is very important and will be very effective in such areas.

Dr. Mahadeo: Thank you for the explanation, Minister. I am not going to make a stage. Project 2509000, Equipment – Medical, includes the purchase of, among other things, delivery beds and dental x-ray unit. Could the Minister advise, for Family Health Care Services, where these pieces of equipment will be placed?

Dr. Norton: The delivery beds and the dental chair will all go to the Port Kaituma Hospital in Region 1, the new hospital.

Dr. Mahadeo: Project 2509100, Equipment, camera and generator: I presume if it is a camera it is not close circuit television (CCTV). Of what use will the camera be, who will use it, for what purpose and where will the generator be placed?

Dr. Norton: The camera is for the Divisional Food Policy.

Dr. Ramsaran: Going back to the purchase of equipment and the mention made by the goodly Minister...

Mr. Chairman: Could you give the project please, Hon. Member?

Dr. Ramsaran: It is project 2508900. It refers to nannies being trained. The explanation being was that in certain villages the health workers do not even know that people are pregnant. I would like to suggest to the Minister that this is a retrograde step. I first heard of it yesterday at a conference held by the Ministry. Is it not the policy of the Ministry to train Community Health Workers (CHW)? There are several CHWs. Is it not giving skills to midwives, single trained midwives, and taking away the old practice of having nannies trained. This is aimed, I see, at improving infant mortality and child mortality. Over the past few years, this has been very good. For the years 2011, 2012 and 2013, there has been a decrease. I am suggestion that this is a serious matter. Where is the theoretical basis for using these resources to train nannies, CHWs, there are hundreds of them, and medics. It is coming under child mortality.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Dr. Ramsaran, I do believe that you owe the Assembly a question. Could you give us now?

Dr. Ramsaran: I would like to ask: Is this not a retrograde step to reintroduce nannies. Could the Minister give us the theoretical provision as a medical person and not the popular approach?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, do you have another question?

Dr. Ramsaran: That was just a throwback to the previous question.

Mr. Chairman: You have not asked the question as yet.

Dr. Ramsaran: The other question I wanted to ask concerns the generator. The generator is in project 2509000 which also mentions cameras. How many cameras and could the Minister indicate if in the past there have been other cameras? Even if we throw back into the first programme, Programme 431, again there are cameras. Could the Minister tell us how many cameras are already in this unit? What will this camera be used by and for whom? Is there a

camera or cameras in this unit and what is the saturation point for expensive pieces of equipment?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Dr. Ramsaran, I am sure you will not find the answer in that direction. Let us look this way Hon. Members if you want us to move along.

Dr. Ramsaran: Mr. Chairman, I am so much worked up by that I am angered by what I am hearing them heckling.

9.53 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Dr. Ramsaran, I would say that there may be other persons who are angered, if not for the same reason. Let us remember that we will have to get on. Would the Hon. Minister say an answer to the question or questions which were raised?

Dr. Norton: Those questions were answered before.

Dr. Mahadeo: Mr. Chairman, I am sorry to be repeating the question, but my question, when I asked where the generator will go, which facility is going to benefit, was not answered.

Dr. Norton: The small generator will benefit the Moruka Hospital, Region 1, and the camera is for the Food Policy Unit, Region 4, again.

Programme: 433 – Family Health Care Services - \$28,635,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 434 - Regional & Clinical Services - \$1,466,451,000

Dr. Anthony: Project 1216200, Ministry of Health – Buildings: Could the Minister explain to us what upgrading would be done at the diagnostic centre at Diamond and what would be the cost and it is the same for Leonora.

Dr. Norton: The upgrading, which would be done at the Diamond Diagnostic Centre, would be \$20 million for the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) programme at that centre and for Leonora it would be \$40 million.

Dr. Anthony: Could the Minister be kind enough to provide us with a breakdown of the differences? There are a number of facilities here. How much would be spent on each and perhaps give us a broad idea of what kinds of repairs would be done at these centres?

Dr. Norton: If the Hon. Member is referring to the \$40 million that is being spent on the upgrading of the Leonora Diagnostic Centre, as in Diamond we are concentrating on the maternal section where we hope to have, for instance in Leonora a pre-natal, ward as well as a post-natal ward. We hope to have a birthing room with two birth beds along with an operating facility and a functioning nursing station, just to mention a few, along with the Neonatology Unit with the necessary incubators.

Assembly resumed.

Suspension of Standing Order No. 10

First Vice-President and Prime Minister [Mr. Nagamootoo]: Mr. Speaker, I moved that this House continues to meet until the conclusion of Consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure together with the consequential legislative measures.

Question put, and agreed to.

Standing Order suspended.

In Committee of Supply

Dr. Ramsaran: Completion of maternity building and operating theatre...

Mr. Chairman: Which project is it?

Mr. Ramsaran: It is project 1216300, "Provision of medical facilities, equipment, vehicle and payment of retention." Mr. Chairman, through you to the Minister, "completion of maternity building and operating theatre" is this the maternity building which was initiated in March 2015 at an initial cost of \$240 million? Is it the same facility that we are referring to the one that was started in March, 2015?

Dr. Norton: The answer is yes.

Dr. Ramsaran: According to the documentation, this was supposed to have been completed by February of this year. What is the status of this vital facility started in March, 2015?

Dr. Norton: That building will be completed at the end of March, that is next month end.

Dr. Ramsaran: I look forward to that big event. The next question pertains to another project 1217600, Speciality Hospital Project, "Construction of Speciality Hospital – India." I would like to ask first of all this question: Is this the same speciality that is being built at Liliendaal which was a project funded by the Indian Government, by a line of credit? Is it that hospital? Is it the said hospital which was several times...?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, we are going to make great progress, and that is the first question you have asked, and you are asking some more.

Mr. Ramsaran: I have not finished the first question. The first question was: Is it the said hospital located or initiated at Liliendaal, under the line of credit from India, which was several times cut from the budget with several past administrations?

Dr. Norton: It is that hospital.

Mr. Ramsaran: The other question, which flows from that, is this a vindication of the correctness of the policy to construct that hospital?

Dr. Norton: No Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Ramsaran: I thank the Minister for that answer and obviously the public looks on. Is this not a contradiction to advice given in previous dispensation by Mr. Harmon and even...?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, stay with the line item here. I think we are now waltzing away from it.

Dr. Ramsaran: I was wondering if we are not colliding with policy.

Mr. Chairman: Would it be a good thing to make it so clear to the Minister? I am not telling you how you must ask your question, but should we dance around? We are getting into the Parkinson principle trying to do this.

Dr. Ramsaran: I will try not to dance around, Mr. Chairman. I am asking if this does not go against stated policy, only a few weeks ago. Is this the final thing, that we are going to be building this facility finally?

Dr. Norton: The principle position of the Members on this side of the Assembly, as our manifesto did state...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, please help us with the answer. Hon. Minister, we await your response.

Dr. Norton: It was our principle position, on this side, that we shall concentrate on primary health care as was stated on so many occasions. We thought that all our efforts should be directed along that line. When we offered a sum of money that will permit us to move in that direction and then we offered the possibility of a speciality hospital, it influenced our thought and our actions towards supporting this venture. We made certain that our stated principle of primary health care be taken or satisfied first of all.

Dr. Ramsaran: Does the Minister understand the concept of the hospital being part of addressing the epidemiological transition of the nation from primary, not getting rid of primary diseases, on to the non-communicable diseases (NCDs)? That is why there is a presidential commission on NCD? Are we now saying we are not in that transition and we would not need both services?

Dr. Norton: That question was answered already.

Dr. Ramsaran: This is very informative from a point of view of science. The next question: When this facility will be started again, hopefully if there is any timelines? Secondly, what would be the bidding procedures for this facility to secure a contractor? Has a contracted contractor already been identified? There are three questions.

10.08 p.m.

Dr. Norton: We cannot say at this moment when that construction will start and no contract has been signed as yet.

Dr. Ramsaran: The third aspect of the question, Mr. Chairman, was would it be advertised for open transparent tendering?

Dr. Norton: We have not reached to that stage as yet.

Mr. Nandlall: Sir, my question is under the very project 1217600, Specialty Hospital Project. There is \$350 million allocated here, presumably to be spent for the year 2016. Could the Minister tell us whether this sum would be spent in accordance with the Public Procurement Act? That is, whether the Act will be complied with in terms of public tendering and competitive bidding, which is a mandatory procedure under the law.

Dr. Norton: To inform the Hon. Member that this is a law abiding party and we will comply by all that is legal.

Mr. Nandlall: Sir, it one last question, on the same line item.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, do you want a follow-up question?

Mr. Nandlall: Please, Sir, with your kind permission.

Mr. Chairman: Go ahead, please.

Mr. Nandlall: Is the Minister is aware that the Minister of Finance has signed a memorandum of understanding with a particular company in relation to this project? Does he see that as inconsistent with his statement that he is going to act in accordance with the Public Procurement Act, in relation to this project?

Dr. Norton: To the Hon. Member, no.

Programme: 434 – Regional and Clinical Services – \$1,466,451,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 435 – Health Sciences Education – \$64,960,000

Programme: 435 – Health Sciences Education – \$64,960,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 436 – Standards & Technical Services – \$10,956,000

Programme: 436 – Standards & Technical Services – \$10,956,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 437 – Disability and Rehabilitation Services – \$ 26,631,000

Programme: 437 – Disability and Rehabilitation Services – \$26,631,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 40 – Ministry of Education

Current Expenditure

Programme: 401 – Policy Development and Administration – \$1,624,181,000

Ms. Manickchand: Sir, first let me say good night to the staff of the Ministry of Education and welcome. Thank you for coming so late. We are very grateful for your service. Beginning under line item 6116, Contracted Employees, I see that there is a marked jump in the number of employees. Could the Minister explain this?

Minister within the Minister of Education [Ms. Henry]: The increase certainly is in keeping with the work plan that we plan to execute for the year 2016. That being said, for the 32 additional contracted employees, I have a list here and I can give you a breakdown. That will be three Civil Engineers, two Expenditure Planning and Management Analyst (EPMA) officers, one Deputy Chief Education Officer, one Personal Assistant to the Minister, one Adviser on culture, one Confidential Secretary, one System Development Officer, one Administrative Assistant, one Transport Officer, four Drivers, three Accounts Clerks, one Procurement Officer, one Research Officer, one Supplies Officer, one Stores Clerk, one Office Assistant, three Typist Clerks, one Editor, two Telephone Operators, one heavy-vehicle Driver and one Quality Assurance Officer. That pretty much completes the 32 positions that are added.

Ms. Manickchand: Could the Hon. Minister tell us if these posts were advertised and where?

Ms. Henry: I am advised that the positions were all advertised. They were advertised internally which is a mechanism that is allowed.

Ms. Manickchand: Did I understand the Minister to be saying that the positions were advertised internally? Does the Minister advertised internally for three engineers, Personal Assistant and internally for Confidential Secretary? I would be grateful for a definition of the word “internally”. What does the word “internally” mean?

Ms. Henry: I am advised that the Public Service Commission makes provision for that type of mechanism.

10.23 p.m.

Ms. Manickchand: We are asking for a list of the offices that the Hon. Minister just listed, along with the remuneration packages. That would include salaries as well as benefits for each of those positions.

Ms. Henry: I am happy to provide this Committee of Supply with a copy of the documentation which contains the information being requested.

Ms. Manickchand: I just want to bring to the attention of the House that this particular Ministry last year promised this sort of information and not a single promise was fulfilled. No promise from the Ministry of Education, Department of Culture, Youth and Sport that was made last year in this honourable House was fulfilled. I would trust that we become honourable and that we will fulfill the promises made. Could I get a timeline in which the information would be delivered?

Mr. Chairman hit gavel.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, would it be correct to say that the Hon. Minister within the Ministry of Education would undertake to make available to the Hon. Members the information which has been requested?

Ms. Henry: I repeat that I am making available, as of now, a copy of this document which contains the information. It has additional information. [An. Hon. Member: *Inaudible*]
If that is the case, then I will have to revise this document to ensure that it is in compliance with what is being requested. That being said, the answer is yes. I would make the information available by Friday of this week.

Ms. Manickchand: I want to go back to the issue of advertisements for these positions.

Repeatedly in this House, over the last week, we have been told that everybody wants a job; everybody is asking for jobs. That is true. Where ever people live, whether it is Bath or Buxton, they want jobs. How would the people who are not aware of this internal system know about these jobs that are available?

Ms. Henry: My understanding is that it is on the world wide web (www) and, therefore, there is an opportunity for even people living outside of Guyana to have access to that information. With that being said, I believe that it is available to persons who are not in the Ministry.

Ms. Manickchand: We were told two things and so I would like some clarity. We were initially told that....

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you asked the questions and you have been promised the answers. If it is not adequate, then you should ask supplementary questions.

Ms. Manickchand: I am about to do that. This is a supplementary question.

Mr. Chairman: Go ahead with that.

Ms. Manickchand: We were told two things. We were told that the advertisements were made internally and that that is a mechanism of the Public Service Commission (PSC). Now, are being told that the vacancies were advertised on the worldwide web, which would not be internal. Which one of those two answers is true?

Ms. Henry: Both responses, in this case, are correct. The internal mechanism makes provision for it to be placed on the worldwide web. The worldwide web is where all websites are, so that is what it really means, for the purpose of sharing information in this Committee.

Ms. Manickchand: A follow-up question. This is an important matter for us.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, all matters here are important.

Ms. Manickchand: I agree.

Mr. Chairman: Do you have another question?

Ms. Manickchand: Yes. I have many questions for you tonight.

The Hon. Minister is telling us that advertisements for vacancies to be filled in the Ministry of Education are advertised on the worldwide web. Could the Hon. Minister tell us if all vacancies are advertised on the worldwide web? What is the website that the vacancies are advertised on?

Ms. Henry: As it relates to the website, I will get the information. My understanding is that the Public Service Commission (PSC) has a website. The staff will provide the name of the website, which will be forwarded.

Ms. Manickchand: There is a part of the question that remains unanswered. I could repeat the question. Were all of the 33 vacancies that have been filled advertised on the website, which is unknown, although I see all of the relevant staff here who should know that answer?

Ms. Henry: Certainly, all were not advertised. As we would know, the Ministers would use their discretion as to who they who recruit for some positions. Therefore, the positions of Personal Assistants were certainly not advertised.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Ganga Persaud.

Ms. Manickchand: Mr. Ganga Persaud would defer, Sir, to me.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, the Chairman still determines who speaks and who does not. Hon. Member, Ganga Persaud, you have the floor. Let us not have this comedy.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6116: I have a follow-up to the question that was asked. The Hon. Minister stated that the Public Service Commission allows for internal advertisements. My understanding of the Public Service rules...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Persaud, let us have the question because the issue has been gone through already.

Mr. G. Persaud: I just want to make sure that the Minister gets me clearly. My understanding of the Public Service rules is that positions that are on the Public Service Ministry...

Mr. Chairman: What is your question?

Mr. Persaud: I am getting there, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: At the risk of the Minister not understanding you, what is your question?

Mr. Persaud: My question is: Could the Hon. Minister provide this Committee of Supply with any approval from the Public Service Commission for GS: 3 and upward positions that she has named as... [Ms. Ferguson: It is the "Hon. Member".] You fill it in for me. That the Hon. Member has named as being appointed by internal advertisements with the approval of the Public Service Commission?

My final question on this issue is: which, if any of those positions, were approval sought from the Public Service Commission to so fill? Would the Hon. Minister provide us with copies of those correspondence and approvals that were received from the Public Service Commission? The Public Service Commission only allows for GS 1 and GS 2 salary scales to be filled by the Ministry.

Ms. Henry: My advice, at this time, is that all of the positions were not approved by the Public Service Commission. In addition to that, in answer to the first question, as the Hon. Member pointed out, that is his interpretation and, therefore, I thank him for sharing. But, certainly, that is neither my interpretation nor understanding.

Ms. Manickchand: Hon. Minister, earlier you had said that all of the positions were advertised internally and that they were all advertised on the worldwide wide, which would make them not internal. Then you said, Hon. Minister, that not all were advertised, for example, the positions of Personal Assistants. Could I interpret that to mean that, except for the position of Personal Assistants, every other position was advertised on the website that will be provided to us?

Ms. Henry: The answer is yes. That is my understanding also.

Ms. Manickchand: If the Hon. Minister does not have the information now, then I would be happy to receive it in writing. Could I be advised of what positions were advertised and on which date?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, are you still asking the question?

Ms. Manickchand: I was startled by a person who heckled from the Gallery, not from the House, directly in front of me.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, you would have noted the request. Do you wish to respond to the request now?

Ms. Henry: It is noted, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: I would assume, Hon. Minister, that that means that the request which was made would be satisfied as you indicated in relation to the others. Please explain to us so that we know.

Ms. Henry: Mr. Chairman, I have noted the question.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, could you assist this Committee in where we go from here with the answer that of “I have noted it” when other Members are asking for information?

Ms. Henry: I have noted the request and I would make the information available.

Ms. Manickchand: Thank you kindly, Minister. I am very pleased. This is the last question. Could we be told how many applications were received for each position?

Mr. Chairman: I will now put the question.

Ms. Manickchand: Sir, there has not been an answer.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I will put the question after I answer you. I understood the Minister to have said that she would provide the information that you wish. If there is any other embellishment on the question, I would assume that the Minister would be providing the answer. There is no need for another question, unless you have something special and new to provide.

Ms. Manickchand: All of the questions that were asked, so far, were asked on one line item under this head.

Mr. Chairman: I will put the question after you reclaim your seat.

10.38 p.m.

Ms. Manickchand: There have been incredible allocations in excess of what were made in 2015 under several line items – 6222 - Drugs and Medical Supplies, 6223 - Office Materials and Supplies, 6224 - Print and Non-Print Materials, 6231 - Fuel and Lubricants, 6261 - Drugs and

Medical Supplies, 6264 - Vehicles Spares and Services, 6271 - Telephone Charges, 6281 - Security Services and 6291 - National and Other Events. Except Your Honour would be kind enough to entertain my application not to have this head closed right now, may I ask what would be the reason for the massive increases under each of these heads?

Ms. Henry: To the Hon. Member, please note that the Ministry of Education's previous programmes 1, 2 and 3 are now merged with what used to be the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport's programme 1. Thereby, we have created a new programme. This change took effect from the 1st September 2015. Therefore, last year being a truncated year, with the last four months' budget that we had presented, the merging of these programmes could be seen on pages 218 to 223 and on pages 232 to 233, as well as September. That is responsible for what would appear to be significant increases, as you pointed out, in the line item. Is that overview sufficient or do you want to get into the details?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I would allow the question that the Minister has posed to you and I will allow an answer from you for the question.

Ms. Manickchand: Pages 218 to 223 refers to the entire Ministry of Education. This particular head is dealing only with the Policy Development and Administration, the main office. So, one cannot add everything from pages 218 to 223 under those line items to get those figures this here. For example, under line item 6223 - Office Materials and Supplies, what was spent for the whole of last year, from January to December, seems to have been \$7.395 million plus \$8,889, which would be just over \$9 million. It has now been increased to \$21.8 million. I am asking why.

Ms. Henry: Actually, if one looks at the total figure for the year 2015, what was actually spent was \$19 million and, in 2016, there is an allocation of \$21 million. So, it is a difference of \$2 million. If I can give you the breakdown, from January to August it was \$889,000 and that was under programme 1; if you look at programme 2, it is \$2.7 million; if we look at programme 3, it is in excess of \$7 million. If you look at programme 1, from January to August, for culture the amount is \$1.8 million and that was under agency 44, which was previously the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport. Under the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, there is another \$7 million. If you add all of those, you would come up with the figure. If you do the maths you would realise that the numbers have not increased significantly.

Programme: 401 –Policy Development and Administration - \$1,624,181,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 402 – Training and Development- \$2,057,274,000

Ms. Manickchand: Line item 6302 - Training (including Scholarships): I have seen an increase from \$99 million to \$409 million, which is a 400% increase. Would the Hon. Minister tell us, firstly, who would be trained under this programme?

Ms. Henry: The training is intended for all of the regions and it includes training for our teachers. The focus, really, is to reduce disparity between the hinterland to the coastland. We also plan to do Information and Communication Technology (ICT) training, particularly for teachers to integrate in their teaching practice. Also, under this line item, we are catering for monitoring and evaluation. We are also catering for training to determine the assessment skills level of our teachers. So, there are a number of areas in which we are planning to build capacity. As I said before, the intent, primarily, is to reduce disparity in access, teaching, and training between the hinterland and the coastland.

Ms. Manickchand: Hon. Minister, training has always been done all across the regions in a host of areas by central Ministry, many of which you have already mentioned. What accounts, Minister, for a 400% increase of almost \$300 million?

Mr. Chairman: Did you give the line item?

Ms. Manickchand: Yes. It is line item 6302- Training (including Scholarships). It is a follow-up on the last question.

Ms. Henry: Again, just to give you a breakdown of the figure. It certainly does not represent a 400% increase. Last year, there was a budgeted amount of \$262 million and this year there is a budgeted amount of \$409 million. That being said, to give you an idea as to how we came up with the \$262 million from January to August, 2015, under the Ministry of Education Programme 4, the sum of \$158 was allocated. For January to August under Programme 2, the sum of \$3.9 million was allocated and from September to December, under Programme 2, the sum of \$100 million was allocated. When the three are added, one would get \$262 million. This

year, we have made provision for \$409 million, which certainly does not reflect a 400% increase, as you have indicated.

Ms. Manickchand: Would the Hon. Minister give us a breakdown of how much is intended to be spent in each region on this training?

Ms. Henry: I do not have the breakdown with me, but I can make that available to this Committee by Friday.

Ms. Manickchand: Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees: I see an increase of 10 contracted employees. Would the Hon. Member be kind enough to tell us what accounts for this increase by 10?

Ms. Henry: This increase is certainly in keeping with our intention to execute a work plan, this year, that would require the additional numbers reflected. While I am on my feet, should I state what those positions are? It is because I suspect that that would be the next question. There is an Administrative Manager for the National Culture Centre (NCC), one Theatre Attendant, one Director of Dance, one Machine Operator, one Digital Producer, three Lectures, one Confidential Secretary, and one Administrator for Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE).

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6117 - Temporary Employees: the staffing details reflect 193 in 2015 as against 19 in 2016. The allocation in 2015 was \$44,558,000. The allocation requested in 2016 is \$138,423,000. Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to explain the following: the decrease in numbers by 174 in terms of staffing and the increase by some 90-plus million dollars?

Ms. Henry: The first question has to do with the decrease in the numbers of temporary employees. As the prefix temporary suggests, these are not permanent staff. They are more or less seasonal and as need arises, we would employ. That is why the numbers, at this time, reflect that we need 19. If the need arise during the course of the year, and the need will arise, we will make those recruitment. That being said, the sum is allocated to make provision for those numbers.

In addition to that, I wish to point out that we anticipate the numbers this year to be less than those of last year given that the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) Board is now taking on

the responsibility of providing guidance and support for Grades 2, 4, and 6, which was formally administered by our temporary staff.

Mr. Ali: Line item 6242- Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister say to us whether works have commenced or when these projects were tendered?

Ms. Henry: The answer to both questions is no.

Mr. Ali: A follow-up question on line item 6242. I would like the Hon. Minister to say whether these works would be publicly advertised and when this would be done.

Ms. Henry: We will follow the rules and regulations, so they will be advertised. I do not have the date when they would be advertised, but you would be notified. Stay tuned.

10.53 p.m.

Mr. Ali: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: I would like the Hon. Minister to say whether the specifications, designs and engineering were done in house or whether it was done through external sources.

Ms. Henry: If I read correctly, the line item deals with maintenance of buildings. We are not dealing with designing of anything. What we intend to do is maintain the National Cultural Centre, the National School of Dance and the Guyana National Music School.

Mr. Ali: I thank the Hon. Minister for listing the three locations. Could she now tell us how much is budgeted for each of the locations?

Ms. Henry: There is a long list of works and sums that are allocated and I suspect that it would be a better use of all of our time if I could just lay the list over.

Mr. Ali: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: The Hon. Member has just referred to a list of work for the three areas, which means that there was a detailed evaluation to come up with that list of work. That is why I asked earlier what in house or external evaluation was done. How was the list determined?

Ms. Henry: There are two things that I wish to say. Firstly, the works to be done are not limited to the three buildings. There are other buildings under the Ministry of Education that are being

considered for maintenance. These include the National Centre for Education Resource Development (NCERD), Turkeyen, the Civil Potter College of Education (CPCE), the Allied Arts Unit and buildings on Brickdam. That being said, as it relates to how the work was determined, we have our skillset in-house, the superintendent of work, which would make the determination. It is an internal determination.

Mr. Ali: Just to be very clear, the Hon. Minister just said that the evaluation was done in-house. Am I to understand that there have been no consultants in the process of determining these works or that no consultants would be hired under this head?

Ms. Henry: If any of the expenses is over \$1 million, then the due process would occur and the necessary advertisements would be done. In this case, these are under the amount and do not require that process. Therefore, we cannot apply that process. But I want to assure you that due process would be observed. Those that have to be advertised would be advertised. We do intend to ensure that we operate within the confines of the rules and regulations and certainly the laws of this country.

Mr. Ali: I appreciate the Hon. Minister's commitment that she would operate within the rules and laws. I have no problem with that. My question, though, still remains. The Minister just said that the works were determined in-house and that there were no consultants. My question was: were any consultants engaged under this head? It is a very important question and we cannot skirt around it.

Ms. Henry: Mr. Chairman, if I may, I think that, in my first response, I stated very clearly that we have not commenced any of these works. Until such time as we commence these works, we would ensure that we are in full compliance and that answer still stands. We cannot entertain a consultant if we have not started and we have not gotten to that stage.

Mr. Ali: The Hon. Minister said to us that the details of the work, *et cetera*, were determined by internal resources. This is what the Hon. Minister said and I am very happy if that is the case. I asked specifically to the Hon. Minister: was any consultant used at any time in determining the works that would be done under this head?

Ms. Henry: I have already answered that question and I consider it to be closed. *[Interruption]*

Mr. Chairman: I know that everyone wants to do the job of the Chairman. Hon. Minister, the question was put by the Hon. Member, namely, whether there were outside help. I would make the suggestion that sometimes when a question is asked, as has happened here, some answers are being given to the same questions three and four times. It is mainly because Hon. Members are not being attentive enough when the question is being asked the first time and I used that word advisedly. The fact is, if a question is asked, to the extent that a Hon. Minister could essay an answer, it really ought to be given. I want to know if the Hon. Minister would think that she could say something to what the Hon. Member Ali said. You have the floor, Ma'am.

Ms. Henry: The answer remains no.

Mr. Chairman: After the next question, I should put the question.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: The National Library received an allocation of \$81,121,000 in 2015. There is a substantial increase in 2016. Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to share with us what this allocation is intended to do, this year, for the Guyana National Library?

Ms. Henry: The increase for the Guyana National Library is to cater mainly for increased spending on books for young adults and juvenile users and binary materials, which would be sourced overseas. There is also expected to be an increased addition to stock in view of request which was received to expand the bookmobile service to new and developing communities. There would also be growth of the internet library service, Information Technology (IT) training for all employees, implementation and use of new software to assist the disabled in utilising library services and the internet, especially for first-time users. Those are the additional services that would be provided by the Guyana National Library, and therefore, it did attract an additional cost.

Programme: 402 – Training and Development – \$2,057,274,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Programme: 403 – Nursery Education – \$1,641,895,000

Ms. Manickchand: Could I ask if Programme 403 – Nursery Education address nursery education in Georgetown or nationally?

Ms. Henry: It addresses nursery education nationally.

Ms. Manickchand: Line item 6272 – Electricity Charges: There seems to be a remarkable increase in the provision. Could the Hon. Member explain why?

Ms. Henry: This caters for electricity charges for four schools' administrative departments, which are housed at Lot 68 Brickdam and 31 nursery schools. The large increase is due to the fact that the Ministry of Finance has included this as part of the Ministry of Education's budget. Prior to that, I understand that the Ministry of Finance would have absorbed that cost.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, when one Member is on the floor, the other ought to sit. Let us remember that, please. If the Minister rises to speak, an Hon. Member would claim his or her seat and *vice versa*.

Ms. Manickchand: I am assuming, from remarks that it was I. I did not realise that the Minister was still standing, I apologise. There are more than 400 nursery schools.

11.08 p.m.

The Hon. Member mentioned more than 30 nursery schools. Is this in relation only to Georgetown or is it nationally?

Ms. Henry: This electricity charges cater for 31 nursery schools in Georgetown.

Ms. Manickchand: Line item 6224 – Print and Non-Print Materials: Would this be where the Roraima Readers are being printed?

Ms. Henry: The response is yes.

Ms. Manickchand: Could the Hon. Member say how many Roraima Readers are expected to be printed this year?

Given that this is the main part of a package to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes, could the Minister say what arrangements are being made to make these books accessible to non-public school students?

Ms. Henry: On the first question, as it relates to the number of books, I do not have the numbers with me here so I cannot provide that information.

On the second question, as it relates to consultation with the private schools, we have not finalised discussions. Therefore, I am not in a position to tell this House as to what the plan of action would be to ensure that these books are utilised by private schools until such consultations would have been concluded. Thank you.

Ms. Manickchand: The Hon. Minister spoke of consultations being concluded. Have consultations begun? The information I received indicated that they have not, despite letters being written to the most senior people in the Ministry of Education. If the answer is yes, would the Hon. Member be kind enough to tell us when it is expected that those consultations will conclude, considering that we are already in a school year and the procurement and distribution of these books usually take a particular time? We do not want the entire batch that there right now to be missing this excellent piece of work that was created by the Ministry.

Ms. Henry: My understanding is that we are in the preparatory phase and, like any initiative, there must be phases. Usually, there would be a planning phase before an execution phase and my understanding is that we are in the planning phase. We will ensure that the process is expedited because we recognise the importance. Therefore, when that information becomes available, I will make it available to the House. I do not have any more information on that at this point in time.

Ms. Manickchand: I see a marked increase also under line item 6281 – Security Services. Could the Hon. Minister explain why?

Ms. Henry: From my records, it reflects a decrease actually and not an increase. If you were to look at January to August, under programme five, you would have seen \$49 million. If you were to look under programme three for September to December, you would have seen \$37 million. If you do the Math, you would recognise that it would be in the vicinity of \$86 million and I believe that \$86 million is more than \$78 million. With that being said, it is a decrease.

Ms. Teixeira: Follow-up: We come to this House with the books which have, annually, year by year... It is anticipated and expected that the relevant Ministries and Minister of Finance present

to us the annual figures. This argument took place when the Ministry of Public Health was being dealt with where the Hon. Minister said that we are expected to go back and count from 2015 and 2014 to come up with these figures. The Ministry of Finance has printed a book that states, under Programme 403 - Nursery Education - that the figure for electricity and water, revised 2015, is the following, and that is the figure we are using. It is unacceptable to be saying to us that we must be adding from this and that page. That is not what we do in this House. Therefore, unless the Hon. Member is saying that the Minister of Finance and his staff have not done the Budget figures correctly for us, under line item 6281, we are looking at figures that went from \$29,192,000 to \$78,985,000. The sarcastic comments about adding are irrelevant in this House. What we are looking at are the columns that were published by the Ministry of Finance on behalf of the Government of Guyana. Therefore, we are looking at the revised annual figures. We are not expected to add from a reconfiguration of the Government. That has to be done when these documents go to print and be brought to this House.

I think the going around is very unfair and I want to put on record our position to this approach by the Hon. Ministers.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I thought you had a question.

Ms. Teixeira: You do understand what I am getting at, with due respect.

Mr. Chairman: I do understand. Hon. Member, I believe that you have said what you wished to say and you are finished. Thank you.

I will allow two more questions and then I will put the question.

Ms. Manickchand: Just for the record, because I know that everything is actually recorded in the Hansard, I assure you that I can add.

Line item 6292 – Dietary: There is an increase to \$913,741,000 from \$469,506,000. Would the Hon. Minister say if this is where the School Feeding Programme for nursery children is catered and whether this is a national figure or a Georgetown figure? The Hon. Minister told the House earlier that this was national and then later on said that it was only for Georgetown. Both answers cannot be right and I am prepared to accept that the Hon. Minister was not deliberately

misleading the House but I would like an answer as to whether it is to cater for Georgetown or to cater for national school feeding.

Ms. Henry: The answer to the first question is yes; it does cater for the School Feeding Programme. For the second question, this Programme is countrywide and, therefore, it is called a national programme.

Ms. Manickchand: Could the Hon. Member tell us if the School Uniform Programme, for nursery, is catered for under line item 6301 – Education Subventions and Grants – and, if not, which line item it is catered for under?

Secondly, if the Programme is national, as the Hon. Member said, could we get an explanation as to why the children from the Hinterland regions have not yet received school uniforms for the September to December term?

Ms. Henry: The answer to the question is yes; this does cater for the school uniform subsidy. The second question being asked is outside of the scope of the Ministry of Education's estimates. The children in the Hinterland communities are catered for under the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs. That is where that question would have been better addressed.

Ms. Manickchand: I just want to be clear. Your Honour may recall that we were unable to ask anything under the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs. Is it that the money has been placed, by the Ministry of Finance, directly into the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs or is it being received by the Ministry of Public Health to be warranted to the Ministry of Ingenious Peoples' Affairs? I meant the Ministry of Education, sorry.

Ms. Henry: I would not be able to answer what concerns either the Ministry of Public Health or the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs. I happen to be functioning as the Minister within the Ministry of Education and I am prepared to answer questions under education.

Ms. Manickchand: I meant the Ministry of Education when I said Ministry of Public Health and I actually corrected it. So, I will repeat the question.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, we accept the correction.

Ms. Manickchand: Thank you, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, would you answer the corrected question?

Ms. Henry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am still not in a position to do so because I do not have that information.

Programme: 403 – Nursery Education - \$1,641,895,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 404 – Primary Education - \$2,769,746,000

Ms. Manickchand: Again, I have a very general question before we begin. Does this Programme address schools in Georgetown or primary schools nationally?

Ms. Henry: I have to say that there are line items that will address nationally and there are line items that are specific to Georgetown, so the answer would be that this Programme addresses both nationally and at the Georgetown level.

Ms. Manickchand: Under line item 6292 – Dietary – could the Hon. Minister tell us if this is to cater for school feeding nationally for all primary school children from Grades One to Six?

11.23 p.m.

Ms. Henry: Actually, the response would be Grades One to Six for receiving hot meals and Grades One to Two for receiving juice and biscuits.

Ms. Manickchand: Except that all the Grades One and Two children are a subset that are going to have both hot meals and juice and biscuits, then we clearly mean something else. Would the Hon. Member be kind enough to explain?

Ms. Henry: Just to make a distinction, the hot meal school feeding programme is in Regions 1, 7, 8 and 9 and, in those regions, they are not provided with the juice and biscuits. So, in cases where we provide the juice and biscuits, there are only for Grades One and Two and those are not in the Hinterland regions. That being said, I am also being advised that there are some Hinterland schools that benefit also from juice and biscuits, as you would know.

Ms. Manickchand: We heard that the removal of the \$2 billion “Because We Care” grant was going to realise an increase in the number of students and the quantities of meals that were going

to be provided. Could the Hon. Minister advise this House about how many new persons will come on to the system to benefit from either the hot meals or the juice and biscuits programme?

Ms. Henry: The reason there is an increase in cost is because 76 new schools will be benefiting from the expansion programme. As I said before, we are expanding the hot meal programme in Regions 1, 7, 8 and 9.

Ms. Manickchand: Could the Hon. Minister kindly advise if that expansion was planned for in the 2014 to 2018 Strategic Plan?

Ms. Henry: Yes, it is an activity listed in that plan.

Ms. Manickchand: Would the Hon. Member accept, then, that this is not an expansion that would use the \$2 billion that was allocated for the “Because We Care” cash grant? It was already planned; it was already going to be implemented in addition to the “Because We Care” cash grant. It was there in the 2014 plan.

Ms. Henry: I have to say that your comments are noted, at this stage, but I do not necessarily have to agree with you.

Mr. Chairman: I will put the question after this question, Hon. Member.

Ms. Manickchand: Line item 6301 - Education Subventions and Grants: Would this be the line item that caters for the provision of school uniforms to children in primary schools? Is this one of the national line items or is this a Georgetown line item?

Ms. Henry: This is a national sum. I am guided. I understand that these are the coastal regions; it does not include the hinterland regions.

Mr. Chairman: I will now put the question. Hon. Member, you have your last question.

Ms. Manickchand: Line item 6224 - Print and Non-Print Materials: Is this where exercise books are bought for primary schools? If yes, is the Hon. Member aware that schools on the coastland have not received exercise books for the September to December term? Is the Hon. Member comfortable with that position? When would those persons who have not yet received their September to December quota of exercise books receive their exercise books?

Ms. Henry: Yes. This is the line item that caters for exercise books and my understanding is that students will be in receipt of exercise books shortly.

Programme: 404 Primary Education - \$2,769,746,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 405 - Secondary Education - \$3,180,447,000

Ms. Manickchand: Line item 6224 - Print and Non-Print Materials: Would this be where we purchase textbooks for secondary school children?

Ms. Henry: The answer is yes.

Ms. Manickchand: Is the Hon. Member aware that, as of today, textbooks have not reached coastal schools, including schools in and around Georgetown? Could the Hon. Member tell us if she is comfortable with that position and when the textbooks are going to reach those children, given that we are three weeks away from the close of the second term of this year?

Ms. Henry: The answer is yes. This is the line item that covers textbooks and my understanding is that the schools are currently in the process of receiving textbooks. In the beginning of the term, the distribution of textbooks...and that process will continue to the end of this term. So it is a continuous process.

Ms. Manickchand: Would the Hon. Member be able to tell us which schools received their textbooks so far?

Ms. Henry: That information will be forthcoming before the end of the week.

Ms. Manickchand: Would the Hon. Member indicate to us if it is under this line item we distribute exercise books to secondary school students?

Ms. Henry: The answer is yes.

Ms. Manickchand: Is the Hon. Member aware that, as of today, schools in and around Georgetown or not 20 minutes away from Georgetown are yet to receive their September to December exercise books as well as their January to March exercise books, and that we are three weeks away from the close of the second term?

Ms. Henry: I am advised that they have received their exercise books.

Ms. Manickchand: I just want to clear this; we are in this House. Is the Hon. Member saying that all the secondary schools that are to benefit, under this line item, have received their exercise books?

Ms. Henry: The process, as I understand it, is ongoing.

Ms. Manickchand: So then, Sir...

Mr. Chairman: I will now put the question.

Ms. Manickchand: Sir, one more...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, this is your last question. Please go ahead.

Ms. Manickchand: Line item 6301 - Education Subventions and Grants \$554,423,000 is allocated or proposed. Is this the line item under which secondary school students from our 110 secondary schools will receive their uniform grants?

Ms. Henry: The answer is yes.

Ms. Manickchand: So, is this a national head, Hon. Minister?

Ms. Henry: This line item covers the coastal regions; it excludes the hinterland regions for uniforms.

Programme: 405 - Secondary Education - \$3,180,447,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 406 - Post Secondary/Tertiary Education - \$3,442,105,000

Ms. Manickchand: Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees: There is an increase of 26 persons here. Could the Hon. Member tell us who they are?

Ms. Henry: While I may not be able to say who they are because of the names, I could certainly say what their positions are.

11.38 p.m.

There are three Instructors, two Dormitory Supervisors, one Social Worker, one Nursing Assistant, one Foreman, one Administrative Manager, two Assistant Instructors, two Senior Training Officers, one Canteen Attendant, a Driver, six Machinists, three Lecturers, one Technician, one Assistant Lecturer, one Lecturer, two Accounts Clerks, one Stores Clerk and one Librarian.

Ms. Manickchand: Are these all for the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Programme?

Ms. Henry: No. Do you want an idea where they are from?

Ms. Manickchand: Sir, if they were, that would have been the end of my questioning for this Programme because I know the needs there. If they are not all for the TVET Programme, then I would like to know, one, for which programme these 26 people were recruited? Two, how were these persons recruited? Was it through public advertisement by the World Wide Web or wherever? If so, to whom were the advertisements published?

Ms. Henry: These persons were recruited for the Sophia Training Centre, Kuru Kuru Training Centre and the New Opportunity Corps. We have also recruited for the TVET Programme, as you are familiar with. My understanding is that these positions were advertised through the public service.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6301 – Education Subventions and Grants: I noted, on page 574, that an allocation to the Critchlow Labour College, in 2015, was \$5 million. I see an allocation of \$15 million in the year 2016. Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say why there is this increase and what justification she can provide, with regard to documentation, to cause the Ministry to increase the allocation by 200%?

Ms. Henry: First of all, the increase is less than \$500,000 because, again, last year, the sum of \$1.5 million was allocated. So, it is not as you are interpreting the numbers. Again, you have to go back and look to see. That being said, we do plan to provide additional services at the Critchlow Labour College and the extent to which we are expanding will have to be circulated to you.

Mr. G. Persaud: I wish to direct the Hon. Minister to page 574 of the Budget document from which I have just read the figures. So, I do not know where I have to get the other figures from.

Mr. Chairman: Is the Hon. Minister in a position to answer the question?

Ms. Manickchand: According to the Minister, the entire book is wrong.

Ms. Henry: The number reflected on that page is for four months and the figure I gave to you just now is for the entire year.

Ms. Teixeira: I am on line item 6301. Page 574 is a reference for it in the Budget book. Now, a lot of statements were made during the speeches about technical and vocational and training, *et cetera*, via, Government Ministers. In the listing of agencies to benefit from the \$2 billion allocated, which is an increase of \$683 million from last year, a number of technical institutes are there, which is good. However, why are certain other technical institutes not included? The Critchlow Labour College and the Government Technical Institute moved from \$72,471,000 to \$208 million; the Guyana Industrial Training Centre from \$1,844,000 to \$3,456,000; the Kuru Kuru Training Centre from \$8,873,000 to \$22,960,000; the Linden Technical Institute from \$51,394,000 to \$124,479,000; and the TVET Council, which I am a great advocate of, from \$12,969,000 to \$25,464,000.

However, why are other technical institutes also run by Government or managed by Government - the New Amsterdam Technical Institute (NATI), the Essequibo Technical Institute and the Upper Corentyne Technical Institute near Skeldon, which I went to, the Mahaicony Technical Institute, which is also a new one, and the Leonora Technical Institute... Could the Minister please explain why were all the technical institutes not included, even if one had to reduce the figures a bit so that all got something? It is very strange that these newer ones, Leonora, Mahaica, Corentyne and Essequibo are not included and NATI has been there for quite a long time. I want an explanation on that. I have some other follow-up questions, but I would like to have my first set of questions that has to do with the technical institutes answered.

Ms. Henry: I am being advised, at this time, that there are two different funding streams: one, these are subvention agencies. In the case of the New Amsterdam Technical Institute and the

Essequibo Technical Institute, they are under the chart of accounts, which is different from this. Therefore, they are spread across the Programme.

Ms. Teixeira: Well, could I please have an answer to do with Leonora, Mahaicony and Corentyne? Could I have an explanation? Tell me where they are in this Programme which is dealing with post-secondary/tertiary education, if they are not subvention agencies?

Ms. Henry: I thought it was implied that, once it is not a subvention agency, it was under the Chart of Accounts. I gave those two as examples. I would like to specify that all the agencies that are not listed here as subvention agencies are considered under the chart of accounts. So, there are two different funding streams here.

Ms. Teixeira: Could the Hon. Member say where? All of these agencies have boards or management committees that run them. So, giving me an example of two, could you tell me which chart of accounts reflects the inclusion of all the other technical institutes that are not listed under line item 6301?

Ms. Henry: I will certainly provide that later, but what I can point out, at this point in time, is that they are from line item 6221 and they go all the way right through to line item 6294. So, I will be happy to provide you with a breakdown but that is where...

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, a follow-up: As the Hon. Minister has offered, to provide the information, could she additionally provide just a summation: Essequibo Technical Institute -X million or half of a million; I do not need all the chart of accounts. What I need is the sum that each of these institutions, whether under the chart of accounts, under line item 6301...how are they benefiting from allocations from the Treasury?

Secondly, my next set of questions has to do with the University of Guyana. I need a clarification. One billion, six hundred million dollars has been allocated for the Berbice Campus and the Turkeyen Campus, if I add them. Could you say whether the Government has changed its position to do with the student loan? That was removed, in 2015, from the Budget. I am not seeing it here, so, has the Government put it somewhere else or has it continued with its position that the student loan arrangements for the University are aborted, in a sense?

Ms. Henry: The student loan is not catered for in this Budget line item. [*Interruption by Mr. Ali.*]

Mr. Chairman hit gavel.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Ali...

Mr. Ali: My apologies, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: I must tell you that there is nothing that you can apologise for here. I expect you to stand until I am through with you, sir.

Mr. Ali: Yes, Sir. I am standing.

Mr. Chairman: That conduct will not be tolerated. You will be invited to leave this Chamber if you do that again.

Mr. Ali: Okay, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: And, the answer could not be okay.

Mr. Ali: I understand you, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you. Let us please go ahead with what we have to do.

Ms. Teixeira: I want to be very clear on it. Is the Hon. Member saying that there is no provision under line item 6301 for student loans at the University of Guyana? It was removed in 2015. I am asking if there is no provision... The Minister of Finance, I see, is rising. Maybe he would clarify that for us?

Minister of Finance [Mr. Jordan]: The Student Loan Agency is a Ministry of Finance agency, so I think I could answer for it. As we said last year, the Student Loan Agency has accumulated enough money for the fund to now revolve. So, the fund is revolving; there is no need for Government's contribution at this time.

Ms. Manickchand: Sir, just to be clear, and if Your Honour would just have a little bit of patience because this is new not only to this Government, but it was something that was

proposed before, the way these Programmes have been broken up. Before, it all came under one head or two heads.

11.53 p.m.

Is the Hon. Minister of Finance or whomever Minister is competent to answer, saying then there is going to be no injection of state funds, new state, into the Student Loan Fund. May I follow-up, Sir? Is the Hon. Minister of Finance in a position to tell us whether students have been repaying as they should have been to cause the fund to be fully revolving as first envisioned?

Mr. Jordan: I said the fund has accumulated enough money as of now to revolve, but if the situation changes then we will start doing our contributions again. As of now, it does not require money, at least for another two years. If we can improve the recovery rate, which is very low at the moment, we would not have to put in money anymore. By the way, it is almost \$10 billion that is outstanding in student loans.

Ms. Manickchand: Sir, it is one follow-up on that. Could the Hon. Minister of Finance tell us what is being done to recover the outstanding \$10 billion?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Ms. Manickchand, the Chairman should not interfere with your scheme of questioning. It seems to me that I should remind you that the Ministry of Finance is the next agency to be considered by this Assembly and, perhaps, some questions could be directed then, but, I will leave that to your good judgement.

Ms. Manickchand: Sir, I will be guided by you except that if it is not provided for under the Ministry of Finance then we would not be able to ask anything.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, do not be guided by me, just proceed if you wish.

Ms. Manickchand: The question stands, Mr. Chairman. What is being done, if anything, this Government is going to do, to recover the almost \$10 million that the Minister of Finance said is outstanding?

Mr. Jordan: I will answer. A paper is before the Cabinet with a range of options which I do not want to disclose now until Cabinet has considered it.

Mr. Lumumba: Line item 6301, Education Subventions and Grants: Hon. Minister, I will like to know whether the sums of money set aside for the University of Guyana will include the construction of a new library for the students.

Ms. Henry: That is a capital item and we will deal with it when we get to capital expenditure.

Programme: 406 – Post Secondary/Tertiary Education - \$3,442,105,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Programme: 407 – Cultural Preservation and Conservation – \$739,404,000

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6116, Contract Employees: Could the Hon. Minister tell us why is there this huge increase from \$19.3 million to \$83.2 million and why the staffing details show only an increase of nine employees. Could we know the emoluments and designations of the contract workers?

Ms. Henry: I will be happy to lay over the information as it relates to the designation and emoluments of the contract workers. That will be done before the end of the week.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6291, National and Other Events,- \$372.377 million: Could the Hon. Minister indicate if this is the line item under which funds are allocated for the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary and if there are any other activities included in this amount? I will ask follow-up questions after that.

Ms. Henry: Yes. This is the line item that caters for the 50th Anniversary. The sum of \$300 million is allocated to that. In addition to the 50th Anniversary, there are other events such as Mashramani, Emancipation, Arrival Day, International Day of the Monument Sites, Phillip Moore Lecture Series. Cultural policy is also covered under this. The National Dance Festival, the National Drama Festival, Steel Pan Competition and the Amerindian Month activities are under this item.

Ms. Teixeira: Could we ask the Hon. Minister to please provide us with a breakdown of the \$372 million by activity as projected in the Budget 2016? What would be useful is to know who comprise the members of the organising bodies because we are hearing about three different bodies for the 50th Anniversary. Could she advise which body she is in charge of, in terms of the

preparations or planning of the 50th Anniversary of Independence? There are three bodies we are reading about in the newspapers. It would help if the Hon. Minister could tell us which one comes under the Ministry of Education, Department of Culture, Youth and Sport.

Ms. Henry: To give a breakdown: for Mashramani the sum of \$28 million allocated, for Emancipation - \$8.5 million, International Day of Monument Sites - \$3 million, Indian Arrival Day - \$6.3 million, Phillip Moore Lecture Series - \$1.1 million, Cultural policy - \$4 million, National Dance Festival - \$6 million, National Drama Festival - \$11 million, Steel Pan Competition - \$2.2 million and Amerindian Month activities - \$1.9 million.

As it relates to the \$300 million dollars, it has been broken into six categories. Those categories include culture, which includes academia and events, the publication of *Guyana at 50* for the sum of \$194 million, youth activities for \$8 million, sport - \$4.2 million, commemorative activities, including stamps, coins, souvenirs and memorabilia - \$61 million, public relations and media - \$26.1 million and contingency planning - \$6.2 million, which brings us to a total of \$300 million. The calendar of activities is available for you to have a look at.

As it relates to the planning and execution of activities related the 50th Anniversary, there is a National Commemorative Commission in which the Opposition is invited to be a part of. I sit as co-chairperson in addition to Minister Roopnarain. There are representatives from the Government, private sector, organisations such as youth representatives. The Opposition is expected to have a representative there. It was invited. We also have an Amerindian representative. The commission consists of fourteen members. The line Ministries would be the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs and the Ministry of Education which are part of the National Commemorative Commission.

Ms. Teixeira: It is a follow-up question, Mr. Chairman. In the list of events, which are covered under line item 6291, is Arrival Day, 5th May, and it covers all those who arrived in Guyana, from the first people to new migrants of the present or the future. Therefore there is no provision for Arrival Day. There is no such thing as Indian Arrival Day. It is Arrival Day for all arrivals. I am glad to see that a number of the events are being marked, but I find it rather odd that Amerindian heritage has been given a small amount. I guess, maybe, that is because it is covered by the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs.

For Mashramani, there is \$28 million: Could the Minister advise me since there is no Mashramani parade this year? Mashramani under the old Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport spent \$16 million, so \$28 million is quite a large amount for the Mashramani celebration. Could the Minister tell me what does the \$28 million cover since there would be no Mashramani parade?

Ms. Henry: The Mashramani activities, which would traditionally occur with the exception of the float parade, will be covered. These activities would include but are certainly not limited to the Calypso Competition. There were several competitions, as the Minister is aware and there was the final for that event. There are the Chutney Competition, the Soca Competition, the Children's Mashramani Competition which we organised and participated in; there is Panorama, and several other activities we are undertaking for Mashramani 2016.

Ms. Teixeira: Hon. Member, the Chutney Competition, for example, people paid to go in; people did not pay to go into Calypso Competition and the Soca Competition has always been run privately. In the past the Government never supported the Soca Competition. It was run by a company for profit making purposes. I never heard of Panorama so I cannot comment on that. We understand the Children's Mashramani Competitions, but the \$28 million does not explain itself for some of the events you are speaking to. We would like to have greater details on how the \$28 million was used. From what you are saying it has been or is about to be used because today is Mashramani Day.

As I am on my feet, happy Mashramani everybody, even though there is no Mashramani parade. We can parade out of here at 2.00 a.m. and have our own Mashramani here. Mr. Chairman, I will lead the way. I just want to ask those questions about Mashramani because the \$28 million seems as a major increase.

12.08 a.m.

While on my feet, could I ask if there is money in this head for the expansion at D'Urban Park, the model or design. Is there money in here for that or am I looking in the wrong place?

Ms. Henry: As the Hon. Member would know that for competitions, prize moneys have to be given out and that type of thing and so those do incur a cost. What I would like to do is to

provide her with a breakdown which I certainly can do. Having said that, the second question, on D'Urban Park, does not fall under the remit of the Ministry of Education.

Ms. Manickchand: Your Honour, I heard Ms. Teixeira said - it was not refuted and there is also a live news report or an account - that there were two competitions recently held, one Saturday and one Sunday, both national and both sponsored by the state. The Chutney Competition audience were asked to pay \$500 to enter and the Calypso Competition was free. Could the Hon. Member explain that?

Ms. Henry: As it relates to the cost, which was attached to the Chutney Competition, that was purely on the doings of Region 3 administration that had the responsibility for organising the finals for that event. That was not the doings of the Ministry of Education Department of Culture, Youth and Sport.

Ms. Manickchand: Were the chutney finals like the calypso finals a national event? If yes, is the Hon. Minister comfortable with one cultural finals an entrance is fee being charged as opposed to another?

Your Honour, I have to confess this is not my original knowledge. This is an account I saw by someone, who is clearly either a patron, fan or an interested citizen in the cultural activities of Guyana, was expressing his concern with the fact that one competition was advertised and given promotions on the radio and television and another one was not. One had an entrance fee attached to it and another one was not. I heard what the Minister said that Region 3 was running it, but I would like to know if this was a national event being held in a region, perhaps for diversity, and if the Government is comfortable with this kind of disparity.

Ms. Henry: I do need to provide a bit of clarity here. First of all, I would like to say that this is not the first time that the Department of Youth, Sport and Culture is undertaking these activities. Having said that, Banks DIH traditionally would have sponsored the Calypso Competition finals and usually it absorbed the cost, so patrons do not pay to go into that. That happened prior to this year Mashramani celebration, and it was happening before.

However, in the case of Chutney Competition, it is not sponsored and therefore the Region 3 bid for the finals and it attracted a cost. Having recognised the disparity, the Ministry will ensure,

moving forward, that it will correct the disparities and that whatever obtains for the Chutney Competition will obtain for Calypso Competition or what obtains for the Calypso Competition *vice versa* will obtain for the Chutney Competition. As we move forward, we will ensure that where there are disparities they are reduced or eliminated if we can.

Mr. Neendkumar: I would like to say, under line item 6224, Print and Non-Print Materials, that I see the big increase from \$1.009 million to \$4 million. I would like to ask why there is this increase. I would like to know whether, under this, there will be the printing and circulation of the Walter Rodney Commission of Inquiry (COI) report.

Mr. Henry: I do not think that question is right-fitted so to speak and therefore I certainly do not have a response for that question.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, do you have another question that you wanted to ask? What is it?

Mr. Neendkumar: Yes. It is a supplemental question. Why are we having this big increase from \$1.009 million to \$4 million for print and non-print materials - for what purpose? Could the Hon. Minister explain to us?

Ms. Henry: For 2015, the sum of \$8 million was spent and in 2016 we are spending \$4 million, having said that this money will be used for the National Museum, the Walter Roth Museum, the National Archives and the Director of Culture administrative support.

Programme: 407 – Cultural Preservation and Conservation - \$739,404,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 408 - Youth - \$188,141,000

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees: I notice the amount has moved from \$8.1 million to \$36.4 million, an increase of 450 % or by \$28 million. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister if she could provide us with the list of designations and salaries of these contracted workers, particularly since the staffing details show an increase of only three.

Ms. Henry: I can certainly provide that list.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6261, Local Travel and Subsistence: I notice the amount moved from \$4.3 million to \$10 million. I would like to ask why there is this large increase and please provide details of this increase.

Ms. Henry: For 2015, the sum of \$8.9 million was spent. For 2016, we are talking about \$10 million. Therefore this money will be used to do field visits, educational tours, youth exchange programmes. It will also be used for President's Youth Award Republic of Guyana (PYARG) youth work.

Ms. Teixeira: I am going to line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships), basically out of desperation. I cannot find where the New Opportunity Corps (NOC) has disappeared to. It used to be under the old Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport. It is not under the Ministry of Home Affairs; it is not under any Ministry. Where has it gone? This is the only juvenile rehabilitation centre in the entire country. I cannot find it. I have been going through all the Ministries to look for it and I have asked Ministers but they do not seem to know. I am desperately asking the Minister under line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships), \$40 million, which I know would be absurdly ridiculous to cover anything to do with NOC. Where has the NOC gone and who is managing this institution of a 170 persons who were sent there by the court as a detention centre? Please help me Minister. I would appreciate that.

Ms. Henry: The New Opportunity Corps is under Programme 6 and it being managed by the Department of Culture, Youth and Sport as it was previously managed by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport.

Ms. Teixeira: Is that Programme 408?

Ms. Henry: We are in Programme 8 and that is under Programme 6.

Ms. Teixeira: Could you just give me the number, Minister? We, who are not in the Ministry every day, do not think of 1, 2, and 3, 4, 5, 6 just give the programme number. Is that Programme 406 or is that under technical institutes?

Ms. Henry: It is Programme 406.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, do you have a question or a programme that you want to ask a question? You are changing, it this or that. Please help us all to follow you.

Ms. Teixeira: Certainly, I will try to help you, Sir, because I am trying to help myself. I would like to know where the NOC has gone and that is what I am trying to find out.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, the question is: Where is the NOC?

Ms. Henry: As I said before, it is under Programme 406, given that it has not received a subvention, the individual chart of accounts will have to be looked at to get exactly where the funding is going to the New Opportunity Corps.

Ms. Teixeira: I thank the Hon. Member. It is except... but I do just wish to point out that Programme 406 deals with both secondary, tertiary education and NOC is dealing with children from ages 11 to 16 years old. Therefore it may be out of the order that it does not belong under post- secondary education. It is for 11-year-old children to 16-year-old-children who are in conflict with the law and therefore they have no place under that programme.

Some of the members of your staff know that institution is very dear to my heart. Although I am on the wrong programme, I am glad that I asked the question because we did not know where we were looking for it. I would appreciate knowing whatever data there are, what is the budget allocation for NOC, how many children are there and what is the staffing and there should be a budget number for NOC. Could I then recommend to please consider that it is not under the programme for post- secondary/tertiary education but it is a rehabilitation institution.

Ms. Henry: I thank the Hon. Member for her comment and her concerns are noted.

12.23 a.m.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships): I see that the amount has moved from \$8.4 million to \$40 million. I noticed that it is an increase of five times. Could the Hon. Minister provide us with the programme and location? Secondly, is there a course outline, a curriculum, and could the Hon. Minister tell us what kind of training?

Ms. Henry: This provision caters for the Youth Empowerment Programme, which is now being implemented for 2016. The allocation will offset expenses for training in five thematic areas,

namely workshop and camp and admin. The PYARG programme will also benefit here. That is it.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6272, Electricity Charges: I see that it has moved from \$2 million to \$20.7 million, an increase by 10 folds. Could the Hon. Minister please provide the list of buildings and locations where services are provided, and the specific amounts?

Ms. Henry: This will cater for our youth friendly spaces.

Mr. Neendkumar: Under line item 6301, Education Subventions and Grants, I see that there is no allocation. I would like to ask: Why there is no provision and is this the way we are going to treat our youths, our best assets of our country?

Ms. Henry: For 2016, given our work plan, we did not allocate any sums under that line item.

Mr. Neendkumar: As a supplemental, I would like to ask: Is there no subvention for our youths in training and development?

Ms. Henry: Two questions before, I indicated to this Assembly that we are doing training for our young people. The Youth Empowerment Programme caters for young persons and therefore that is training for our young people. The President's Youth Award Republic of Guyana programme is also training for our young people. If the Member looks at line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships), I think he will get a better sense and understanding of what we are doing for our young people, as it relates to training.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6264, Vehicle Spares and Service: I see that it has gone up from \$445,000 to \$1,045,000, more than double. Could the Hon. Minister provide us with some details?

Ms. Henry: For the 2015, the sum of \$2.2 million was allocated and for the year 2016, we are talking about \$1 million which is really a decrease.

Programme: 408 – Youth – \$188,141,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 409 – Sport – \$414,099,000

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees: I see that there is a total of \$30.4 million, an increase of \$30 million. Could the Hon. Minister provide us with a list of designation and salaries of these contracted workers?

Ms. Henry: I will be happy to provide that list.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, will you provide the information at a later time?

Ms. Henry: Yes. It is before the end of the week, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings: I see that there is a total of \$21.5 million. Could the Hon. Minister provide us with an explanation, a list of buildings and the locations and the amount of moneys that will be designated to the specific buildings?

Ms. Henry: This increase caters for maintenance works such as the painting of stands and electrical works in the VIP section of the National Synthetic Track. It also caters for upgrading and plumbing works and remodelling of the storeroom. The allocation caters for the maintenance of electrical systems, including lights for the National Stadium. It caters for work to be done both at the synthetic track and the National Stadium.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6255, Maintenance of Other Infrastructure, \$9.4 million: Could the Hon. Minister provide us with a list of the locations and other infrastructure and how much money will be spent on each?

Ms. Henry: The two locations will be the National Synthetic Track and the National Stadium. This increase caters for infrastructural works such as the concreting some areas, gates, drain covers, fencing, the electrical room needs some work, there is a transformer area that we will be looking at, routine weeding and cleaning of the compound, trimming of trees and upgrading of the parking area at the National Stadium.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6272, Electricity Charges: There is an increase from zero to \$55 million. Could the Hon. Minister please provide a list and location where this service will be provided? It is whether it is pre-meter or what type of system will be in place – prepaid.

Ms. Henry: This increase in electricity charges is to offset shortfalls which are normally catered for by the Ministry of Finance. This year we will be looking at the lighting facilities in and around the grounds which are at the National Stadium and the National Synthetic Track.

Programme: 409 – Sport – \$414,099,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 401 – Policy Development and Administration – \$54,452,000

Ms. Manickchand: Project 1215000, Administrative Buildings, “Extension of building”: Could the Hon. Minister please say what this is for?

Ms. Henry: This is to cater for the extension of the Ministry of Education’s boardroom which is on Brickdam, the main boardroom that is.

Ms. Manickchand: Could the Hon. Minister say if this project is going to be made public? Will the public be invited to bid to be awarded this project?

Ms. Henry: The answer is yes.

Ms. Manickchand: Project 2406600, Land Transport: There is a sum being proposed of \$16 million. Could the Hon. Minister please say why?

Ms. Henry: There are two vehicles that the Ministry plans to acquire. The first being a jeep, which is for \$4 million, and the second being a 32-seater bus, which will be used for transporting our children from the Kuru Kururu area and the Linden Soesdyke Highway. That bus will cost us \$12 million, so \$4 million plus \$12 million will give us the \$16 million.

Programme: 401– Policy Development and Administration – \$54,452,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 402 – Training and Development – \$ 92,871,000

Ms. Manickchand: Project 2607200 – Resource Development Centre: does this refer to National Center for Educational Resource Development (NCERD)?

Ms. Henry: Yes. It does.

12.38 a.m.

Ms. Manickchand: A follow-up question: What would be done with this provision?

Ms. Henry: We will purchase 12 computers, six air-conditioning units, one fax machine, one electric board, two electron beams (E-Beams), two network broadcast systems and two audio/video editing systems.

Ms. Manickchand: A follow-up question: In keeping with the Government's pronouncement that the Learning Channel will no longer be utilising the services of the uplink/downlink debit provided by ...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, is this the question?

Ms. Manickchand: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Could you simply try to save us the lead up?

Ms. Manickchand: Is there any provision, under this or any other head, that would allow for the National Communications Network (NCN) or any other place, other than TVG Channel 28, to provide uplink/downlink services?

Ms. Henry: There is such a provision but that is under current expenditure.

Mr. Ali: Project Code 2607200 - Resource Development Centre: The Hon. Minister said, earlier, under current expenditure, that the Ministry would be spending resources allocated there for the maintenance of the building. The Hon. Minister just stated, under capital expenditure, that she will be using resources allocated here for rehabilitation works to the buildings. Is this not a duplication of resources?

Earlier, the Hon. Minister said that the Ministry would be spending from the current expenditure for the maintenance of the NCERD building. The Hon. Member, Ms. Manickchand, asked specifically whether the Resource Development Centre is the NCERD building, to which the Hon. Minister answered yes. Could the Hon. Minister explain the duplication?

Ms. Henry: They are two different things. One is rehabilitation works and the other is repairs. What I spoke to just now dealt with the up-linking, when I referred to the current expenditure for NCERD, and not rehabilitation or repairs

Mr. Ali: Under current expenditure, there is a line item “Maintenance of Buildings”. Under “Maintenance of Buildings”, the Hon. Minister said that NCERD will be maintained. Under this head, the Hon. Minister is saying that there are resources to rehabilitate the building. Is the building going to be rehabilitated and maintained at the same time? I see this as a duplication of resources. Could the Hon. Minister clarify this issue? It is because the Hon. Minister did say, under “Maintenance of Buildings”, that there are resources to maintain this building.

Ms. Henry: Under current expenditure, I spoke about repairs to buildings. Under capital expenditure, I am speaking about rehabilitation of the Broadcasting Unit, which speaks directly to the procurement of items such as computers, air-conditioning units, fax machines, electronic board and network broadcast. I do not understand where the duplication is and how acquiring these items is duplicative of repairing a building.

Mr. Ali: I wish to read the Legend of project code 2607200 which is contained in the 2016 Budget. This is what the Legend states:

“Provision for Building and Equipment”.

Could the Hon. Minister please explain?

Ms. Henry: The works to be done under capital expenditure would include a complete rehabilitation of the central air-conditioning unit system that was built in 1999. Other rehabilitation work, which has to do with creating a noise-free environment, is also vital. Therefore, sound-proofing work is being done on that Unit. In addition, the equipment, which I mentioned before, will be acquired to assist in the rehabilitation of the Broadcasting Unit.

Ms. Manickchand: Project code 2607200: Would the procurement of these many items, computers, sound-proof systems, *et cetera*, indicate a shift in policy for the Guyana Learning Channel and the broadcast for schools, which policy stated that those channels would be used only for educational purposes and not for any political or public service broadcasts of that nature?

Ms. Henry: There is no shift in any policy.

Mr. Neendkumar: Project code 4503500 – National Sports Commission: I see an amount of \$72.8... but there is a transfer to Programme 409 – Sports. Should we deal with this now or later?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you have asked for the floor. You will ask the question and you will do what you wish to do.

Mr. Neendkumar: I will go to the Legend. The Legend states:

“Payment of Retention”.

Could the Hon. Minister tell us how much money is being paid for retention, for which projects and for what purpose?

Ms. Henry: We are on Programme 402 and I believe that the Hon. Member is speaking to Programme 409. I will appreciate it if when we get to Programme 409, we address that question in its appropriate place.

Programme: 402 – Training and Development - \$92,871,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 403 – Nursery Education – \$271,321,000

Ms. Manickchand: Project code 1215300 – Nursery Schools: I see a proposed provision of \$100 million. Could the Hon. Minister tell us which schools and how much each school would cost?

Ms. Henry: The schools are the Smythe Street Nursery School - \$50 million and South Road Bourda Nursery School - \$50 million.

Ms. Manickchand: A follow-up question: What would be the capacity of each school and will there be public tender for the construction of these two schools?

Ms. Henry: To answer the second question first, the answer is yes. We do plan to do public tender. In fact, I understand that that has already been concluded. In the case of Smythe Street

Nursery School, it has a capacity for 262 students. In the case of South Road Nursery School, it has a capacity of 250-300 students.

Mr. Ali: A follow-up: The Hon. Minister just said that the tender process has already been completed. This is strange. Could the Hon. Minister say how is it that the tender process has been completed when the allocation has not been approved by the National Assembly?

Ms. Henry: My understanding is that it is a rollover project. Therefore, that aspect has already been concluded for the Smythe Street Nursery School.

Mr. Ali: A follow-up: If this is indeed a rollover project, Hon. Minister, could you state the original sum of the project, the name of the contractor and when it was awarded?

Ms. Henry: The name of the contractor is Kares Engineering Inc. The original sum is \$53 million. It was awarded in December, 2015.

Mr. Ali: A follow-up: The Hon. Minister just informed the Committee of Supply that this contract was awarded in December, 2015, which is just a few months ago. The Minister then told us that it is a rollover project and that the total contract sum is \$53 million. The allocation here is \$100 million.

12.53 a.m.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, are you going to ask a question?

Mr. Ali: Yes. I am.

Mr. Chairman: Could you assist us?

Mr. Ali: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Please do that.

Mr. Ali: The \$100 million is for two projects. The Hon. Minister said that the tender process was completed for the two projects. I asked specifically, Hon. Minister, when this was done. What is the position of that project?

Ms. Henry: The position for the other project is that it is to be advertised.

Ms. Manickchand: Are consultants going to be hired to supervise these projects?

Ms. Henry: Yes.

Ms. Manickchand: Is the Ministry going to go to public tender for this?

Ms. Henry: Yes.

Ms. Manickchand: Project code 2607100- Furniture and Equipment: I see a sum of \$415,000 proposed for the purchase of furniture. Would this be furniture for the students?

Ms. Henry: This is not for the students. This is for the office of the Assistant Chief Education Officer (ACEO).

Ms. Manickchand: Would project code 2607400 -School Furniture and Equipment cater for the students?

Ms. Henry: Yes.

Ms. Manickchand: How many pairs of furniture is expected to be bought under this project code?

Ms. Henry: For the children, there would be 100 nursery set; for teachers, 60 chairs and 20 tables; 20 large storage cupboards; 20 small storage cupboards; 10 long display boards; 10 short display boards; 30 screens; 30 lunch racks, and 14 wall fans. In terms of equipment, four small refrigerators, four water coolers, three television sets, two DVD players, and 20 computer interactive games.

Ms. Manickchand: Would the Hon. Minister say if the plan to move all of our nursery school to the Escuela Nueva setting using the horseshoe shape furniture has been abandoned or is this to begin implementation of that plan?

Ms. Henry: It is still on-going.

Mr. Neendkumar: Project code 2607300- Early Childhood Education Project: The legend states that the allocation caters for capacity building, supplying of teaching and learning materials, and

parental caregiver education. It is a total of \$160 million. Could the Hon. Minister please give us a breakdown?

Ms. Henry: Component one is capacity building and that would be for Grade 1 teachers to the tune of \$84 million. Component two is for the provision of early childhood resource kits to all nursery and Grade 1 classes for \$10 million. Component three is for parental and caregivers' education and that is \$42.9 million. Component four, which is project implementation support administration and monitoring and evaluation is for \$22 million and that would give you a total of \$160 million.

Programme: 403 –Nursery Education - \$271,321,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 404 – Primary Education \$104,974,000

Ms. Manickchand: Project code 1215400 - Primary Schools: The profile states that there would be the construction of the teaching block at Parfaite Harmonie and St. Steven's Schools. There seems to be some work that is on-going there. I would be grateful if the Hon. Minister can tell us how the money is proposed to be split.

Ms. Henry: In the case of Parfaite Harmonie, it is \$49.6 million and in the case of St. Steven's School, it is \$15 million. There is also a consultant fee for \$2 million attached to St. Stevens Primary School.

Ms. Manickchand: Is Parfaite Harmonie going to be supervised by the Ministry's Engineering Department?

Ms. Henry: They both will be supervised by consultants.

Ms. Manickchand: When we were told earlier that there was a \$2 million set aside for the supervision of St. Steven's Primary School, was that not true?

Ms. Henry: I have to make a correction. The consultancy fee is related to Parfaite Harmonie School. The internal supervision will be done for the St. Steven's Primary School.

Mr. Ali: Since the consultant is already in place at Parfaite Harmonie, am I to understand that this project has started?

Ms. Henry: This is just a provision being made and the work has not started. That is not in place.

Mr. Ali: Could the Hon. Minister say whether any of the two projects were started last year?

Ms. Henry: Neither of the two projects was started last year.

Mr. Ali: Hon. Minister, are these two new projects? Could you say what the timeframe for the two projects are?

Ms. Henry: The duration for St. Steven Primary School is four months and the duration for the Parfaite Harmonie School is eight months.

Mr. Ali: I am very happy to know that both projects have duration of less than a year, which would see them completed in this financial year. However, I wish to take you to profile 131, 9.1 - total project cost \$80,522,000. There is a budget, this year, for completion of these buildings, of \$66,704,000. Could you explain this?

Ms. Henry: I am advised that the difference caters for the retention that is to be paid.

Mr. Ali: The total budgeted allocation for the two projects was itemised by the Hon. Minister. In that allocation, provision for contingency and provision for retention is normally included. Even if we were to assume that it is not included...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I think that we are going to have a speech.

Mr. Ali: No. I am going straight to the question. Even if we are to assume that the retention is not included, if we add a retention fee of 10% of the amount, it would still not amount to \$80,552,000.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, what is your question? Let us have it now please.

Mr. Ali: Could the Hon. Minister please explain this to the House?

1.08 a.m.

Ms. Henry: My earlier response still stands. I am told that it is retention that is accounting for the difference and that is what I am guided by.

Ms. Manickchand: Project code 2607400 – School Furniture and Equipment: Would this be furniture for the school children in the primary schools and is this a national figure or a Georgetown figure?

Ms. Henry: It is for Georgetown.

Ms. Manickchand: Given that it is only \$38 million, would the Hon. Minister feel comfortable in saying that there is practically a saturation of furniture for the Georgetown primary school students and this allocation is, more or less, to fix those that are broken?

Ms. Henry: If I were to give my view, I would say that I do not feel that this is too much for Georgetown. I believe it is because it is required and that is why it is being asked for.

Ms. Manickchand: I am not sure what question the Hon. Member was answering; that was not my question. My question is: is \$38 million the only sum that is required - I do not think that it is too much or enough; I did not offer an opinion on that - because there is practically a saturation, that means there is enough, in a general sense for most of the primary school students and this is to fix those broken and to repair those that were destroyed, *et cetera*? This is because this is not nearly enough, if everything were to be supplied.

Mr. Chairman: After the Minister answers, one further question would be allowed and then I would put the question.

Ms. Henry: Again, in my opinion, we recognise that it is needed and we do not believe that Georgetown has reached saturation point, hence the needs for us to repair these furniture in Georgetown.

Mr. G. Persaud: Project code 1215400 – Primary Schools: According to the Legend, \$80,522,000 was allocated for the activities stated in this profile. In trying to get the answer with regards to the difference of \$66,704,000, I looked at the profile and I saw that in 2015, a sum of \$11,207,000 was allocated to the Ministry of Education. Could the Hon. Minister say what was

done with that allocation in 2015, since this is a rollover project, as the Hon. Minister would have stated?

Ms. Henry: I would have to provide the breakdown of how this \$11 million was utilised in 2015 subsequently.

Programme: 404 – Primary Education – \$104,974,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 405 – Secondary Education – \$1,319,886,000

Ms. Manickchand: Project code 1215500 – Secondary Schools: There is a sum of \$491,740,000 proposed. I have several questions on this project code. Does this sum include the Aurora Secondary School, the construction of which was announced by the Minister of Finance in his Budget speech?

Ms. Henry: That is not catered for under this project code.

Ms. Manickchand: Is the Hon. Minister aware of the publicly aired concerns about the missing Aurora Secondary School, the school that was dismantled and then, apparently, disappeared?

Ms. Henry: The Aurora Secondary School is catered for under Region 2.

Mr. Ali: Project code 1215500 – Secondary Schools: Could the Hon. Minister say whether any of the listed projects are multiyear or rollover?

Ms. Henry: Some of the projects are multiyear projects.

Mr. Ali: Could the Hon. Minister state which projects were started last year?

Ms. Henry: The projects that started last year are the rehabilitation of North Ruimveldt Secondary School, the Science Laboratory for North Georgetown, Science Laboratory for Veeden-Hoop School, the Kato Secondary School, Zeeburg Secondary School, St. Ignatius Secondary School, extension of West Demerara Secondary School, extension of Aishalton Secondary School, rehabilitation of St. Rose's High School, rehabilitation of Sand Creek secondary School and the Science Laboratory at Comprehensive Secondary School.

Mr. Ali: Could the Hon. Minister say how much were spent on these projects last year?

Ms. Henry: I would have to provide that information subsequently. I would give the Hon. Member a breakdown.

Mr. Ali: I wish to take the Minister's attention to profile reference 134, 9.13. For 2015, there is a figure of \$105,984,000. Does the Hon. Minister want to confirm this figure?

Ms. Henry: I said I would give the Hon. Member a breakdown of the figure.

Mr. Ali: I am just asking the Hon. Minister whether she would confirm this figure for me, please.

Ms. Henry: I can confirm that figure.

Ms. Manickchand: Project code 1215500 – Secondary Schools: The Hon. Minister mentioned the Kato Secondary School. I would like to ask a couple of questions on the Kato Secondary School. Firstly, has that school been completed? Secondly, was the construction of the Kato Secondary School publicly tendered? Thirdly, was the consultancy to supervise the construction of the Kato Secondary School publicly tendered?

Ms. Henry: It was publicly tendered and it was completed and it is in the practical completion phase.

Ms. Manickchand: The response was that it was publicly tendered. I asked about two specific things and that is because, in this House, it was said that there was corruption under this project.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, do you have two questions to ask? I am beginning to form the impression that the Hon. Members would like us to remain here until daybreak. I have no difficulty with that, but I would like to know that we are making progress in the work. I have a very strong suspicion that some of the answers given here tonight, a great deal of them, were sought before and given. I am suggesting Hon. Members that if you are going to hold the place, then you should put your questions and let us go.

Ms. Manickchand: I did put both questions, but they were not answered.

Mr. Chairman: You have put your questions and you got some answers.

Ms. Manickchand: I did not get the answers.

Mr. Chairman: You got no answers. Hon. Minister, would you, please answer the question of the Hon. Member.

Ms. Henry: The answer would be yes to both areas. It was publicly tendered.

Mr. Chairman: I would allow two more questions after this one.

Ms. Manickchand: I am happy that it is confirmed that both the construction and supervision of that construction were publicly tendered.

Project code 2607500 – Secondary Education Improvement Project: I would be grateful if the Hon. Member would be kind enough to tell us which schools would be built under this project code.

Ms. Henry: The names of the schools are Good Hope Secondary School, Parfait Harmony Secondary School and Yarrowkabra Secondary School.

Ms. Manickchand: Project code 1215600 – President’s College: These much needed activities were recommended in the report of the last Board. Would that be correct?

Ms. Henry: The answer is yes.

1.23 a.m.

Programme: 405 – Secondary Education - \$1,319,886,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 406 – Post Secondary/Tertiary Education - \$1,315,555,000

Mr. Lumumba: Project code 1216000 – University of Guyana - Turkeyen: I notice that \$173,137,000 has been set aside for provision for buildings and equipment. I would like to know if this allocation is the funding for the construction of the new library that is needed at the University of Guyana.

Ms. Henry: The only thing that is happening with the library at the University of Guyana, under this project code, is rewiring.

Mr. Lumumba: I know that there has been a document that was submitted to the Ministry of Education for a new library. Is the Minister saying, at this point in time, that there will be no funding for the new library at the University of Guyana?

Ms. Henry: It is not catered for under this line item.

Mr. Lumumba: My question to the Minister was, since it is not catered for under this project code, is there any consideration or will it be catered for, by this Government, under any other project code at this point in time?

Ms. Henry: Yes, it is catered for and it will be given consideration moving forward but it is not catered for under this project code.

Programme: 406 – Post Secondary/Tertiary Education - \$1,315,555,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 407 – Cultural Preservation and Conservation - \$101,105,000

Mr. Neendkumar: Project code 2508800 – Museum Development: I see there is a sum of \$30,730,000 for the provision of buildings, vehicle, furniture and equipment. Could the Minister offer some explanation?

Ms. Henry: This sum will be used for the procurement of a minibus for the Museum of African Heritage. It will be used to procure chair sets and display cases for artefacts. It will also be used for the Castellani House, the Walter Roth Museum of Anthropology and the Guyana National Museum.

Mr. Neendkumar: In the Description of Project, it states:

“1. Purchase of projectors, surveillance system, air conditioning units, computers and printer – Guyana National Museum.”

Could the Minister give us a breakdown on how much will be spent here?

Ms. Henry: For the Guyana National Museum, the sum of \$5.3 million will be spent on the procurement of a projector, a projector screen, tripod stand, purchase and installation of 16 security cameras, air conditioned units for top floor, air conditioned units for bottom floor, air

conditioned unit for Museum library, air conditioned unit for lecture room, two computers with accessories and one printer.

Mr. Neendkumar: Could the Hon. Minister tell us how much money will be spent for the restoration of and upgrading of the building at Castellani House?

Ms. Henry: The sum of \$14. 6 million will be expended for Castellani House.

Mr. Neendkumar: Could the Minister tell us what will be done there?

Ms. Henry: Restoration and upgrading of the building will be done.

Mr. Neendkumar: Project code 4503800 – National Trust: I see there is a total of \$48 million for the provision of the upgrading of heritage sites. Could the Minister tell us about the heritage sites?

Ms. Henry: The sites that will be upgraded will be the stabilising of the Damon Monument; upgrading of Enmore Martyrs site - construction of a security guard hut and installation of security lights; there will also be the purchasing of a complete solar panel unit and the Dutch Heritage Museum at Fort Island will also benefit from refurbishment.

Mr. Neendkumar: Could the Hon. Minister tell us how much money will be spent for the extension of the information centre and provision of lighting at the 1763 Monument site?

Ms. Henry: I do not have the 1763 Monument listed here.

Mr. Neendkumar: The Description of Project of ref: 157 clearly states:

“1. Extension of information centre and provision for lighting – 1763 Monument site.”

Ms. Henry: I would like to make a correction there. There will be replacement lights that will be done at the 1763 Monument.

Mr. Neendkumar: Could the Hon. Minister tell us how much money will be spent?

Ms. Henry: The sum of \$2.5 million will be expended for that purpose.

Mr. Neendkumar: I would like a breakdown for all seven listed in the Description of Project. Last year, the Hon. Minister promised that there will be some development of the Palmyra monument site. Could the Minister shed some light on this as to why this is not for consideration here?

Ms. Henry: I did not promise that work will be done this year on the Palmyra site. That is still under consideration.

Programme: 407 – Cultural Preservation and Conservation - \$101,105,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 408 – Youth - \$201,000,000

Mr. Neendkumar: Project code 1800300 – Youth: I see there is a total of \$151 million for the provision of training centres, campsites, furniture and equipment. Could the Minister give us a breakdown?

Ms. Henry: The list of activities to be undertaken would include purchase of refrigerator for the Director of Youth’s office, television for that office, a microwave, backup battery, air conditioned unit, an executive chair and camera. There are also some civil works to be done like the rehabilitation and remodelling of the Den Amstel campsite, rehabilitation of the building to accommodate the Training Centre at Coldingen, upgrading of the Madewini Youth Centre and upgrading of the Kuru Kuru Training Centre. All of this will accumulate to \$151 million.

Mr. Neendkumar: Could the Hon. Minister give a breakdown of how much money will be spent on these three specific items?

Ms. Henry: Could the Hon. Member be specific and identify the items to which he refers?

Mr. Neendkumar: The Description of Project states:

- “1. Rehabilitation of building – Coldingen.
2. Rehabilitation and upgrading of Den Amstel camp site, Madewini Youth Camp and Kuru Kuru Training Centre.
3. Purchase of furniture and equipment.”

Ms. Henry: For Den Amstel, it is the sum of \$30 million; for the Training Centre at Coldingen, it is \$60 million; Madewini Youth Camp - \$30 million; and, for the upgrading of the Kuru Kuru Training Centre, it is another \$30 million.

Mr. G. Persaud: Project code 4504000 - Youth Initiative Programme: There is an allocation of \$50 million. Would the Hon. Minister please say to us where the construction and rehabilitation of youth recreational facilities will take place and the cost for each facility?

1.38 a.m.

Ms. Henry: These will occur across various regions. In Region 2, Jacklow Village, Suddie. The scope of work will entail grade, landfill and roll to the tune of \$5 million.

In Region 3, for the villages of Crane, Met en Meerzorg and Tuschen, landfill, grade and roll. The various sums allocated are \$2.5 million for Crane, \$2.5 million for Met en Meerzorg and \$2.5 million for Tuschen. Region Number 4: 'C' Field Sophia - land fill, grade, roll and fence at \$3 million; in 'D' Field Sophia, landfill, grade and roll at \$2.5 million; Tucville: landfill, grade and roll at \$2 million; Sumata Point, Grove: landfill, grade and roll at \$1 million; West Ruimveldt - construction of a fence at \$1 million; South Ruimveldt Park: construction of a walkway at \$1.5 million.

Region 5, Hopetown Village: landfill, grade and fence - \$2.5 million; Region 6: Leslie Holding ground - landfill, grade and roll - \$2 million; Lancaster - resurfacing the basketball court, grade and roll - \$3.5 million; Region 10: Wisroc Community Ground - \$2.5 million will be used for the construction of hard court and installation of air conditioning unit for the research centre. In Christiansburg, there will be landfill, grade, roll and fence at \$2.5 million.

For rehabilitation of the Youth Choice Buildings, in Region 3, Phoenix Park, we have the rehabilitation of a building at \$1 million; in Region 4, West Ruimveldt, we will be repairing the step of a building for \$500,000. In Durban Backlands, we will enclose the bottom flat for another \$500,000. There is also the procurement of a vehicle to support the work to the tune of \$4 million and procurement of sport equipment to the tune of \$1 million. The aggregate of all will be \$50 million.

Programme: 408 – Youth - \$201,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 409 – Sport - \$311,954,000

Mr. Neendkumar: Project code 4503500 - National Sports Commission: I see in the Description of Project, there is payment of retention. Could the Hon. Minister tell us which project and how much money we will be paid for retention?

Ms. Henry: The list will include landfilling for Skeldon Primary School on the Corentyne at \$138,000; upgrading of Canje Secondary School Ground at \$134,000; landfilling of Black Bush Polder Secondary School at \$168,000; upgrading of the school ground at Port Mourant, Corentyne Secondary School, at \$158,000; upgrading of school ground, Berbice Educational Institute, New Amsterdam at \$140,000, upgrading of school ground, New Amsterdam Secondary School, at \$204,000; extension of concrete tarmac and landfilling, New Amsterdam Secondary School, at \$252,000; landfilling for Friendship Ground, Corentyne, at \$150,000; landfilling at Angoy's Avenue, New Amsterdam, at \$150,000; upgrading of Sports Ground at Kildonan at \$280,000; landfilling at Fort Ordinance Playground, East Canje Berbice at \$149,000; repairs to Area H Sports Facility, Rose Hall, Berbice, at \$178,000; construction of footpath bridge, New Amsterdam, at \$201,000; repairs to pavilion and construction of side screen at Fryrish Community Centre at \$117,000; upgrading of ground at Kimbia River, Berbice, at \$945,000; construction of a pavilion at Orealla, Corentyne Berbice, at \$1 million; landscaping at *Kuru Kuru* Primary School at \$1 million; landfilling of field at Bladen Hall Multilateral School at \$100,000; rehabilitation of Mocha Arcadia Community Centre Ground at \$500,000; repairs to boundary fence and landscaping at Lodge Community Ground at \$500,000; landfilling at Samatta Point Playground at \$500,000; rehabilitation of Community Ground at East Ruimveldt at \$500,000; ground enhancement project at Region 2 at \$2 million; ground enhancement project at Region 3 at \$1.5 million; ground enhancement project at Region 5 at \$3.5 million; ground enhancement project at Region 7 at \$3.8 million; and ground enhancement project at Region 10 at \$5.1 million. Those are the retentions.

Mr. Neendkumar: Could the Hon. Minister give us the total amount of money the Ministry has for payment of retention?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, will you answer the question, please?

Ms. Henry: I will be happy to give you a breakdown but I have to take it out from the other activities that are listed there and I will be able to give you that before we conclude this evening.

Mr. Neendkumar: Mr. Chairman, I did not get to ask a lot of questions. That was only one question.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you have one other question to ask. Please proceed.

Mr. Neendkumar: Under project code 4503500 - National Sports Commission - there is a total of \$311,954,000 and the Description of Project has:

“1. Payment of retention.

2. Completion of stand at National Synthetic Track, storerooms at Racquet Centre and Aquatic Centre, fence at the Gymnasium, roof at Cliff Anderson Sports Hall...”

I would like to know how much money was allocated.

“3. Provision for external works at National Stadium including rehabilitation of sewage system.”

I would like to know how much money.

“4. Purchase of server, sports gear and gym equipment.”

I would like to know how much money is allocated.

“5. Provision for ground enhancement programme.”

I would like to know how much money.

Ms. Henry: I will be happy to lay over that information to the Hon. Member.

Programme: 409 – Sport - \$311,954,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 03 Ministry of Finance

Current Expenditure

Programme: 031 – Policy and Administration - 15,375,248,000

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, do you wish a few minutes to enable your team to gather?

Mr. Jordan: You go ahead.

Mr. Chairman: Then I would prefer them to not be moving around.

Mr. Ali: Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister say what would have caused the increase in contracted employees, where they are assigned and, if there are new designations, what these designations are and subsequently provide a list of employees' positions and salaries?

Mr. Jordan: There are eight additions and three deletions. The eight additions are one Public Relations Officer, who came on Monday, 2nd November, 2015, at a salary of \$200,000; two Office Assistants, who came on Friday, 20th November, 2015, at a salary of \$50,000 each; one Clerk General, who came on Tuesday, 20th October, 2015, at a salary of \$53,984; two Accounts Clerks, who came on Wednesday, 7th October, 2015, at a salary of \$53,984 each; one Finance Secretary, who came on Friday, 27th October, 2015, at a salary of \$1 million and one Driver, who came on Saturday, 4th July, 2015, at a salary of \$50,294.

Those who left were one Finance Secretary on Tuesday, 1st September, 2015, whose salary was \$915,713; one Office Assistant on Tuesday, 1st September, 2015, whose salary was \$42,703 and one Accounts Clerk on Thursday, 1st October, 2015, at a salary of \$69,618. The net effect of that is the increase that you get for the year.

Mr. Ali: Line item 6141 - Other Employment Costs: Hon. Minister, there is a substantial move from \$3,475,090,000 to \$6,855,043,000 when you do a comparative analysis. Could you say what would have necessitated this, if it is catering for any potential salary increases and what percentage you have in mind?

Mr. Jordan: We have a set amount there. First of all, this amount has been arrived at purely taking into consideration a set target for the deficit. This figure does not break out, by amounts, every category but I can tell you what it caters for. It caters for the salary increase.

1.53 a.m.

It will cater for new recruits because agencies do not budget for vacancies but, as they fill vacancies, they come to the Ministry of Finance for money. It caters for other employment costs that will go with the new recruits and so on. It caters for when we pay salary in lieu of leave. Those are essentially some of the big items that this head will cater for.

Mr. Ali: Hon. Minister, you have budgeted for a salary increase. Is there a percentage that is playing in your head that you may want to share with us? Whatever it comes up to must be within the affordability of the proposed sum.

Just to avoid you getting up again, line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings - you have some resources set aside there. Would you be willing to share with us what you intend to do? I know that the Ministry is outgrowing its space, so would it not be more practical to seek a newer, bigger building than to continue to expand on this existing building?

Mr. Jordan: I thank the Hon. Member for looking after our interest and welfare, he being an ex-member of the Ministry. At this stage, I would want to stay within the realm of my Budget speech, which is to allow the discussions with the Unions to take place and see where those go. Suffice to say, as I said before, there is a broad allocation in there for salary increases, but it is blended with the other categories of expenditure that have been identified.

In terms of the building, we have not as yet identified moving, although, yes, space is becoming a premium in terms of our spreading activities, but the amounts budgeted for this year will see a painting of the western and southern exterior walls of the building - roughly \$3 million; painting of the interior walls of the Management Information Systems Unit (MISU) aspect of the building - another \$2 million; painting of the interior walls of the Procurement Agency building - \$2 million; painting of exterior walls of the Valuation Division - \$2.5 million; renovation of the ground floor of the Ministry's head office - \$3.5 million; electrical and maintenance of the Administrative building - \$5 million; miscellaneous repairs, carpentry, guttering, plumbing, minor painting and so on - another \$7 million. That is essentially it.

Mr. Ali: Thank you, Hon. Minister, and thank you for the wealth of details that you are able to share with us at this late hour.

Line item 6272 – Electricity Charges: At a time when you would have announced measures to bring down the cost of electricity, Hon. Minister, I see you have a movement from \$1,546,832,000 to \$2,342,000,000. Could you explain this please?

Also, line item 6284 – Other: You have an expenditure of \$126,700,000 and that is moving from \$79,875,000. If you look at your expenditure last year, you were only able to expend \$111,628,000. Could you give some justification as to the increase in line item 6284 – Other?

Mr. Jordan: The electricity cost is going down. The three largest agencies for which we will continue paying electricity are the Transport and Harbours Department - \$64.6 million, the Guyana Water Incorporated - \$1.7 billion and the Cheddi Jagan International Airport (CJIA) - \$479 million. It is a bit of a bother but, until we solve this, we will have to continue paying. Those are the bulk of the payments for electricity.

In terms of line item 6284 – Other – essentially, the increases are coming from a documentary magazine that we are doing with the *Miami Herald*, this year, for Independence, an eight-page spread in two languages plus it is being placed on the internet. That is \$65 million. That is essentially new. Then, we are going to be doing a series of television programmes to highlight the work of the Ministry, essentially. Late last year, we started it and, earlier this year, we have also included some television programmes, especially on Budget and the highlights of the Budget and so on.

Productions of these programmes for radio and television will cost about \$400,000; production of radio, television and press releases and so on - \$2.8 million; placing of advertisements in newspapers, television, radio and so on - another \$4 million; production of a 30 millimetre television and radio production on the Ministry of Finance's overview of the year activities - \$500,000; airing of production on the National Communications Network (NCN), Voice of Guyana (VoG), Little Rock Television (LRTV) and so on - another \$100,000; production of television and radio programmes on the Budget preparation - \$400,000; and airtime for the Ministry of Finance's year-end review and Budget preparation - another \$1.4 million. Those are, essentially, the new activities. Then we have the regular activities that recur every year. Most of them are just budgeted at the same amount as last year.

Mr. Ali: Hon. Minister, I must say that you sound as if you are taking on the information Ministry's load.

In relation to the electricity transfers to the agency, is it going to be a direct transfer to the Guyana Power and Light Incorporated (GPL)? Is it a lump sum or will it be transferred to the company and then transferred to GPL? And, if it is done through the company, will the company be holding this lump sum in an interest bearing account? In the case of CJIA, I heard, in a report by the Hon. Minister Patterson, a reference of the net surplus of CJIA in the just concluded financial year. So, if it has a surplus position, would it be in a position to carry its weight in terms of payment of electricity?

With reference to the magazine, would it be investment focused or tourism focused?

Mr. Jordan: For the last question, about the magazine, it is about selling Guyana in all aspects. As I said, it is the 50th Independence anniversary eight-page spread and it covers all areas - investment, tourism, mineral, agriculture, *et cetera*.

Pertaining to electricity, no; the moneys are going to be paid directly to GPL on behalf of those agencies. You made an extremely valid point, which, during this budgeting year, we are going to be looking at more closely, precisely because the CJIA ought to be carrying its expenses before it thinks about transferring. So, this is just something I came and I met. Unfortunately, I continued it for this year alone, but I have already begun flagging this issue about it transferring money to us while we transfer money on its behalf. Hopefully, this will be the last year this would be happening, providing that we understand, very clearly, what it is that CJIA is doing and what it is it requires of us.

My answer to the first question is that I invite everyone to go to our redone website. It is full of information as we continue to add more information, and it is all in the new branding of the Ministry, essentially.

Programme: 031 – Policy and Administration - \$15,375,248,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 032 – Public Financial Management - \$4,247,537,000

Mr. Ali: Line item 6223 – Office Materials and Supplies - and line item 6224 – Print and Non-Print Materials - carry substantial increases. Hon. Minister, would this have anything to do with the upcoming local government elections?

Mr. Jordan: Line item 6223 – Office Materials and Supplies: The new additions here that will cause the \$12 million increase, the major aspects, are the following: we are attempting this year to produce a Journal of the Office of the Budget (JOB) and so we have set aside \$2 million for the preparation of that.

The Ministry also bids to give out more information to the public so that they are better informed and they could use it in whatever purposes. We are trying to produce monthly reports, quarterly reports, half-year reports and, of course, the annual reports on the developments in the economy. For this, we are budgeting \$2.4 million.

We are budgeting to produce other reports not done necessarily in the past or not done with any periodicity, and these include preparation of death management reports and reports for the Fiscal Monetary Department and the new Expenditure, Policy and Management Unit, among others, and for that we are budgeting, roughly, \$1.6 million.

The rest that takes up this, as I said, are, more or less, natural increases due to inflation, essentially, but they are, more or less, the same things that recur every year.

Concerning line item 6224 – Print and Non-Print Materials - the new item here is the replenishment of T-5 receipt books. Do not ask me what it means but I think it is used by the Accountant General's Department, and they were last replenished five years ago. There is an expenditure of \$3.6 million there, which is considered a new expenditure. Then, of course, there is an increase in stamps from \$14.7 million, last year, to \$20 million, this year. These are the revenue stamps that we purchase and give to the Post Office to sell. We get them back in revenue, so it is neither here or there. Those are the two big ticket items under that particular head.

There is a small increase in printing of Identification (ID) cards for our staff and that is about it for that head.

Mr. Ali: Line item 6262 – Overseas Conferences and Official Visits: The Hon. Minister has a tremendously huge increase there from \$263,567,000 to \$360 million.

2.08 a.m.

Would the Minister be able to explain why there is such an enormous increase in overseas travel? I know the Minister is a man who likes to stay within the walls of Guyana.

Mr. Jordan: As you well know that last year was a short year and nothing much happened. The Government changed in May, as you know, and prior to that there was not much travelling. Post May a lot of time was taken up with the budget, so there was not much travelling although there could have been. The figures, which you see here, are not necessarily a reflection of a year's activity. Essentially what we are doing in 2016, which represents the first full year of the Government, that is being reflected here.

Mr. Ali: Line item 6262, Overseas Conferences and Official Visits: Hon. Minister, would this increase cater for any movement in the various allowances and expenses for Ministers and officials travelling as approved by Cabinet?

Mr. Jordan: There is no major movement in rates at Cabinet's level. The rates remain more or less the same. I am trying to think which rate might have moved. The rate is US\$275 for a Minister travelling to North, Central and South America and US\$300 travelling to Europe. The rest of rates remain US\$100 for meals per day and US\$25 out of pocket. They all remain the same. There was no great movement in the rates.

Mr. Ali: Hon. Minister, you mentioned earlier that the increase for print and non-print material was to cater for inflation. I know in the budget you projected inflation by the end of this fiscal year, but we are in a deflation year. Do you have any additional report as to where we are now?

Mr. Jordan: I think you are slightly misquoting me. I first give the set of items that are considered new, in terms of the different reports we will be putting out. Then I said the rest are generally the regular items every year and that the small increases, which are reflected, are due to the usual inflation. That is what I said. Do not forget that inflation is an index so it does not necessarily correspond to actual price increase.

Programme: 032 – Public Financial Management - \$4,247,537,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part to the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 031 – Policy and Administration - \$3,871,514,000

Mr. Ali: Under Buildings, project 1202200, I see the Hon. Minister has an allocation of \$30 million. In current expenditure there was also expenditure for various works. In previous years I know that there was also expenditure for the electrical system and sheds. Is this allocation for a new shed and electrical system?

Mr. Jordan: We actually purchased a new generator so this provision here is for the electrical system that goes with the new generator which will be by the Ministry's parking lot. That is for \$25 million. Four million dollars will be used for constructing cubicles for the new concrete part of the building which is there but not occupied as yet, top and middle floor; \$1 million for proposed construction of visitor's shed. There is a new security hut, for high level security, so we will be putting a shed for visitors to wait as calls are made upstairs. For pensioners who come in once a month, as you know, to keep them away from the elements of nature, a shed will be built.

Mr. Ali: Project 1701900, Minor Works: Is this a new head by the Ministry? I know that there are minor works in the Office of the Prime Minister and the Office of the President. What gave rise to the need?

Mr. Jordan: It is a new name for an old head. The old head was "Poverty Alleviation". It was that the head of poverty alleviation was kind of one-track. The head of "Minor Works" gives a better understanding of the different activities that could be done as opposed to poverty alleviation. It is not a new project as such.

Mr. Ali: I guess these projects, Hon. Minister, are approved at Cabinet. Is the selection of these projects community based? What are they?

Second, how far are we in terms of implementation with the Basic Needs Trust Fund (BNTF)? When would this segment of funding come to an end and what are the plans in terms of a new basic needs programme.

Mr. Jordan: Basic Needs Trust Fund projects, Projects 7 and 8, are coming to an end this year and we are now in the process of negotiating Project 9.

Mr. Ali: Project 3401000, Low Carbon Development Programme (LCDS): Hon. Minister, I am very happy to see the LCDS programme because, I think, this is a visionary approach to our future development. There is an amount of \$1.12 billion which is set aside. Would you be able to share with us the projects this funding will facilitate and how much of this would be utilised for demarcation of lands for Amerindians?

Mr. Jordan: For institutional strengthening - \$96.8 million, to support the climate change office, \$171.2 million for the Amerindian Development Fund, \$143.8 million for Amerindian Land Titling, \$113.6 million for micro and small enterprise, \$165.2 million signed recently for the adaptation project, the Cunha Canal rehabilitation, for the next phase we are budgeting \$254.2 million of which \$16.9 million is for Climate Resilience Strategy and Action Plan, \$134.9 million for LCDS outreach and communication, \$9.6 million for Monitoring, Reporting and Verification System (MRVS) development, \$92.9 million for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) access and eServices for hinterland, poor and remote communities, the next phase interventions - \$165.2 million and Trustee Administration Fee - \$9.9 million, for a total of \$1.12 billion.

[Mr. John Adams in the Chair.]

Mr. Ali: Hon. Minister would you be so kind to share a list of the projects under the LCDS with us?

Mr. Jordan: We will share it with you.

Programme: 031 – Policy and Administration – \$3,871,514,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

[Mr. Chairman assumed the Chair.]

Programme: 032 – Public Financial Management - \$180,000,000

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, I just want to seek your advice. I had one question on the heading “Contribution to International Organisations.” I do not have any question on Programme 032. I

need a clarification from the Hon. Minister on the bold head “Contribution to International Organisation.”

Mr. Chairman: Ask the question, Hon. Member.

Mr. Jordan: Hon. Minister, I just want to know whether we are a full member of the Islamic Development Bank, whether our borrowing status has been approved and whether resources from the bank are also available for the local private sector, if we are a full-fledged member.

Mr. Jordan: The update is that we are close to becoming a full member. The last communication I got is that a round robin is being done on our application at the level of the governing board which is the last part before we get formal approval. We have an indication. What is here, it is our subscription. We will hopefully get special dispensation to pay the subscription over a very long period. This part here represents the first year of the subscription once our application can be approved. We are hoping that this can be done before the annual meeting which is slated for Indonesia in May of this year.

2.23 a.m.

Mr. Ali: I am very happy that Guyana is moving towards the direction of becoming a full member of the Islamic Development Bank. I just have one policy question, Hon. Minister.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I will permit the question but you know that we have completed this consideration already. Do not let us massage it too much.

Mr. Ali: It is for national importance. Could you say, Hon. Minister, whether the IDB is trying to come with its financing to the region through the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) or whether it is going to operate independently for independent countries? The second question is the access of it by the private sector.

Mr. Jordan: I cannot speak for IDB, but what I do know that the terms of joining the bank is that the country must be a member of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) and then there is the three-step approach in the second round which is where we are at the moment. I am not sure that it has actually expressed any interest outside of that established framework for its activities. Secondly, yes, it has a private sector aspect to its lending. As this stage, as I said, it is

early days, we have not become a member as yet and we have not had any discussions. We do not know whether it is going, but based on some of the annual reports I have read we have had a significant lending in their member countries in various sectors. Hopefully all our sectors, particularly the very strong in the social sector, are areas that we think we will benefit most.

Programme 032 – Public Financial Management - \$180,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we have completed the considerations of the Estimates of the Committee of Supply of the Estimates of Expenditure for the year 2016.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister of Finance

Mr. Jordan: I have to report that the Committee of Supply considered the Estimates of Expenditure for the Financial Year 2016 and approved of them as printed.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

Mr. Nagamootoo: Mr. Speaker, with your leave, I move that Standing Orders No. 13 (n) and 54 be suspended to enable the Appropriation Bill 2016 – No. 1 of 2016 to be introduced at this stage.

Question put, and agreed to.

Standing Orders suspended.

Mr. Jordan: Mr. Speaker, in accordance to paragraph (2), article 171 of the Constitution, I signify that Cabinet has recommended the Appropriation Bill 2016, Bill No.1 of 2016, for consideration by the National Assembly. I now present the Bill to the Assembly and move that it be read the first time.

INTRODUCTION OF BILL AND FIRST READING

The following Bill was introduced and read for the first time:

APPROPRIATION BILL 2016 – BILL No. 1 of 2016

A Bill Intituled

“AN ACT to provide for the issue from the Consolidated Fund of the sums necessary to meet the expenditure (not otherwise lawfully charged on the Consolidated Fund) of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana for the fiscal year ending 31st December, 2016, estimates whereof have been approved by the National Assembly, and for the appropriation of those sums for the specified purposes, in conformity with the Constitution.” [Minister of Finance]

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read for the first time.

Mr. Jordan: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Appropriation Bill (2016), Bill No.1 of 2016, be read a second time.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

BILL – SECOND AND THIRD READINGS

APPROPRIATION BILL (2016) – BILL No. 1 of 2016

A Bill Intituled

“AN ACT to provide for the issue from the Consolidated Fund of the sums necessary to meet the expenditure (not otherwise lawfully charged on the Consolidated Fund) of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana for the fiscal year ending 31st December, 2016, estimates whereof have been approved by the National Assembly, and for the appropriation of those sums for the specified purposes, in conformity with the Constitution.” [Minister of Finance]

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read for a second time.

Mr. Jordan: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Appropriation Bill 2016, Bill No.1 of 2016, be read the third time and pass as printed.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read for the third time and passed as printed.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members we have completed consideration of the Estimates and the Appropriation Bill which is a consequential action we must take. They have both been completed now. Hon. Prime Minister I wonder whether this is a good time to take the adjournment.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Nagamootoo: Mr. Speaker, kindly permit me to observe that we have passed 2.30 a.m. and in my recollection this would be perhaps the longest continuous of the National Assembly on a public holiday. Today we have worked well all day up to this morning in cooperation. It is fitting on Republic Day to wish you, Mr. Speaker, the staff and all Members of this National Assembly a happy Republic Day.

Forty-six years ago, when this country chose the route of republicanism, in spite that type of carping you hear on an occasion, that ought to be solemn as this one, we opted for a unitary, sovereign and secular state. We hope that after 46 years of going this route, having shaken off monarchical rule, that we can still realise that mission of national unity and find, as being celebrated in many years, Mashramani as the celebration of cooperation, that we could still achieve the cooperation in this Year of Renaissance.

I take this opportunity once again to wish the people of Guyana, all Guyanese, on this auspicious day a happy Republic Day.

I wish to move that this House be adjourned to Friday 26th February, 2016 at 2.00 p.m.
[Applause]

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Speaker, I note at this hour we would like to, first of all, recognise 46 years as a Republic that it is this Parliament that brought the consequential constitutional legal changes to make us a unique country with a republican system and a hybrid Westminster system.

I think it is fitting that at this hour we are actually doing that because the venue for the Republic activity has been changed. I am glad that we are here actually at this hour to be able to recognise that it is in this room, 46 years ago, that the decision was made by the Parliament.

I would like to wish all the Members of the House and the staff, in particular, and the media, of course, that have been here with us throughout the whole budget debate... I am going to miss terribly the Mashramani parade because some of you may know I used to lead that parade when I was younger, of course, but I still loved it.

2.38 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, I did say to you at some point, during the debate this evening, that I predicted that at 2.00 a.m. this morning... I am off by half of an hour. You can lead us out of the chambers with a Mash dance to have our own parade and to end on a high note. Sir - I see that you are not smiling at my joke - I wish you all the best for Republic Day. I wish everyone and their families a good Mashramani Day celebration. I look forward in 2017, to getting back our parades on the road and it is to really enjoying what I believe is the one main event in our history and our calendar that brings 100,000 people of all different hues and all different parts of Guyana to enjoy being together on that one day of 365 days.

I am wishing you all the best and thanking everybody for all the preparations for the budget and I think all of us deserve a good rest today. Thank you very much. [*Applause*]

Mr. Speaker: I thank the Hon. Member. Hon. Members, this House stands adjourned until Friday 26th February, 2016 at 2.00 p.m.

Adjourned accordingly at 2.40 a.m.