



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY  
OF THE PARLIAMENT OF  
THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC  
OF GUYANA

# OFFICIAL REPORT

*PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION (2020-2021) OF THE TWELFTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA HELD IN THE DOME OF THE ARTHUR CHUNG CONFERENCE CENTRE, LILIENDAAL, GREATER GEORGETOWN*

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33<sup>RD</sup> Sitting

Thursday, 16<sup>TH</sup> December, 2021

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**PARLIAMENT OFFICE  
HANSARD DIVISION**

*The Assembly convened at 11.15 a.m.*

*Prayers*

*[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]*

**MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (71)**

**Speaker (1)**

\*Hon. Manzoor Nadir, M.P.,  
*Speaker of the National Assembly,  
Parliament Office,  
Public Buildings,  
Brickdam,  
Georgetown.*

**MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT (38)**

**(i) MEMBERS OF THE PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY/CIVIC (PPP/C) (38)**

**Prime Minister (1)**

+ Hon. Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Anthony Phillips, M.S.S., M.P.,  
*Prime Minister,  
Prime Minister's Office,  
Colgrain House,  
205 Camp Street,  
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**Vice-President (1)**

+ Hon. Bharrat Jagdeo, M.P.,  
*Vice-President,  
Office of the President,  
New Garden Street,  
Georgetown.*

*[Virtual Participation]*

+ **Cabinet Member**

\* **Non-Elected Speaker**

**Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs (1)**

+ Hon. Mohabir Anil Nandlall, M.P.,  
*Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs,  
Ministry of Legal Affairs,  
Carmichael Street,  
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**Senior Ministers (17)**

+ Hon. Gail Teixeira, M.P.,  
*(Region No. 7 – Cuyuni/Mazaruni),  
Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance,  
Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance,  
Government Chief Whip,  
Office of the Presidency,  
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+ Hon. Hugh H. Todd, M.P.,  
*(Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica),  
Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation,  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs,  
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Georgetown.*

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*Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance  
Ministry of Finance,  
Main & Urquhart Streets,  
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*Minister of Public Works,  
Ministry of Public Works,  
Wight's Lane,  
Kingston,  
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+ Hon. Dr. Frank C. S. Anthony, M.P.,  
*Minister of Health,  
Ministry of Health,  
Brickdam,  
Georgetown.*

+ **Cabinet Member**

\* **Non-Elected Minister**

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*(Region No. 3 – Essequibo Islands/West Demerara),*  
*Minister of Education,*  
*Ministry of Education,*  
*Lot 26 Brickdam,*  
*Georgetown.*

+ \*Hon. Brindley H.R. Benn, M.P.,  
*Minister of Home Affairs,*  
*Ministry of Home Affairs,*  
*Brickdam,*  
*Georgetown.*

+ Hon. Zulfikar Mustapha, M.P.,  
*Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne),*  
*Minister of Agriculture,*  
*Ministry of Agriculture,*  
*Regent and Vlissengen Road,*  
*Bourda, Georgetown.*

+ Hon. Pauline R.A. Campbell-Sukhai, M.P.,  
*Minister of Amerindian Affairs,*  
*Ministry of Amerindian Affairs,*  
*Lot 251-252 Thomas & Quamina Streets,*  
*South Cummingsburg,*  
*Georgetown.*

+ Hon. Joseph L.F. Hamilton, M.P.,  
*Minister of Labour,*  
*Ministry of Labour,*  
*Brickdam,*  
*Georgetown.*

+ **Cabinet Member**

\* **Non-Elected Minister**

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*Ministry of Natural Resources,*

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*Kingston,*

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*Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce,*

*Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce,*

*Lot 229 South Road,*

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+ Hon. Nigel D. Dharamlall, M.P.,

*(Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supenaam),*

*Minister of Local Government and Regional Development,*

*Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development,*

*DeWinkle Building,*

*Fort Street,*

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*(Region No. 1 – BarimaWaini),*

*Minister of Housing and Water,*

*Ministry of Housing and Water,*

*Brickdam,*

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+ Hon. Vindhya V. H. Persaud, M.S., M.P.,

*(Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica),*

*Minister of Human Services and Social Security,*

*Ministry of Human Services and Social Security,*

*Lot 357 East and Lamaha Streets*

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+ Hon. Charles S. Ramson, M.P.,

*Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports,*

*Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports,*

*Main Street,*

*Georgetown.*

+ Hon. Sonia Savitri Parag, M.P.,

*Minister of the Public Service,*

*Ministry of the Public Service,*

*164 Waterloo Street,*

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+ **Cabinet Member**

\* **Non-Elected Minister**

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Ministry of Housing and Water,  
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Georgetown.*

Hon. Deodat Indar, M.P.,  
*Minister within the Ministry of Public Works,  
Ministry of Public Works,  
Wight's Lane,  
Kingston,  
Georgetown.*

Hon. Anand Persaud, M.P.,  
*Minister within the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development,  
Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development,  
Fort Street,  
Kingston,  
Georgetown.*

Hon. Warren Kwame E. McCoy, M.P.,  
*Minister within the Office of the Prime Minister,  
Office of the Prime Minister,  
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205 Camp Street,  
Georgetown.*

**Other Members (14)**

Mr. Dharamkumar Seeraj, M.P.,  
*Lot 71 BB Eccles,  
East Bank Demerara.*

Mr. Alister S. Charlie, M.P.,  
*(Region No. 9 – Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo),  
148 Lethem,  
Central Rupununi,  
c/o Freedom House,  
41 Robb Street,  
Georgetown.*

Dr. Vishwa D.B. Mahadeo, M.P.,  
*Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne),  
Lot 4 Public Road,  
No. 66 Village,  
Corentyne,  
Berbice.*

Mr. Sanjeev J. Datadin, M.P.,  
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John Street,  
Campbellville,  
Georgetown.*

Mr. Seepaul Narine, M.P.,  
*Lot 321 BB Seventh Street,  
Eccles,  
East Bank Demerara.*

Mrs. Yvonne Pearson-Fredericks, M.P.,  
*Mainstay Lake/Whyaka Village,  
Mainstay Lake, Essequibo Coast,  
c/o Freedom House,  
41 Robb Street,  
Georgetown.*

Dr. Bheri S. Ramsaran, M.P.,  
*Lot 340 East Street,  
South Cummingsburg,  
c/o Freedom House,  
41 Robb Street,  
Georgetown.*

Dr. Jennifer R.A. Westford, M.P.,  
*55 AA Victoria Avenue,  
Eccles,  
East Bank Demerara.*

Mr. Faizal M. Jaffarally, M.P.,  
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c/o Freedom House,  
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Tuschen, North,  
East Bank Essequibo.*

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*Paruima Upper Mazaruni,  
c/o Freedom House,  
Robb Street,  
Georgetown.*

\*Ms. Sarah Browne, M.P.,  
*Parliamentary Secretary,  
Ministry of Amerindian Affairs,  
Lot 251-252 Thomas & Quamina Streets,  
South Cummingsburg,  
Georgetown.*

*[Absent – on leave]*

\*Mr. Vikash Ramkissoon, M.P.,  
*Parliamentary Secretary,  
Ministry of Agriculture,  
Regent and Vlissengen Road,  
Bourda, Georgetown.*

*[Absent – on leave]*

Ms. Bhagmattie Veerasammy, M.P.,  
*Lot 32 Crown Dam,  
Industry,  
East Coast Demerara.*

**MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION (32)**

**(i) A Partnership For National Unity/Alliance For Change (APNU/AFC) (31)**

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Joseph F. Harmon, M.S.M., M.P.,  
*Leader of the Opposition,*  
*Lot 99 Mazaruni Street,*  
*Guyhoc Park,*  
*Georgetown.*

Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan, M.P.,  
*Lot 10 Delph Street,*  
*Campbelville,*  
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Mr. Roysdale A. Forde, S.C., M.P.,  
*Lot 410 Caneview Avenue,*  
*South Ruimveldt,*  
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Mr. Raphael G.C. Trotman, M.P.,  
*Lot 3202 Pricese 3,*  
*Providence,*  
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*[Virtual Participation]*

Ms. Dawn Hastings-Williams, M.P.,  
*Lot 933 Block 1,*  
*Eccles,*  
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Dr. Nicolette O. Henry, M.P.,  
*Lot 2227 Ozama Street, North Ruimveldt,*  
*Georgetown.*

*[Virtual Participation]*

Dr. Karen R.V. Cummings, M.P.,  
*Lot 2 Belfield Housing Scheme,*  
*East Coast Demerara.*

Ms. Tabitha J. Sarabo-Halley, M.P.,  
*Lot 3382 Caneview Avenue,*  
*South Ruimveldt Park,*  
*Georgetown.*

Ms. Geeta Chandan-Edmond, M.P.,  
*Lot 48 Atlantic Ville,*  
*Georgetown.*

*[Virtual Participation]*

Mr. Christopher A. Jones, M.P.,  
*Opposition Chief Whip,*  
*Lot 609 Conciliation Street,*  
*Tucville,*  
*Georgetown.*

Ms. Annette N. Ferguson, M.P.,  
*Lot 842 Eccles,*  
*East Bank Demerara.*

*[Virtual Participation]*

Mr. David A. Patterson, M.P.,  
*Lot 151 Durbana Square,  
Lamaha Gardens,  
Georgetown.*

*[Virtual Participation]*

Ms. Coretta A. McDonald, A.A., M.P.,  
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Alexander Village,  
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Ms. Catherine A. Hughes, M.P.,  
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East Bank Demerara.*

*[Virtual Participation]*

Mr. Haimraj B. Rajkumar, M.P.,  
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Johanna Cecilia,  
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Ms. Amanza O.R. Walton-Desir, M.P.,  
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*[Virtual Participation]*

Ms. Natasha Singh-Lewis, M.P.,  
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Mr. Sherod A. Duncan, M.P.,  
*Lot 590 Good Hope,  
East Coast Demerara.*

Ms. Juretha V. Fernandes, M.P.,  
*Lot 1282 Block EE,  
Eccles,  
East Bank Demerara.*

Mr. Vincent P. Henry, M.P.,  
*(Region No. 9 – Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo),  
Shulidnab Village,  
South Central,  
Rupununi.*

*(Culvert City Lethem)*

Mr. Ronald Cox, M.P.,  
*(Region No. 1 – Barima Waini),  
Mabaruma Compound.*

Mr. Shurwayne F.K. Holder, M.P.,  
(Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supenaam),  
Lot 55 Henrietta,  
Essequibo Coast.

Mr. Ganesh A. Mahipaul, M.P.,  
Lot 14 Plantain Walk,  
West Bank Demerara.

Ms. Nima N. Flue-Bess, M.P.,  
(Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica),  
Lot 88 Nelson Street,  
Mocha Village,  
East Bank Demerara.

Ms. Maureen A. Philadelphia, M.P.,  
(Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica),  
Lot 17 Block 1, Section F,  
Plantation Belfield,  
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Mr. Deonarine Ramsaroop, M.P.,  
(Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica),  
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Craig Milne,  
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Mr. Vinceroy H. Jordan, M.P.,  
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West Coast Berbice.  
C/o Christopher Jones

Mr. Dineshwar N. Jaiprashad, M.P.,  
Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne),  
Lot 80 Babu John Road,  
Haswell,  
Port Mourant, Corentyne Berbice.

Mr. Richard E. Sinclair, M.P.,  
(Region No. 8 – Potaro/Siparuni)  
Church Street Mahdia.  
Lot 4 Public Road,  
Stewartville,  
West Coast Demerara.

Mr. Jermaine Figueira, M.P.,  
(Region No. 10 – Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice),  
Lot 136 2<sup>nd</sup> Street,  
Silvertown,  
Wismar, Linden.

Mr. Devin L. Sears, M.P.,  
(Region No. 10 – Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice),  
Lot 90, Section C,  
Wismar, Linden.

**(ii) A New and United Guyana, Liberty and Justice Party and The New Movement (ANUG, LJP & TNM) (1)**

Mr. Lenox R. O'Dell Shuman, M.P.,  
Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly,  
St. Cuthbert's Mission,  
Soesdyke Linden Highway.

**Officers (2)**

Mr. Sherlock E. Isaacs, A.A.,  
*Clerk of the National Assembly,*  
*Parliament Office,*  
*Public Buildings,*  
*Brickdam,*  
*Georgetown.*

Ms. Hermina Gilgeours,  
*Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly,*  
*Parliament Office,*  
*Public Buildings,*  
*Brickdam,*  
*Georgetown.*

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*Senior Editor*

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*Senior Editor*

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*Audio Technician*

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*Audio Technician*

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**ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER****Apology for Late Commencement of Sitting**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, let me apologise for the late commencement this morning. I trust that time lost will not be sacrificed and that our business will continue with due consideration.

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE****[For Written Replies]**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, there are six questions on today's Order Paper and all of these questions are for written replies. Questions number one, two and three are in the name of the Hon. Member, Mr. Jermaine Figueira, and are for the Hon. Minister of Home Affairs. Questions number four and five are in the name of the Hon. Member, Ms. Geeta Chandan-Edmond, and are for the Hon. Minister of Home Affairs. Question number six is in the name of the Hon. Member, Ms. Geeta Chandan-Edmond, and is for the Hon. Minister of Health.

The answers to all of these questions have been received and have, therefore, in accordance with our Standing Orders, been circulated.

Regions	Citizens found Dead	Total Reports of Missing Citizens
1	1	17
2	0	8
3	0	40
4A	0	68
4B	1	35
4C	0	45
5	2	48
6	1	25
7	0	Fi
8	0	0
9	0	3
10	1	28
Total	6	325

**(1) Number of Reports of Missing Citizens****Mr. Figueira:**

- For the period 1<sup>st</sup> August 2020 to 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021, can the Hon. Minister inform the National Assembly how many reports of citizens going missing were dealt with by the Guyana Police Force?
- For the period 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015 to 12<sup>th</sup> January 2016, can the Hon. Minister also inform the National Assembly how many reports of citizens going missing were dealt with by the Guyana Police Force?
- Can the Hon. Minister further inform the National Assembly by Region, the number of citizens in A and B above (state separately) that were discovered dead? Please state their names.

**Minister of Home Affairs [Mr. Benn]:**

- The number of reports received by the Guyana Police Force along with persons found dead for the period 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2021 to the 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2021 are as follows:

- The number of reports received by the Guyana Police Force along with persons found dead for the period 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2015 to 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2016 are as follows:

Region	Persons Found Dead	Total reports of missing persons
1	0	0
2	0	12
3	0	34
4A	0	54
4B	N/A	0
4C	N/A	0
5	1	34
6	N/A	0
7	0	5

8	0	0
9	0	0
10	0	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>155</b>

\*N/A – No records were found for this division.

- c) The name of the persons found dead during the period 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2015 to 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2016.

Serial #	Name of Persons Found Dead	Date Found
1	Ignatius Daniels	12 <sup>th</sup> July, 2015

The names of persons found dead during the period 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2020 to the 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2021 are as follows:

Serial #	Names of Persons found Dead	Date Found
1	Avinesh Fernandes	08 <sup>th</sup> April, 2021
2	Joel Skeete	05 <sup>th</sup> April, 2021
3	Isiah Henry	06 <sup>th</sup> September, 2020
4	Joel Henry	06 <sup>th</sup> September, 2020
5	Sharida Hussain	06 <sup>th</sup> March, 2021
6	Shonette Dover	30 <sup>th</sup> April, 2021

## (2) Number of Reports of Sexual Abuse

**Mr. Figueira:**

- (a) For the period 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015 to 12<sup>th</sup> January 2016, can the Hon. Minister inform the National Assembly how many reports, by Region, of sexual abuse that were dealt with by the Guyana Police Force?

**Mr. Benn:**

- a) The number of sexual abuse reports handled by the Guyana Police Force for the period 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2015 to the 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2016 by region are as follows:

Months	1	2	3	4	4	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	Tota
				A	B	C						0	l
May	5	4	4	1	2	2	0	5	1	0	2	2	28
June	6	0	6	0	1	7	0	7	1	0	2	3	33
July	0	1	4	1	0	2	2	7	1	0	0	5	23
August	2	0	0	3	1	6	1	0	1	0	4	2	20
Septemb er	4	0	3	3	1	3	3	4	2	0	1	0	24
October	4	1	8	1	0	9	0	5	1	0	0	2	31
Novemb er	5	4	3	1	2	0	0	3	0	1	0	1	20
Decemb er	2	1	6	0	1	6	0	2	2	1	1	3	25
January	2	0	3	0	4	7	1	1	1	0	0	1	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>224</b>
	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>		

\*The categories of sexual abuse monitored by the Guyana Police Force's Statistics Unit are statutory rape (rape of a child under 16) and forcible rape (rape of persons over 16).

## (3) Trafficking of Drugs

**Mr. Figueira:**

- (a) For the period 1<sup>st</sup> August 2020 to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021, can the Hon. Minister inform the National Assembly how many pounds of cocaine were reported and the number of times, as originated (trafficked) from

Guyana at the time of interception in a second country?

- (b) For the period 1<sup>st</sup> August 2015 to 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016, can the Hon. Minister additionally inform the National Assembly how many pounds of cocaine were reported and the number of times, as originated (trafficked) from Guyana, at the time of interception in a second country?
- (c) For the period 1<sup>st</sup> August 2020 to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021, can the Hon. Minister inform the National Assembly, how many persons were apprehended and charged for cocaine trafficking/possession of amounts more than five pounds in Guyana and the number of incidences?
- (d) For the period 1<sup>st</sup> August 2020 to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021, can the Hon. Minister further inform the National Assembly, how many persons in Guyana were apprehended and charged for cocaine trafficking of amounts more than five pounds and the number of incidences, when cocaine was intercepted in a second country, but was trafficked from Guyana?

**Mr. Benn:**

- a) During the period 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2020 to the 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2020, 19.066 pounds were found. The Three times, cocaine was allegedly shipped from Guyana to a second country.
- b) During the period 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2015 to the 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2016, 99.173 pounds of cocaine were found. Seven times, cocaine was allegedly shipped from Guyana to a second country. On four occasions the information was passed to counterparts from Guyana.
- c) For the period 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2020 to the 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2021, two males were charged for trafficking in narcotic of 7.26 pounds.
- d) During the period 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2020 to the 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2020, two males were charged for trafficking in narcotic of 7.26 pounds. Additional, three incidences of cocaine were intercepted overseas that was allegedly shipped from Guyana.
- a. On the 26<sup>th</sup> May, 2020, 1.5 tonnes of cocaine were alleged shipped from Guyana to Hamburg, Germany. It was intercepted in August, 2020.

- b. On the 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2020, 11.5 tonnes of cocaine were allegedly shipped from Guyana to Antwerp, Belgium. It was intercepted in October, 2020.
- c. On the 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2021, 307.324 pounds of cocaine were allegedly shipped from Guyana to Jamaica. It was intercepted on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2021.

**(4) Total Number of Foreign Owned and Operated Security Companies in Guyana**

**Ms. Chandan-Edmond:**

- (a) Can the Hon. Minister indicate how many foreign owned and operated security companies are in Guyana?

**Mr. Benn:**

- a) The total number of foreign owned security companies in Guyana are 12.

**(5) Award of Government Contracts for the Provision of Security Services**

**Ms. Chandan-Edmond:**

- (a) Can the Hon. Minister state the names of the companies who were awarded Government Contracts for the provision of security services under your sector since 02<sup>nd</sup> August, 2020?
- (b) Can the Hon. Minister state what percentage of the total budgeted allocations have been expended on the award of these security contracts?
- (c) Can the Hon. Minister state whether inspections were done at security companies, with existing governments' contracts under your sector since 02<sup>nd</sup> August, 2020? If yes, can the Minister state how frequent these inspections are carried out?
- (d) Can the Hon. Minister state the name of any contractor/s who was/were awarded security contracts prior to August 2020 and who may have failed to deliver in terms of their contracted performance and/or breached the terms and conditions of their contracts within the stipulated contractual period under your sector after 02<sup>nd</sup> August, 2020?

- (e) Can the Hon. Minister state the value of sums outstanding by the Contractor/s for any contract/s breached and/or terminated?
- (f) Can the Hon. Minister state the value of each government contract, for the provision of security services, the date of award and the duration of these contracts under your sector?
- (g) Can the Hon. Minister state what vetting process was established by the Ministry for persons employed and authorised to carry firearms in these companies?
- (h) Can the Hon. Minister state whether the tenders for the awarding of these security contracts were publicly advertised and, if so, when, and where?
- (i) Can the Hon. Minister state whether these awardees were pre-qualified?
- (j) Regarding (8) and (9), could the Hon. Minister state which entity was responsible for the evaluation and recommendation of the awards of the contracts?
- (k) Can the Hon. Minister state what criteria were used in the pre-qualification and qualification process?
- (l) Can the Hon. Minister state whether the Principal/s of any of the security companies, which were awarded contracts, have any pending litigation against the Government of Guyana, or whether the Government of Guyana has any pending litigation against the Principal/s of these companies?
- a) The names of the companies who were awarded Government contracts for the provision of security services for the Ministry of Home Affairs with effect from 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 2020 are:
- MMC Security Force Incorporated.
  - I-Secure Security Services Incorporated
  - Elite Protection Services Incorporated
  - Kalibur Security
- b) The percentage of the total budgetary allocation (*chart of account 6281- security charges*) expended on award of these security contracts are as follows:
- 35.4% for the period August – September 2020, Ministry of Public Security.
  - 100% for the period October to December, 2020, Ministry of Home Affairs.
  - 58.3% for the period January to September, 2021.
- c) Annual inspections are done at these security companies with existing contracts under the Ministry.
- d) No, there were no breaches prior to nor after 02<sup>nd</sup> August, 2020.
- e) There is no sum outstanding by any contractor for any breach and/or termination of contracts.
- f) The contract information is as follows:

**Mr. Benn:**

NAME OF SECURITY SERVICE	VALUE	DATE OF AWARD	DURATION OF CONTRACT
MMC Security Force Incorporated (Monitoring system at the Citizen Security Strengthening Programme)	59,508		Nine months
MMC Security Force Incorporated (Monitoring and patrol at the Customs Anti-Narcotics Unit)	1,552,176	2020/02/14	One Year
MMC Security Force Incorporated (Monitoring and patrol at the Customs Anti-Narcotics Unit)	891,563		Eight months
I-Secure Security Service Incorporated	1,326,000	2020/11/05	Three months

	483,600	2021/02/01	One month
	1,060,800	2021/02/19	Two months
	1,499,600	2021/04/07	Three months
	1,154,400	2021/06/30	Two Months
	1,107,600	2021/09/08	Two months
Elite Protection Service Incorporated	1,452,000	2021/11/13	Three months
	1,254,000	2021/02/19	Three months (Linden Immigration Office)
	1,254,000	2021/02/24	Three months (New Amsterdam Immigration Office)
	864,000	2021/05/03	Two months (Linden Immigration Office)
	864,000	2021/05/12	Two months (New Amsterdam, Immigration Office)
	846,000	2021/06/29	Two months (New Amsterdam, Immigration Office)
	846,000	2021/06/29	Two months (Linden Immigration Office)
	1,278,000	2021/09/13	Three months (Linden Immigration Office)
	1,278,000	2021/09/13	Three months (New Amsterdam Immigration Office)
Kalibur Security	1,314,402	2020/11/02	One month (Linden and New Amsterdam Immigration Offices)

- g) The vetting process reviewed by the Ministry for persons employed and authorised to carry firearms in companies includes the submission of a medical report, police clearance, background check done by the Special Branch and Criminal Investigation Department, observance of supplementary status, completion of two weeks training conducted by the Tactical Service Unit and a report submitted to the Commissioner of Police indicating whether the person/s would have met the criteria.
- h) No, there was no advertisement for tenders.
- i) No, there were no advertisement for tenders.
- j) There was no advertisement, hence no evaluation to be done.
- k) Due to the sensitive nature of the security concerns, confidentially and trust, the Ministry opted to use the single source method of procurement. In addition, the contracts are less than \$1.5 million.
- l) At the time the contract was signed there were no pending matters of litigation against the Government of Guyana neither does the Government has any

pending litigation against the Principal/s of the company.

**(6) Fire at the Psychiatric Hospital on the 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2021**

**Ms. Chandan-Edmond:**

- (a) Could the Hon. Minister indicate to the House, the causes, circumstances, and conditions that led to the fire on Saturday, 5th June, 2021, whereby several patients at the Psychiatric Hospital, East Canje/Berbice, were badly burnt during the said fire, and further whereby it was widely reported in the media that one patient named Mr. Wewoushi Akenty King died from his injuries?
- (b) Can the Hon. Minister state the nature of all the injuries sustained by the affected patients, on the date aforementioned, and the cause of death of Mr. Wewoushi Akenty King?
- (c) Could the Hon. Minister state whether the conduct of the staff of the Psychiatric Institution, who were on duty on 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2021, and thereafter was in conformity with existing Standard Operating Procedures?
- (d) Could the Hon. Minister state base on the conclusion of any investigation report, whether the death of the aforementioned patient and the patients who were burnt, was a result of any negligence, abandonment of duty, disregard of instructions, inaction of the staff, who were on duty on 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2021, and thereafter?
- (e) Could the Hon. Minister indicate based on any initial report(s), what recommendations were made:
  - a. To improve the physical infrastructure of the Institution?
  - b. The existing security, safety, and other arrangements with respect to the custody, management, and control of patients?
  - c. That the appropriate treatment of patients is in compliance with legal and other requirements, to prevent a recurrence of any such disturbance(s)?

**Mr. Benn:**

- a) On the evening of the 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2021, there was a fight among three patients in Chalet 4. The staff on

duty spoke to the patients, and eventually, the fighting subsided. A patient subsequently lit a mattress which result in the partial burning of the Chalet 4. At 7.51 p.m., the supervisor raised an alarm about a fire in Chalet 4. The staff immediately contacted the Guyana Fire Service and The Guyana Police Force. The Guyana Fire Service responded promptly and extinguished the fire.

- b) Ten patients housed in Chalet 4 sustained varying degrees of burn injury.
  - Four patients were initially admitted to the New Amsterdam Hospital, and one was discharged. At the same time, three were transferred to the Georgetown Public Hospital Burns Unit for further care on the 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2021.
  - While at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC), two of the patients were subsequently discharged and sent back to the Psychiatry Hospital.
  - Patient Mr. Wewoushi King was admitted at GPHC on the 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2021, with a diagnosis of burns, and pneumonitis/pneumonia due to smoke inhalation. At GPHC he was managed by a team of doctors from the Burns Unit, the Internal Medicine Department and the Psychiatry Department. Despite the medical treatment, Mr. King succumbed on the 18<sup>th</sup> June, 2021. The postmortem confirmed that he died from pneumonia and burn injuries.
  - Six patients were admitted to the Port Mourant Hospital with minor burn injuries. These patients were discharged within 48 hours.
- c) The Standing Operating Procedures were adhered to, and the relevant actions were taken promptly.
- d) None of the investigations concluded that there was any negligence, abandonment of duty, disregard of instructions or inaction of the staff.
- e) To improve the physical infrastructure of the Institution?
  - Non-flammable ceiling materials.
  - Rubberised tiles on the floor.
  - Window grills that are easily accessible to staff.

- Single rooms for aggressive patients.
- (ii) The existing security, safety, and other arrangement with respect to the custody, management, and control of patients.
- In the reconstruction of Chalet 4, single rooms were added; these would be used to house aggressive patients.
  - A security hut was placed next to the male admission ward.
  - Cameras will be installed to allow for observations of patients.
- (iii) That the appropriate treatment of patients is in compliance with legal and other requirements, to prevent a recurrence of any such disturbance(s)?
- Work has started to arrange inpatient and outpatient services. Once patients have been stabilised, they can be discharged and followed up through outpatient clinics.
  - Legislation governing psychiatric care is outdated. New legislation govern psychiatric services will be laid in the near future.
  - The Government is also working with several international partners to improve the quality of care.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND FIRST READING

The following Bills were introduced and read the first time:

##### (1) Human Organ and Tissue Transplant Bill 2021 – Bill No. 19/2021

###### A BILL intituled:

“AN ACT to make provision for the donation and removal of human organs, tissues, cells and biofluids for transplantation and blood for transfusion, for their use for regenerative medicine including cell therapy, gene therapy and stem cell therapy, and other therapeutic purposes, for medical education and for scientific research purposes including stem cell research, cell explant research and cell line research, and for connected matters.”

[Minister of Health]

**Opposition Chief Whip [Mr. Jones]:** Cde. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Yes, Hon. Member.

**Mr. Jones:** Just seeking your guidance. We do not have that Bill with us.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Bill will be circulated shortly. The Minister has presented the Bill. The question is that the Bill be read a first time. Normally, the Bill is read a first time. It is going to be circulated.

##### (2) Natural Resource Fund Bill 2021 – Bill No. 20/2021

###### A BILL intituled:

“AN ACT to establish the Natural Resource Fund to manage the natural resource wealth of Guyana for the present and future benefit of the people and for the sustainable development of the country, and for connected matters.”

[Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance]

**Mr. Speaker:** Again, this Bill will be circulated shortly.

##### (3) Local Content Bill 2021 – Bill No. 21/2021

###### A BILL intituled:

“AN ACT to provide for the implementation of local content obligations on persons engaged in petroleum operations or related activities in the petroleum sector; to prioritise Guyanese nationals and Guyanese companies in the procurement of goods and services for the enhancement of the value chain of the petroleum sector; to enable local capacity development; to provide for the investigation, supervision, co-ordination, monitoring and evaluation of, and participation in, local content in Guyana; to promote competitiveness and encourage the creation of related industries that will sustain the social and economic development of Guyana; and for other related matters.”

[Minister of Natural Resources]

#### PUBLIC BUSINESS

#### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

#### MOTION

## Consideration of Financial Paper No. 3/2021 – Current and Capital Estimates

“Be It RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly approve of the proposal set out in Financial No. 3 of 2021 – Schedule of Supplementary Estimates (Current and Capital) totalling five billion, one hundred and twelve million and three hundred and fifty-five thousand, two hundred and ten dollars (\$5,112,355,210) – Advances made from the Contingencies Fund for the period 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2021 to 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2021.”

*[Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the Assembly will now resolve itself into Committee of Supply to consider Financial Paper No. 3/2021.

*Assembly in Committee of Supply.*

**Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance [Dr. Singh]:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in accordance with Article 171 (2) of the Constitution, I signify that Cabinet has recommended for consideration by the Assembly the motion for the approval of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 3 of 2021 Supplementary Estimates (Current and Capital) totalling \$5,112,355,210 for the period 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2021 to 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2021 and I now move the motion.

*Motion proposed.*

### Current Expenditure

#### **Item 1: 01-012 Office of the President – National Policy Development Presidential Advisory Services – \$265,025,850**

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Thank you, very much, Cde. Chairman. I have noted that, in 2018, the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission (GLSC) functioned with \$107,500,000 from this National Assembly. In 2019, they functioned with \$150 million. In 2020, they functioned with \$150 million. In the 2021 Budget, the National Assembly also approved \$150 million for Commission. I now see a request for \$265,025,850. May I ask the Hon. Minister to provide an explanation as to why this substantial increase in subsidies and contribution to the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission?

**Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance and Government Chief Whip [Ms. Teixeira]:** Thank you, Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul for your question. Mr. Mahipaul must remember that in recent times, under this Government, we have had massive housing programmes and lands are being opened up for housing and other economic activities, including agriculture. I know it is difficult for Mr. Mahipaul to address that issue and come to terms with it.

In relation to the increase of \$265,025,850, this has to do with the direct relationship with the fact that...As Mr. Mahipaul might remember, it is this Government that reduced the rental rates for the occupants of Government/State lands when we came into Office. This also led to a reduction in the amount of revenue that the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission collected. I am sorry that you do not like the facts. I know that all of you have a problem with the facts, my dear Friends on the other side. Go back and check the budget and you will see that we reduce the rental fees for the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission. The Hon. Member asked for an explanation as to why there is an increase, and I am giving the explanation. One, there was a reduction in revenues being brought in because of the reduction of rental fees.

Secondly, because of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the flooding that took place this year, a number of the occupants, particularly leaseholders, had difficulties in paying their rates and taxes in a timely manner.

*11.30 a.m.*

Therefore, that is one for the reasons for the shortfall in revenue and the need to assist the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission (GLSC). More importantly is the fact that the massive programmes of the Government have increased the workload of the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission in terms of surveying new lands for housing. I am sure you will remember the Minister of Housing and Water, Mr. Collin Croal, talking recently in the press about his reaching over 7,000 house lots, which have been distributed. He may correct me. There is more being done; new lands are being opened up for housing. I think on the other side there were questions asked of the Minister of Housing and Water, recently, as of Monday, with regard to the housing programme and so forth.

We are opening up lands and there are more surveys going on. Of course, it is not just for housing, but it is also for economic investments and expansion and the transformation programmes of the Government. The \$265,025,850 asked for is well deserved and is part of the Government’s policy of its

transformative agenda that we will see unfolding within 2022. Thank you.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Cde. Chairman, may I ask if, from this amount of more than \$256 million, there is consideration for legal fees to pay for ongoing legal matters concerning the Guyana Lands and Survey Commission? If so, could you state the amount that would be focused on legal matters?

**Ms. Teixeira:** I am not aware of any legal fees that are included in this amount, nor am I aware of any outstanding legal fees. However, the Hon. Member could ask a question in the normal way, a question on notice, so that we could research it, if necessary. At this point, it is not included in this allocation.

*Item 1: 01-012 Office of the President – National Policy Development Presidential Advisory Services – \$265,025,850 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

#### Current Expenditure

#### Item 2: 21-212 Ministry of Agriculture – Agriculture Development and Support Services – \$3,888,558,690

**Mr. Ramjattan:** Could the Hon. Minister indicate how much of this sum will be for the one-off grant? How much will be for support for Guyana Sugar Corporation (GuySuCo)? How much will be for the operational expenses of National Drainage & Irrigation Authority (NDIA)? Could you give a breakdown of the three?

**Minister of Agriculture [Mr. Mustapha]:** Let me thank the Hon. Member for asking that question. First, I want to state from the onset that every single dollar that is stated here will go towards the development of our country and the people of our country. For the question that was asked by the Hon. Member, 5,263 workers, who were dismissed by the former Government, received \$250,000 from the Government of Guyana. That amounted to \$1,315,570,000, which we have put into the village economy of this country. We will also give \$2,355,800,000 for out of crop support to GuySuCo. An additional \$236,989,261 has been allocated for drainage and irrigation (D&I) in order to provide services to the farmers of our country, to enhance food security and to enhance our D&I system, because, today, Guyana is leading the agriculture agenda in the Caribbean. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Ramjattan:** Out of this \$2.3 billion out of crop support for GuySuCo, what specifically is that out of crop expense?

**Mr. Mustapha:** The sum of \$1.662 billion is for wages and salaries, \$286.6 million is for fuel, \$47.9 million is for lubricants, \$130 million is labour lorry rental, and \$94.7 million is for essential parts and material. This here has to do with the running down of the factories because, when we took over, the factory was running about 40% capacity. The sum of \$86.3 million is for pension and \$28.2 million is for union dues. From 2015 to 2020, GuySuCo had hardly paid union dues to the union. This gives a total of \$2.3358 billion.

**Mr. Ramjattan:** Were the wages and salaries for workers not something you could have foreseen since the budget process? When did this urgency arise?

**Mr. Mustapha:** This is annual support to the GuySuCo out of crop; this is nothing new. This is the annual regular out of crop support for GuySuCo.

**Mr. Ramjattan:** When did this become urgent for you as under the Constitution?

**Mr. Mustapha:** The Hon. Member would know that we had a serious flood; one of the worst floods in the history of our country. The Guyana Sugar Corporation...

**Mr. Ramjattan:** Answer the question.

**Mr. Mustapha:** Comrade, I am answering the question; be patient. We would have expended a large sum to ensure that we safeguard GuySuCo. The budget of GuySuCo have been exhausted. That is why this has become an emergency so as to input the cash into GuySuCo.

**Mr. Ramjattan:** The \$1.62 billion for wages and salaries is a contingent. Did you employ more workers, as a result, since the budget?

**Mr. Mustapha:** This is a replacement of the cash that was utilised because, as I was saying, there were a number of emergency works during that period – from May to August. As result of that, all the heads had been exhausted. That is why we find it necessary to put the money back into GuySuCo.

**Mr. Ramjattan:** What were the moneys and from where did you take them to vire this against wages and salaries?

**Mr. Mustapha:** We vired this money from one head to the other to ensure we put into GuySuCo's account.

**Mr. Ramjattan:** Yes, which head? Come on. From which head did you send it off for that special relief and all of that?

Which head you... now you want to put it back into salaries and wages.

**Mr. Mustapha:** Probably the Hon. Member does not know how sugar is being produced and he is speaking on agriculture. I am saying that the budgetary allocation for the various heads would have been exhausted. That is why it became necessary to ensure we put back money in the various heads. I mentioned all the heads just now and he was making very copious notes. If he wants, I will lay the details over to him at the end of this.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, Hon. Minister. Hon. Member, Mr. Ramjattan, before we go, I just saw the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs had someone come down to him. Remember the vicinity within which the Members of Parliament sit, we cannot have the public come in and talk... We should cease and desist. The moment I see someone come in again, I will call them out. Hon. Member Mr. Ramjattan, you have the floor.

**Mr. Ramjattan:** For the \$1.6 billion here for wages and salaries, when did the transfer occur and was it to the institution GuySuCo?

**Mr. Mustapha:** Of course, all the allocations were made to GuySuCo for wages and salaries. As I said, this is for normal out of crop support because of the heavy workload that GuySuCo has encountered during the flood.

**Mr. Ramjattan:** The \$1.3 billion, if it was made, would it not have been proper for GuySuCo officials to distribute the \$250,000, rather than Ministers?

**Mr. Mustapha:** Again, I want to correct a misleading statement. I saw it and I thought about it now. The Hon. Member has refreshed my memory. As usual, the APNU/AFC normally spreads misinformation in this country. Not one, all the payments were done by GuySuCo staff around the estate. Dr. Singh and I were there to tell the workers... because let me tell you that, last Saturday and Sunday, the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) has corrected the wrong that was done to the sugar workers of this country by APNU/AFC. We brought smiles to the people's faces. Today, the people, who were punished by APNU/AFC, are once again brimming with hope in our country.

**Mr. Ramjattan:** Just for the Minister to clarify, for the cheques paid to these workers, are they GuySuCo cheques?

**Mr. Mustapha:** I think Hon. Member is splitting ears now. The cheque is a Government of Guyana cheque. The GuySuCo is owned and operated by the people of Guyana. The Government is the shareholder of GuySuCo.

**Mr. Ramjattan:** So, it was not GuySuCo's cheques that were distributed. Was it the Accountant General's cheques? Please answer the question.

**Mr. Mustapha:** I already answered that question.

**Mr. Jones:** For clarification, the Hon. Minister indicated that moneys were given to the severed sugar workers. Could the Hon. Member explain whether these sugar workers received severance from the previous Administration?

**Mr. Mustapha:** First of all, I cannot say if all the sugar workers received all the severance pay since they were told that they could not get all the moneys at once because they were going to spend it out.

*11.45 p.m.*

That was said by the APNU/AFC Government; we know that. Our Government ensured that we fulfilled a manifesto's promise. When we went around, we said that we will bring direct payment to the sugar workers who were punished by the APNU/AFC, and we did it last Saturday.

**Mr. Jones:** A follow-up question, Cde. Chairman: Is the Hon. Minister saying that he is unaware that sugar workers received their severance pay from the APNU/AFC Government?

**Mr. Mustapha:** Mr. Chairman, I do not think that question is relevant to the line item.

**Mr. Jones:** Cde. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister indicate whether the moneys paid to sugar workers – a sum of \$250,000 or a quarter of a million dollars each – were considered severance pay?

**Mr. Mustapha:** Mr. Chairman, as I said, we have corrected the wrong that they did to the sugar workers.

**Ms. Fernandes:** That is not an answer.

**Mr. Mustapha:** Mr. McCoy was right to call you that.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Ms. Fernandes, I saw you pointing to me just now. Do you want to accost me? Hon. Minister, please continue.

**Mr. Mustapha:** I want to say, yes.... What was the question he asked?

**Mr. Jones:** [*Inaudible*] severance?

**Mr. Mustapha:** Mr. Chairman, that was compensation because the workers were dismissed and punished by the APNU/AFC. We have compensated them because of the punishment they went through. Families broke up, an entire village economy died a sudden death, people committed suicide and people took out their children from schools all because the APNU/AFC Government punished the workers of our country.

**Mr. Jones:** Cde. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister just simply answer the question because I am seeking clarification? The Government disbursed billions of dollars from the public's coffers. We are trying to ascertain whether or not those moneys paid to the sugar workers were severance pay. It cannot just be compensation because public servants across this country need compensation as well.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister, just before you answer, I think all of us read Financial Paper No.3, and that paper before me states that it is a one-off grant. There is an issue of repetition, and the information is before us. Hon. Minister, you have the floor.

**Mr. Mustapha:** Mr. Chairman, I think I clarified the point appropriately. I think that is enough.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much, Hon. Minister. Hon. Member Mr. Figueira, you have the floor.

**Mr. Figueira:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister inform this House what was GuySuCo's budget for 2021 and how much of that sum was projected to be Government subsidies?

**Mr. Mustapha:** Mr. Chairman, I will lay that over to the Hon. Member.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, the Minister does not have it at his fingertips, but he is prepared to lay it over.

**Mr. Figueira:** Could the Minister inform this House what was GuySuCo's sugar sale income for 2021 as of 1<sup>st</sup> December?

**Mr. Chairman:** Before you speak, Hon. Minister, Hon. Member, again, we are speaking to the reason for these requests. I do not think that question is fully...

**Mr. Figueira:** Mr. Chairman, I...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, you know I am giving an explanation to you before I ask, and you are standing now to engage me. I think we have gone down that road with you before. Hon. Minister, please continue.

**Mr. Mustapha:** Mr. Chairman, I do not think that question is appropriate for this line item which is in relation to the one-off grant for the sugar workers.

**Mr. Figueira:** Mr. Chairman, I want to strongly disagree with the Minister. Mr. Chairman, we are disbursing taxpayers' money to GuySuCo. It is an industry that produces sugar to sell on the international market. We need to know if we are giving workers moneys based on the production of profitable sugar, so the question is indeed linked...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, that is another question. That is an issue of policy. Whether we are giving incentives based on production is my understanding of this current statement that you made to me. The previous one to which the Minister said that he did not find appropriate at this time was on the sales of GuySuCo.

**Mr. Figueira:** Mr. Chairman, I have another question.

**Mr. Chairman:** Go ahead.

**Mr. Figueira:** Given the amount of subsidies required by GuySuCo since 2020, could the Minister inform this House when GuySuCo will breakeven? If so, could he state in which year?

**Mr. Mustapha:** Mr. Chairman, that is a work in progress. We are continually putting funds to ensure that GuySuCo breakeven. As the price of sugar improves, GuySuCo will make more profits and breakeven at some point in time.

**Mr. Figueira:** I am happy that the Minister has indicated to this House that it is a work in progress. Could the Minister indicate what is the percentage of the progression that the Government has achieved so far? [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister, you have the floor. Hon. Members, we have to allow the Hon. Minister to hear the question being proposed. The noise is getting very distracting.

**Mr. Mustapha:** Mr. Chairman, when we took over last year, GuySuCo was in need of critical support, both capital and in the field. As I said, the capacity of GuySuCo, at that time, was just around 40%. We have since recapitalised a number

of areas in GuySuCo, including factories and fields. As it stands today, we are over 50% of that work. That will continue over the years to ensure that we bring GuySuCo to a breakeven point and eventually bring it to profitability. At the same time, take into consideration the social impact that GuySuCo has been making on our country as the largest single employer. Thank you.

**Mr. Figueira:** Could the Minister state, with the positive outlook that he has for GuySuCo, if there would be a restructuring of the management of GuySuCo? It is evident that the management is failing this nation with regards to GuySuCo. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) himself is a failure, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister state if we will be hiring a new CEO for GuySuCo for it to be effective? The present one is failing in the management of GuySuCo. We cannot be giving GuySuCo billions of dollars every other month for a failed industry. We have to fix it.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister, you have the floor. After this, I have the Hon. Minister Mr. Robeson Benn.

**Mr. Mustapha:** Mr. Chairman, of course, we restructured the management of GuySuCo. We reduced management. As matter of fact, we have reduced costs at the management level. We also restructured local management at the various estates. That is why GuySuCo is now moving in the forward direction. We cut the wastages and excesses that the previous Government had, especially at the head office area. We reduced staff there tremendously.

**Mr. Figueira:** Mr. Chairman, could the Minister for my edification and more so the entire nation, indicate what is the salary of the CEO who is supposed to be fixing GuySuCo?

**Mr. Chairman:** I rule that irrelevant, Hon. Member.

**Mr. Figueira:** We are paying the CEO millions of dollars.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, can you please take your seat. Hon. Member Mr. Benn, you have the floor.

**Mr. Benn:** Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Hon. Minister if it is not the case that the presentations, being made from the other side on this issue of GuySuCo, identify for us the pathological disdain and disrespect they have for the sugar industry. This is an important industry for our country.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister Benn, I am still trying to get the relevance. We are going to have a big policy issue shortly. I have the Hon. Member, Mr. Ramjattan waiting.

**Mr. Ramjattan:** From the almost \$3.6 billion that will go to GuySuCo, will any be spent on the rehabilitation of the Skeldon Sugar Factory?

**Mr. Mustapha:** Mr. Chairman, I outlined a roadmap the last time I spoke here about how we will reopen the sugar estates that were closed by the APNU/AFC. As I said, works are ongoing on the present operating estates that we have. For the shuttered estates, as you call them, we are doing work there too – Rose Hall, Enmore, and Skeldon. As I said, we are pushing to ensure that we are doing it in a phased approach so that we concentrate our energy to reopen one at a time. When the APNU/AFC closed these estates, they sold out a number of assets. We have to now put back those assets to ensure that we get these estates operating as early as possible.

**Mr. Ramjattan:** Mr. Chairman, for the phases that have been completed or are to be completed by the 31<sup>st</sup> December this year, does this include any expenditure towards the Skeldon Sugar Estate?

**Mr. Mustapha:** Mr. Chairman, I just answered that question. I just mentioned all three shuttered estates on which works are ongoing. Works are ongoing on all the estates.

**Mr. Ramjattan:** How much of this \$3.6 billion have been expended on the Skeldon Sugar Estate and Factory?

**Mr. Mustapha:** Mr. Chairman, I will lay that information over to the Member.

**Ms. Fernandes:** Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister indicate whether any of the \$1.6 billion that has been allocated to wages and salaries includes payment to the CEO and if so, how much?

**Mr. Mustapha:** Mr. Chairman, it is for the total wages and salaries for GuySuCo. I do not know if the Hon. Member cannot comprehend that. Total wages and salaries mean it is for all employees of GuySuCo.

**Ms. Fernandes:** Mr. Chairman, I understand that we are questioning the specific line item. As part of this line item, we could ask for disaggregation of these figures. I am asking for the \$1.6 billion which has been allocated to wages and salaries to be disaggregated. [**Mr. McCoy:** What should be disaggregated?] Mr. McCoy, you are not bright, you know.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister, she is asking for the \$1.6 billion that you stated earlier to be disaggregated. I do not know if the disaggregation means that she wants each...

**Mr. Mustapha:** Mr. Chairman, just to confirm the disaggregation, as I said, this money is for out of crop support. Out of crop means that cane is not grinding at the estate. That means these moneys are allocated to the operating estates. I can give a disaggregation of the figures for which the Members are asking. For example, for the Albion Estate, there is \$941.7 million; Blairmont Estate – \$573 million; Uitvlugt Estate – \$444 million and; GuySuCo Head Office – \$376 million. This gives a total of \$2.335 billion.

**Mr. Jones:** For clarity, could the Hon. Minister confirm that the sum of \$250, 000 or a quarter of a million dollars, which was paid to each sugar worker, is severance pay or as mentioned, one-off grants?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, I think that you have asked that question so many times in as many different ways, and I had to draw your attention to what was stated here.

12.00 p.m.

I will give the Minister another opportunity to respond again to that question that has been asked a few times.

**Mr. Mustapha:** Mr. Chairman, as you rightfully said, the line item described the payment. As I said, these workers were fired by the APNU/AFC Government. They took a long time to pay the severance pay to these workers. Some of them received it in tranches. The problem is that, after the closure of the estate, a study was done by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The ILO confirmed that, after the closure of the estates, a lot of social ills took place. Families were broken up, the village economy died, parents were forced to take their children out of schools and many persons committed suicide – thanks to the APNU/AFC. This is the disdain that they have for sugar workers in this country. As I said, we have made a commitment. The Vice President of our country had made a commitment in 2015 when the factory was closed that, when we return to Government, we will give them a cash grant to ensure we take care of the period that they were in.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much, Hon. Minister. Hon. Member, Mr. Ramjattan, you may have the floor.

**Mr. Ramjattan:** In the \$3.6 billion that is now added to the subvention of almost \$10 billion, Mr. Minister, when the budget was being done, was a plan of action and expenses given to you by the management or the CEO of GuySuCo? This is way off. It is almost \$4 billion more. I want to know if

the proper plan was given in relation to how much will be spent so as to not come here for contingencies and... you are going into the treasury.

**Mr. Mustapha:** This is the third time that I am answering that question. I already told the Hon. Member that we have had a number of emergencies in GuySuCo this year. As a result of the extended floods, moneys were made available to take care of the estate and cultivation. That is why we are now giving back to GuySuCo the shortfall in which it has found itself. I have already explained that to the Member three times.

**Mr. Ramjattan:** Do you see, in the future, further subsidies for GuySuCo in this vicinity?

**Mr. Mustapha:** Not only for GuySuCo, but for any corporation that benefits the country or serves the country, we will make subsidies available.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, very much. Hon. Member, Mr. Jordan, you may have the floor.

**Mr. Jordan:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If we review the *Hansard* for today, just a few minutes ago, the Hon. Minister confirmed that all sugar workers, who were severed, were paid severance in full. Could the Hon. Minister state what measures or criteria were used to determine that each of those more than 5,000 workers needed \$250,000 tax free?

**Mr. Mustapha:** We are not talking about an assessment of these workers, Mr. Chairman. The assessment was done. These workers were dismissed by the Hon. Member's party and that is why we made that sum available; the 5,263 workers. That is the assessment. They were dismissed, they were placed on the breadline, and their families were broken up. That is why we gave that cash grant to ensure that they repair their lives under the PPP/C Government.

**Mr. Jordan:** Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Minister clearly stated that the workers received their severance. He said that they needed to be compensated further. What measures were placed or what criteria used to determine that amount of payment?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister, the issue here is: How did you come up with a number?

**Mr. Mustapha:** Mr. Chairman, that was the total number of persons that were dismissed. As I said...the ILO. We took the study of those organisations. We took into consideration the social ills of society in those areas. Imagine a man living in

Rosehall, Canje, the estate closes, where will he find employment? Many families in those areas were destroyed; thanks to the APNU/AFC Government. As I said, the assessment that was used is, because those workers were dismissed, we took that into consideration and gave them the cash grant.

**Mr. Jordan:** Could the Hon. Minister state how many of these workers were reemployed and are still working on the estates?

**Mr. Mustapha:** I think the Hon. Member is telling me now to make the case. Under the PPP/C Government, of the 5,263 workers that were dismissed, we have already reemployed 1,200 workers. Approximately 1,200 workers were reemployed under the PPP/C Government.

**Mr. Jones:** I have a follow-up question, Cde. Chairman. Could the Hon. Minister indicate if the 1,200 workers who have since been reemployed were also recipients of the quarter of a million dollars pay out?

**Mr. Mustapha:** The Hon. Member is stressing about this ‘quarter of a million dollars’. I do not think that any amount of money could compensate these workers for the damages that have been done to their lives over the last five years under the APNU/AFC Government; no amount of money.

**Mr. Jones:** Cde. Chairman, I will repeat my question because the Hon. Minister has not answered the question. Could the Hon. Minister...

**Mr. Chairman:** The Hon. Minister answered the question. You might not like the answer, or he may not have answered the way you want him to answer but, when a question is raised and an answer is given, that is the answer. I will give you another opportunity to ask again, another question.

**Mr. Jones:** Thank you, Cde. Chairman. Cde. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister confirm his own statement that the quarter of a million dollars pay out to the severed sugar workers was indeed, as he mentioned, an election promised by the PPP/C?

**Mr. Mustapha:** I do not want to know why the Hon. Member is harping on this ‘quarter of a million dollars’. As I said, no amount of money can compensate these workers for the damages that were done to them by the APNU/AFC Government. As I said, out of the 5,263 workers, 1,200 workers have already been rehired by our Government, and we will ensure that we create employment for all those

persons, all 35,000 persons and over that they have dismissed during their tenure in Office.

**Mr. Jones:** Could the Hon. Minister indicate whether the 1,200 sugar workers, who have since been reemployed, received their quarter of a million dollars as well?

**Mr. Mustapha:** I do not know why this Member cannot comprehend simple basic English. I already said that we paid \$250,000 to 5,263 workers that were dismissed by the APNU/AFC. Out of those 5,263 workers, we have already rehired approximately 1,200 of those workers. That is basic English.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much, Hon. Minister. Hon. Members, this...

**Ms. Ferguson:** Mr. Chairman...

**Mr. Chairman:** I am looking for the light.

**Ms. Ferguson:** I am online, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Chairman:** You are online; I am sorry. You may go ahead, Hon. Member.

**Ms. Ferguson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, to the Hon. Minister, I would like to do a follow-up from my Colleague, the Hon. Vinceroy Jordan. The Hon. Minister stated what would have informed the decision of this current Regime to ensure the one-off grant payment to severed sugar workers. He referred to an ILO report. Could the Hon. Minister state whether the report was laid to the National Assembly? If not, when will Members of the Parliament be able to have a copy of such a report? Thank you very much.

**Mr. Mustapha:** Mr. Chairman, it is simple. It is not a report that we have laid in the National Assembly. The case was made here by many Members of Parliament (MPs). The plight that these workers found themselves in under the APNU/AFC Government... As I said already, the dismissal of these workers... and I want the Hon. Member to comprehend what I am saying here today. We, as a party in Government, stand with the people of our country. We do not stand against the people of our country; we stand with the people, and we will stand with any worker of our country. We have love, we have compassion, and we care for the people of our country, and we will continue to do those things. Thank you.

**Mr. Ferguson:** I want to let the Minister know that I have full comprehension. I am actually asking a question based on

what he said to the Hon. Vincero Jordan when the question was asked about what measure or measurements were used to form the decision of the pay outs to the sugar workers. He made reference to an ILO report. Whether it is a report or a statement, this is taxpayers' moneys being paid and, as representatives of the people of this nation, we need to know what would have informed that decision. Thank you very much, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, all of us have been listening to the Hon. Minister and I heard him say over and over again about the hardships of these sugar workers and these village economies that were reported by the ILO. If it comes as another question along that vein, I will not put it to the Minister. I will give him one last opportunity to address that repetitive question once again. Minister, you may have the floor.

**Mr. Mustapha:** Mr. Chairman, I already answered that question. I said a number of factors were taken into consideration. I just listed a few and I also said that we took into consideration a reputable labour organisation report on the ills in society amongst these people. We also spoke about the damages that were done by the APNU/AFC to the lives of these sugar workers.

**Mr. Ramjattan:** I just want to be reminded by the Minister if it is not also a fact that Diamond and Enmore Sugar Estates were closed by the PPP/C Government?

**Ms. Ferguson:** Exactly.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister, I do not see Diamond and Enmore Sugar Estates mentioned in these estimates here.

*Item 2: 21-212 Ministry of Agriculture – Agriculture Development and Support Services –\$3,888,558,690 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

#### **Current Expenditure**

#### **Item 3: 40-403 Ministry of Education – Nursery Education – \$31,573,496**

**Mr. Chairman:** Let me ask the Minister if she needs to sit here and have her staff with her.

*12.15 a.m.*

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Sir...Cde. Speaker.

*Item 3: 40-403 Ministry of Education – Education Subventions and Grants - \$31,573,496, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, I know I am getting on in age, but I think I still have a lot of faculties of recall. Yes, I could be reminded if I am making a mistake. None of us are infallible.

#### **Item: 3 40-404 Ministry of Education – Primary Education – \$175,565,488**

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Mr. Mahipaul, you have the floor.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Thank you, Sir. I just wanted to say that I did hear you put the question there again. You used the word “put”.

**Mr. Chairman:** The process is proposing and then putting. After we propose, the questions are asked, and when I scan and I think we have exhausted all the questions, including all of the repetitions, I put. I am now proposing.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Thank you, Sir. May I just ask the Hon. Minister to provide us with the number of students who have received this \$175,565,488?

**Minister of Education [Ms. Manickchand]:** Thank you very much for the question, Hon. Member Mahipaul. Mr. Chairman, as you recall, this is a programme that was promised by the People’s Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) that it would be restored once we got back into Government. It was abolished by the A Partnership for National Unity/Alliance For Change (APNU/AFC), a programme that was aimed at giving each public school child at the time cash grants. At that time, it was \$10,000 with the aim that it would be raised to at least \$50,000. As soon as we entered Office, we recommitted and actually implemented the programme where each public-school child received \$19,000. During that process, the parents of private school children said to us, very clearly, that they thought they were entitled. They had suffered the same hardships of those five years of misgovernance and bad governance, and they too needed the \$19,000. As a result of which, the Government made a conscious decision, a caring decision, a decision in service to and out of love for the parents of the children of private schools and decided that all the children of Guyana going to school, public and private, would-be beneficiaries of this caring grant.

In all, for public schools, 32,767 children received \$19,000 each, and that amounted to \$622,573,000. For primary schools, 93,333 children received this grant. For secondary schools, 50,362 students received the grant of \$19,000 each, giving us a grand total in the public sector of 176,462 Guyanese students receiving \$19,000 each. With the private schools, in the nursery, 3,922 students received \$19,000 each. In primary schools, 9,088 students received \$19,000 each. In secondary schools, 3,990 students received \$19,000 each. That brings us to a grand total of private school students numbering 17,000 who received the \$19,000 cash grant. In total, in the public schools, \$3,352,774,000 were paid to the children of this country. And in private schools, \$323,000,000 were paid and transferred directly to the private school children of Guyana.

**Dr. Henry:** Mr. Chairman, I do have a question for the Minister. I would like to know if we could have a breakdown of the schools that have benefitted from this grant and their geographic locations. We received the number of students, but what we do not know is the number of students from each school and which schools were a part of the programme. If all of the schools were a part, we would like to have a breakdown of the schools to make that determination. I would like that information.

**Ms. Manickchand:** Thank you very much for the question, Dr. Henry. Mr. Chairman, this was a very public programme, publicly advertised on every media – mainstream, radio, television, social, *Facebook*, *Instagram*, *TikTok*, or as some say, ‘*TikTak*’, in this National Assembly, on several talk shows and shows, using numerous fliers, and sending letters to each parent. The fact that more than 95% of our students received this money may well say that the information reached them. I think what the former Minister is asking, and I understand the question... She is unfamiliar with the programme because they had abolished it. What the Minister is asking is whether every child was entitled... [**Ms. Ferguson:** We never abolished it, you all abolished it.]

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister, please go ahead. I would just want to ask our operators to mute the microphones except for the person who is speaking. Go ahead, Hon. Minister.

**Ms. Manickchand:** This programme, where \$19,000 was offered to each public and private school child, was just that, a programme where each child, in every school, in every region, from the Pomeroon to Gunns Strip, from the Corentyne coast to Buxton, from Parika to Albouystown – everywhere... There were published schedules in the

newspapers and elsewhere. Every single child was entitled. Some children, as you can see from the numbers, did not take the grant for various reasons, but that is a very small amount. If the Minister wishes for us to give her a breakdown of which schools this programme was offered at, then we would simply have to print all the nursery schools, all the primary schools, all the secondary schools in all 10 regions, including in the Education District of Georgetown.

**Ms. Fernandes:** Mr. Chairman, I noted the question asked by my Colleague and the response given by the Minister, but to make it a little more straightforward, could the Hon. Minister give us a specific number of schools that received the moneys by region? Say, Region 1: this amount of schools; Region 2: this amount of schools, and so forth.

**Mr. Chairman:** Is that the question, Hon. Member?

**Ms. Manickchand:** I know it is an offense to mislead, so I want to be very careful with numbers. Every single school in every single region, every child was entitled. We did not limit it to nationality, once people were going to school they were entitled. There are 116 high schools, so I can say off the top of my head 116 high schools. There are 443 primary schools, so that would be the primary schools. And all the nursery schools. The nursery schools, I believe, is very similar to the primary schools because, generally, nursery schools feed into primary schools. But this is what I could invite you to do, not to give you homework, but I did note one of your Colleagues saying that we should not waste paper. You could go to our digest, something that was not published for any of the five years you were in Office, go to the Ministry of Education’s page, and you could get a listing of all of our schools in every region, publicly, right now, live as we sit here in this Assembly. Right now. I cannot do it because I do not have a device, but you can.

**Ms. Fernandes:** Mr. Chairman, the first thing I would like to note is that newspapers and websites are not official parliamentary documents. The question being asked is specific to the line item before us. We are looking at:

“Provision caters for cash grant for students of private schools.”

I am asking a very specific question. I am asking for a breakdown in the number per schools within these regions, private schools that received these moneys.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, Hon. Member.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** The website is down.

**Ms. Manickchand:** The website is not down.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister, please, you could address me.

**Ms. Manickchand:** Mr. Chairman, the website is not down. We should not give that kind of misinformation. It is absolutely not down; we are looking at it right here. The private schools have a listing also, but because private schools have not been regulated formally by law, as yet, bearing in mind that the Education Act is more than 100 years old, at the time it was made and created, we did not cater for private schools. The first private school came into being in 1992. We are going to change how we regulate private schools, including the listing. But what we can do, and what we would be happy to do, is to lay over to you every single school that registered with us and benefitted from this programme. It is interesting to note that, once we said we were doing this, private schools that we did not yet know were in operation came to our attention. And so, we too have some guidelines and rules about what would comprise a private school.

12.30 p.m.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, Hon. Minister. Hon. Members, I have line up to speak, the Hon. Member, Ms. Hastings-Williams; the Hon. Member, Mr. Henry; the Hon. Member, Mr. Figueira; and the Hon. Member to my left.

**Ms. Ferguson:** And the Hon. Member, Ms. Ferguson.

**Mr. Chairman:** Ms. Hastings-Williams, you have the floor.

**Ms. Hastings-Williams:** Thank you, Cde. Chairman. Thank you for that information, Minister of Education. I have a question. You were quite correct that 95% of the children in the public schools received... Personally, I have at least 26 and more children who did not receive the cash grant at Jawalla Primary School. My question to you is, did you consider those who did not receive it before you handed over the cash grants to the private schools? What is in place for those students from our public schools who did not receive it? This is because I can tell you, Hon. Minister, that I had submitted the names of those. It is not your fault neither was it the fault of the children. When these things were being announced, as you would know, in the hinterland, there is no television in most schools, and the newspapers really do not reach there on time, and due to the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) the people left the community and were far away in the backdams and could not have been accessed. Are

there any plans for these children who did not receive, which was not your fault or theirs, and when are they going to be given their cash grants?

**Ms. Manickchand:** I am very glad that we are seeing a convert in you and that you now believe in the cash grant. I hope this is recognised across. Secondly, Hon. Member, you see the usefulness of it that was taken away from our children before. I want to be very careful of how I frame that because you began the question by asking if we considered the children from the public schools who did not get it before we decided to give it to the private schools. That is a very dangerous thing to send out there. Nothing was taken away from anyone to give to anyone. All of our children are entitled to this grant. We did not take away the cash grants from the children of the public schools to give to the children of the private schools. The reason we are coming here is to add to the budget so that we could give to the children of the private schools.

The truth is, we did it everywhere. We went and we had a schedule. We knew in certain places the newspapers made no sense so we would send in radio messages, we would send in fliers, we would send to the head teachers, present or absent. At the villages, we sent to the Toshaos and we sent it through the Civil Defence Commission (CDC) workers just to try and get the message in. Not everyone came, so, for every region, we did a second round, so that, if you did not get it the first time because there were different reasons people did not come the first time. We also made provisions that if a parent could not come, they could authorise anyone in a proper way and they would be able to receive for the child. The truth is, at some point this has to end. We want an audited report. The auditors were auditing the entire programme live, so if you were in Jawalla at that time, you would have seen auditors with the entire money and the process...

**Mr. Chairman:** Unfortunately, Minister, I cannot be everywhere, so I was not in Jawalla at the time. Please quickly...

**Ms. Manickchand:** If the Hon. Member was in Jawalla at that time Sir, the Hon. Member would have seen that there were auditors there and even here on the coast. There is no discrimination. Even on the coast, in Region 3 and Region 5, people are saying and they are hearing me now, 'We did not get to go that day, will we get it?' I have said, very sadly, we cannot keep it open indefinitely. Next year they will have to pay attention. What I can say is that the percentage of children who received are in the high 90s and they could say

that the information went out there and more people than not, by far, knew about this and received it. Unfortunately, for the children who did not receive it, they are very small numbers, we will do it next year. We also have to be very clear that to get the cash grant, children had to be on the register of the schools. They had to be registered. We believe this could be an incentive for children coming to school. What we saw in some villages was that children who were not on the register and were not coming to school, had turned up for the grant. That posed an audit problem for us. We had some of those challenges to deal with.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, Hon. Minister. I heard a certain unparliamentary word shouted across the room just now. Please, go ahead, Hon. Member Ms. Hastings-Williams.

**Ms. Hastings-Williams:** Thank you for your answer, Hon. Minister. Are you saying that the children who did not receive the cash grant have no possibility of receiving it this year until next year?

**Ms. Manickchand:** It would be very difficult here on 16<sup>th</sup> December, for us, where we are trying to... You know how this works. We have closed off our accounts. If persons did not use the many opportunities given to receive this grant in this year, we will be very happy to serve them next year because this will not stop under the PPP/C. It is going to increase until it reaches at least \$50,000, but it could be more.

**Ms. Fernandes:** Mr. Chairman, based on the statement given by the Hon. Minister that when the distribution or registration started for these moneys for the private schools, there were a lot of schools that came in which the Minister said they were unaware of. [**Mr. Dharamlall:** The Hon. Minister.] The Hon. Minister. The question is, how many schools came in that they were unaware of, which regions those schools were in, and what criteria were used by the Ministry to determine the functioning of those schools?

**Ms. Manickchand:** Everything is relative. When I said ‘many’, the number of private schools across the country that benefited from this amounted to 58. We had some persons who appeared to have day cares.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister, you do not have to listen to her until I put her question to you.

**Ms. Manickchand:** There are 58 in all. But, like I said, I would be happy to give you the listing of those schools because I think we should all know where schools exist, whether they are private or public. Schools should have

certain basic things like a register, some records, blackboards and teaching aids. A bottom house that is looking after three children might not be considered a school. I say ‘might not’ very cautiously because it could be, depending on what is happening there. That is why I say, the Bill we laid in this House in 2014 that was 100 hundred years old then really ought to have received the attention of the APNU/AFC Government, so that we could deal with these kinds of issues. It is required of the PPP/C to look at that legislation again, and we are bringing that soon. That is something we have to pay attention to, how we are defining private schools and what comprises a private school.

**Mr. Figueira:** Hon. Minister, let me reaffirm, that we do believe in cash grants. We believe that all public servants should be given a cash grant, we believe all farmers who are discriminated should be given a cash grant, and, most importantly, we believe all Guyanese should benefit from an annual cash grant from the oil revenue. Hon. Minister, I believe that given \$19,000, it was not just to fulfil a promise. I believe some thoughts were put into it. Given the COVID-19 environment when the decision was made to give the \$19,000, was the objective of the distribution of the cash grant, in your estimation, as the Minister, did it give you some degree of comfort that it achieved its ultimate objective given the challenges of experiencing education in that environment?

**Ms. Manickchand:** I am glad we see another convert. The reason I say ‘a convert’ is because, if you are standing now, Hon. Member, through the Chairman, to say that you believe in cash grants, then one would expect to see that belief manifested in cash grants being given when your Government was in Office. We did not see that; we saw the opposite. Nineteen thousand dollars was given to every public servant who has a child in school; nineteen thousand dollars was given to every farmer who has a child in school; and nineteen thousand dollars was given to every housewife who has a child in school. Here is what we can tell you, we now have more children with tablets and devices in school than when we came into Office in August, 2020. Mr. Chairman, I see an Hon. Member negatively shaking his head. We are absolutely certain, we are not unsure, that there are more devices in every classroom right now as a result of that \$19,000 than there were in August, 2020. We are certain of that because we have done the survey. We now know who we can contact and who we can send work to on the devices.

The question is whether I was satisfied. We made a promise. Our promise was that we would restore the cash grant to the

children of this country. In the midst of an election crisis that should never have happened, which caused a lot of economic worry and strain, in the midst of a pandemic, in the midst of giving every household \$25,000, and in the midst of the biggest flood we have seen in this country, we thought it was a priority to keep our promise and give every single child \$19,000. So yes, I am satisfied, and my heart is pleased that we were able to keep that promise. But our promise was that before the end of five years we are going to give every child at least \$50,000 and that is coming because we are the PPP/C Government and when we make promises we keep those promises.

**Mr. Figueira:** Hon. Minister, I am trying to really get what you said. Now, I believe, Hon. Minister, the distribution of...*[Interruption]* Sir, can I have your protection?

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, Hon. Member.

**Mr. Figueira:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Hon. Minister, I believe the honouring of promises and manifestos is always honourable. But I believe Hon. Minister, for future, I think the distribution of taxpayer's money has to be structured and has to give direction to the recipient.

*12.45 p.m.*

I am aware of a number of students who have been in receipt of this \$19,000 and are not benefiting from the platform of having a device, but the money was given. As a result of that, even the United Nations (UN) would have commented on Guyana's state of education as a nation. I am saying this to say that, going forward, more thought and direction should be given to the recipients to say that when they get the money, these are the conditions they have to fulfil. Yes, we applaud the fact that...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, I think a budget is coming up shortly, and we can...

**Mr. Figueira:** Sir, I am getting to my question.

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, please ask the question, do not get to the question.

**Mr. Figueira:** Sir, you cannot direct me how to ask my question.

**Mr. Chairman:** I can.

**Mr. Figueira:** Well, I am asking you not to.

**Mr. Chairman:** Would you put the question to the Minister?

**Mr. Figueira:** Thank you, Cde. Chairman. Minister, my question is, if the intent of the...

**Mr. Chairman:** My apologies, I accidentally cut you off. You may go ahead. Put on the microphone Hon. Member.

**Mr. Figueira:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You have to be a little careful. Minister, my question is, going forward, if the intent of the Government is to continue the cash grant, would you as the Minister give directives, having done your analysis with the \$19,000 distribution where we would have seen an increase in students receiving a device to learn in this challenging time, would you consider giving criteria that have to be fulfilled by the recipient, that the objective set out by the Ministry is actually achieved on a more grandeur scale? Thank you.

**Ms. Manickchand:** I think what the Hon. Member is asking for is a conditional cash grant, a conditional distribution, and we have to be very careful with that, we should not measure. I used an example of us being certain that the cash grant was used sensibly, because we know we have more tablets in the classroom. I could also say this, there are parents who used the cash grant to buy a black tank so that they could have water and their children could have water at the ready. They could use water in their home, they could flush their toilets. I know parents who used the cash grant to further improve their home so that their children could be more comfortable. We have to leave families with the ability to determine how to use the service that the Government is going to give to serve their families. The dictatorial behaviour of walking into your house and telling you that you must do this or that or we would not give you at all, might not be the most useful. We have a condition attached to this grant and it is that you must be on the register attending school. There are some countries that attached vaccination and attendance percentage before it is given. We have not gotten there as yet, but these discussions could be opened.

I want to also say, very clearly, the report referred to is politically expedient, opportunistic even, to speak of how the report addressed Guyana. The world, the universe, is in a pandemic. Across the world, educational engagement in every single country, from the United States (US) to the United Kingdom (UK), to Trinidad, to Guyana has declined, simply because people cannot go face to face, and nobody planned and prepared for this pandemic. We are not in a worse place. In fact, we have been commended in this country for being very creative by using television, worksheets, radio and other means to engage our children. To

pluck out two lines and make it into a commentary about our entire country is actually unpatriotic. This is because, right now, we should all be celebrating what we have managed to do as a country in a pandemic. Through you, Mr. Speaker, if we are leaders and we see a family or a person using or misusing this money, stop them, advise them, help them along the right path. I would say that the majority of our parents, and I believe this, the majority of our parents applied the cash grant in a way that benefited their children sensibly. We believe that about the people of this country and that is why the cash grant will increase and it will not stop.

**Mr. Figueira:** I hear the Minister and her political gamesmanship with my question. I agree that, with cash grants, if you are giving it to people... and I disagree...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, there is a question. This is not a discussion on who agrees with and who does not agree [*inaudible*].

**Mr. Figueira:** Sir, if you would allow me, I could get to ask the Minister a question.

**Mr. Chairman:** Please get to the question.

**Mr. Figueira:** Hon. Minister, I am saying that this cash grant was specific for a particular purpose. It was not to say that you have a dictatorial approach to tell people what to do...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, the question.

**Mr. Figueira:** This was an...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, the question to the Minister.

**Mr. Figueira:** Hon. Minister, this was an educational cash grant. The question is, even though you would have indicated that some parents used the money for other things, and rightfully so, because of the times that they are living in, my question is Minister, given an educational cash grant and that is specific, would you as the Minister, in giving an educational cash grant, going forward, put criteria that have to be fulfilled, so that the objective of the grant which is to enhance education...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister, I heard that question previously and you answered. I am not going to put it to you, I am going to move on. I have the Hon. Member, Ms. Philadelphia, and the Hon. Deputy Speaker.

**An Hon. Member:** I have members online.

**Ms. Philadelphia:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I have listened attentively to the Hon. Minister's response, and I must say, there are about 386 nursery schools in Guyana. However, the information provided is that persons should have been on the register of the institution as of the 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2021. Outside of that, those persons were not given cash grants. The Minister would have said that they will receive same next year because of it being a continuous programme. I would want to ask a question, those persons who did not receive in 2021, will there be a phase 2 for 2021, so that they could receive the money that they did not receive in 2021? Will there be some mechanism in place so that those persons who have not received in 2021 will have for 2021 and 2022? Thank you.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister, the variation of that question is if they will have the next for 2021 and 2022.

**Ms. Manickchand:** There are 508 nursery schools and classes; your figure is incorrect. No, because the way budgets work, it is for a period, from one year to the next. Good head teachers would have ensured that their children got registered within the time. What had happened was, we said very clearly that persons who were registered by the end of June would be entitled to the cash grant. Then when we thought, maybe because we were out of school and people were not paying attention to when they should get registered, we extended it to July. So, if I were a good head teacher, I would make sure the people who indicated interest in coming to my school were on my register and able to receive that grant. The direct answer would be no, it would not be, but we will be serving those children in 2022.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much. The Hon. Member Mr. Shuman, the Deputy Speaker, you have the floor.

**Deputy Speaker [Mr. Shuman]:** Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity. Hon. Minister, if I have heard you correctly, you would have said that in many Indigenous communities, you encountered a lot of young kids who are not registered in school. I am happy to hear that you have acknowledged that both the PPP/C and the People's National Congress (PNC) have failed to address this issue with Indigenous communities. I want to thank you for that acknowledgement. What I want to ask Mdm. Minister is, what framework is the Ministry putting in place to ensure that those students who are not registered have the opportunity to be registered in school.

**Ms. Manickchand:** Thank you Deputy Speaker. I did not say that; I did not say that at all. The *Hansard* would be there.

You should not put words that are that dangerous in the domain. I said, in response to a particular question about why some students did not get their grants, that some students were not registered. Through you, Mr. Chairman, the Hon Member is saying that I said that many students in Indigenous communities are not registered. I did not say that because that is not true. Guyana has more than 85% of our nursery children enrolled, and it is the highest in the Commonwealth Caribbean, and it is higher in the hinterland communities than anywhere else [Ms. Teixeira: Including Canada.] Including, yes. So, I did not say that. It is the parents, Toshaos, leaders, perhaps such as the Hon. Deputy Speaker, who should ensure children are registered at the right time. Our education officers also go out to do that. We have not found that there is any disproportionate registration or any disproportionate number of students not registering in the hinterland communities. In fact, the interest in education in those communities, in many cases, are much higher than in other communities, and we are very glad about that.

**Mr. Shuman:** Mdm. Minister, thank you. I would love to see the *Hansard* at some point to clarify my point. Hon. Minister, could you tell the listening public, for the students who want to go to school, for the differently able, the disabled, who want to be students, how much of this cash grant actually made it to those differently abled people? Could you quantify the number for this House?

**Ms. Manickchand:** The cash grant came with one condition, and that is that a student had to be on the register of a school. Once the student was on the register of any school, whether a school that incorporated and integrates disabled children, differently abled children, or a school that we call a special needs school, all of the children received it. To answer you, this cash grant, given by the Government, made its way into every hand that wanted it, every student that wanted it who is on the register of a school.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, Hon. Minister.

1.00 p.m.

**Mr. Shuman:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Hon. Minister, I, once again, thank you for your response. However, there are many differently abled people across this country who will never make it onto a register, but that does not mean they are not students. [An. Hon. Member: *Inaudible*]. If I am *throwing salt on the wound* of the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) at this point, my apologies. There are many students across this country who are differently abled but cannot go to school. It does not mean that they are not

students. How does the Hon. Minister intend to address the differently abled who cannot get onto a register, not by virtue of them not wanting to, but because there is not provision for them to be able to go to school? What framework is there within the whole cash grant scheme to ensure that those students are not denied part of this country's bounty?

**Ms. Manickchand:** I think we are entering a different realm, but I would be happy to answer. The new thinking about students with disabilities is not to separate them and put them in special schools but to integrate them into the regular school setting with specific emphasis and training on how they can best learn in those settings. That is the modern approach and there is where we are heading. There are special schools in Guyana, however. Like in every other country, there is need for special schools. We do not have a large record or number of students who would like an education but are unable to get into schools. In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, through the Chairman, what we did was load onto tablets special programmes for the deaf, the blind and for other differently abled students and most of our disabled population. Six hundred and fifty-eight of those students received those devices from seven institutions. While it is true that every country, particularly ours, could pay and will pay more attention to how we treat with differently abled students, I think the premise upon which the Hon. Member based the question, that somehow or the other these children are separate from the regular school environment, is flawed.

**Mr. Shuman:** Thank you, Hon. Minister, for your response. Hon. Minister, in your remarks you said that the PPP/C Administration intends on driving this grant to \$50,000. I commend you on that promise; \$50,000 for the differently abled hearing folks over there. Mr. Chairman, this is a drive towards a welfare state. All Guyanese should have part of this bounty. What I want the Hon. Minister to maybe communicate to the listening public and to this Committee is: under this cash grant scheme, is there such a framework that is being developed to ensure that this comes through an institution and not through a political gimmick, as Ministers handing the public money?

**Ms. Manickchand:** I find it extremely disappointing that any Member of this House would call the distribution of goods and services to children of this country a gimmick. Here is how this works, Mr. Deputy Speaker, through the Chairman. We go to an election – democracy – and we say to the people of a country that these are our plans for them. You said what your plans were for the people. We said what our plans were for the people. The people of Guyana specifically said they

wanted a restoration of the cash grant. The people chose us, and they rejected you because they want the cash grant to be delivered by a PPP/C Government, which happened.

It is not a political gimmick. It is a political promise being fulfilled. People asked us and voted us into place because they believed that we would fulfil this promise. This is money from the public coffers – the public largesse. It has to be audited. I am not certain what other mechanism could be used to deliver this in a way that would be credible and decent. Not one child, and I think we have to put it on the record, or not one parent said that they could not get this grant because of how they voted, where they lived, how they prayed or what they looked like. There was no discrimination. In fact, it was perfectly disseminated. I am not certain how anyone with a conscience or anyone who wishes to be decent and honest could call this a political gimmick. It was not a secret. We said from the platform that, once you put us back into government, we will give you back the cash grant. That is what we did and, perhaps, that is why we are here. This is not a political gimmick. This is service to children out of love for children. [Ms. Ferguson: You are there because of fraudulent votes.]

**Mr. Shuman:** Hon. Minister, thank you for your response. Maybe the words that I uttered escaped you. It is not the cash grant that is the gimmick, Minister. I never said that. I commended the Government. I commended the PPP/C on delivering \$19,000 to the students.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Deputy Speaker, the question.

**Mr. Shuman:** My apologies. Hon. Minister. I commended the Government on delivering. Where the gimmickry comes in is the mechanism under...

**Mr. Chairman:** The question, Hon. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Shuman:** Mr. Chairman. I have to contextualise the question. A question cannot be given in a vacuum.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Deputy Speaker, the question. We are not debating the policy of whether the action is a gimmick, or a promise fulfilled. What is the question with respect to the sum allocated and the policy behind it, please?

**Mr. Shuman:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mdm. Minister, the assumption is made that the majority of the cash grant is going to people who are unregistered. Education in itself acknowledges that parents are the first teachers. In many Indigenous communities, students do not have birth certificates, they do not have uniforms and they do not live in

a geography where they could access the institution. What mechanism is being put in place, under the cash grant scheme, to address these issues?

**Ms. Manickchand:** First of all, again, the entire premise of Mr. Shuman's question, through you, Hon. Mr. Shuman...

**Mr. Chairman:** The Hon. Deputy Speaker.

**Ms. Manickchand:** ... the Hon. Deputy Speaker, is flawed and it is worrying. It suggests that the Hon. Member is unaware of what happens in the Indigenous communities. Every student from the hinterland and riverain communities in 2020, not in 2021, received a uniform grant. In 2021, the students received the cash grant and a uniform grant. In 2021, for the first time in the history of this country, every Grade 6 student all over this country, particularly in the hinterland – and by particularly, I mean, they went there first – received all the textbooks they needed for Grade 6, all the past papers and all the notes and all the questions. It is true that we are paying more and specific attention to the education of children in the hinterland. You will see that with more teachers and more trained teachers. In fact, we have just expanded the Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE) to have an intake, from a historical 535 at its maximum, of 3,281 currently, many of whom are from the hinterland. The hinterland teachers are now being trained, not at the Trained Teachers Certificate (TTC) level but at the Associate Degree level. I suppose one can forgive or be patient with the Hon. Deputy Speaker because he is making statements, I suppose...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister, the answer.

**Ms. Manickchand:** There was not a question.

**Mr. Chairman:** There was.

**Ms. Manickchand:** The question was: how could we make sure children get birth certificates through the cash grant?

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes. Thank you, Hon. Minister.

**Mr. Shuman:** Mr. Chairman, I thank you and I would ask the Hon. Minister to pay a bit keener attention to the question. To contextualise a question, Mr. Chairman, and have to repeat it means that you have to go through the entire process again. I would humbly ask the Hon. Minister to maybe have a look at the *Hansard* and provide the answer in writing, if she so chooses.

**Ms. Manickchand:** Mr. Chairman, I think it would be a good time for me to also inform the Hon. Deputy Speaker that we created a position, almost as soon as we came into Office, called the Deputy Chief Education Officer for Amerindian and Hinterland Education Development. That is held by an Amerindian gentleman, a qualified educator from Region 1, named Marti DeSouza. That programme alone has seen children from across Regions 1, 7, 8 and 9 doing lessons online and doing better at the regional and national examinations in this country. The suggestion that there is a neglect of the hinterland communities is inaccurate, it is flawed, and it is not true.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, Hon. Minister. Hon. Members, we have a few Members online. The challenge I have is that I cannot monitor the raise hand function. I see Ms. Ferguson on the monitor. Hon. Member, please ask your question.

**Ms. Ferguson:** Thank you very much, Cde. Chairman. I just want to remind the Hon. Minister...

**Mr. Chairman:** Do not remind her. Ask her a question.

**Ms. Ferguson:** It is fraudulent votes that have them on the opposite side.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, do you have a question?

**Ms. Ferguson:** Yes, Sir. Could the Hon. Minister confirm to this Assembly whether pre-May, 2015, there was a document, dated 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2015, by the then PPP/C Government, which stated, “envisioned that the grant would not have been possible”? If her answer to the question is yes, could the Hon. Minister further state what would have informed the decision of the then People’s Progressive Party/Civic to cease the cash grant of \$10,000 per child? Thank you.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister, the question normally has to relate to the provision before us but here is a policy that goes back a few years. I will give you an opportunity to respond.

**Ms. Manickchand:** There is no policy. The A Partnership for National Unity/Alliance For Change (APNU/AFC) made that up and said that the PPP/C was going to abolish this grant. We came back into Office and showed just how made up it was.

**Ms. Ferguson:** We never did, Cde. Speaker.

*1.15 p.m.*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, please.

**Ms. Manickchand:** The question posed to me was if I believe there was such a policy to abolish the grant. I say, absolutely not. From the initiation of the grant, we said it was a cash grant that was beginning at \$10,000 but would raise to at least \$50,000 over the next few years.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, Hon. Minister.

**Ms. Ferguson:** We could consider that a photoshop.

*Item 3: 40-404 Ministry of Education – Primary Education – \$175,565,488 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

*Assembly resumed.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I think this is a good time to take the suspension for lunch.

*Sitting suspended at 1.16 p.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 2.32 p.m.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you. Please be seated.

*Assembly in Committee of Supply.*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Education and staff, you have the floor.

**Item 3: 40-405 Ministry of Education – Secondary Education – \$77,980,116**

*Item 3: 40-405 Ministry of Education – Secondary Education – \$77,980,116 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister and staff, thank you very much.

**Current Expenditure**

**Item 4: 47-473 Ministry of Health – Family and Primary Health Care Services – \$51,484,423**

**Dr. Cummings:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We know that vaccination is the world’s safest method to protect children and the vulnerable, basically across life cycles. Could the Minister tell us if this vaccination campaign was routine vaccination or was it mass immunisation for COVID-19? That is the first question.

**Minister of Health [Dr. Anthony]:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much, Hon. Member. The

sum that we are talking about here is for the enhanced COVID-19 vaccinations that we are doing across the country. As you may know, as of yesterday, we were able to give 407,828 first doses to adults across our country. The second dose is now at 289,095 doses. That is 79.5% of our adult population for first dose and 56.4% of our adult population for second dose vaccinations. We have been able to vaccinate children between 12 to 17 years. First dose vaccinations now stand at 29,920 children. That is about 41% of that age cohort. The second dose is 21,175 or 29% of that age cohort. We have commenced doing booster doses for persons who are eligible, meaning 18 years and over. We have just completed about 7,914 booster doses. The sums that are being sought here are to pay for subsistence for our healthcare workers who have been involved in the vaccination programme across the country.

**Dr. Cummings:** Since 2020, we have recognised that there were about eight variants of the COVID-19. Coming at this time when these moneys have been spent, was it poor planning that caused you not to cater for it in past budgets? The COVID-19 is evolving but I thought that you would have planned for it earlier. What are the categories of these workers? Are they frontline workers that are catered for under subsistence and transportation? Which category is it? Is it from the primary care programme or are these persons that you brought on? Are they non-ministry persons?

**Dr. Anthony:** As the Hon. Member, Dr. Cummings, should know, COVID-19 first emerged in December, 2019. In early 2020, we saw the emergence of variants. As you would also know, right now, we are at the Omicron variant in the Greek alphabet. Yes, with the virus we anticipate that there is going to be an evolution of the virus and there are going to be variants. How these variants infect people, the severity of the disease, the rates of transmissions, *et cetera*, would vary. As you pointed out in your first question, with all of this, the only safeguard that we have is using vaccines to protect persons.

Vaccines first became available to us here in Guyana on 11<sup>th</sup> February this year. From that date, we started rolling out vaccines to, firstly, healthcare workers. After a couple of weeks, we then went to persons who were 60 years and older and had comorbidities. That programme started on 10<sup>th</sup> March. We then further extended that programme. By 1<sup>st</sup> April, we were vaccinating persons 40 years and older. We then lowered the age to 18 years and older and that was done on 16<sup>th</sup> April. From about mid-August, we also started doing vaccinations for persons 12 years and older. Again, this has

been a gradual expansion of our vaccination programme, as more scientific information became known to us. Emergency use authorisation for persons 12 to 17 was only recently given. When that was given, we quickly moved to make that available here in Guyana. As you would note, some countries are offering booster doses. We are one of those few countries in this part of the world that is offering booster doses because we recognise that booster doses are effective against Omicron. The only way that one can increase their immunity is by getting booster doses.

We have been following the science and we have been making sure that we can deliver these vaccines in a timely manner to our population. The workers who have been involved in this are some of our trained vaccination staff. We also hired retired persons who we have trained specially for these vaccines and a lot of them are in the primary healthcare system.

**Dr. Cummings:** I thank the Minister for that answer. You boast that you are a caring Government and you have this compassion – these are some of the words that were uttered – so by now I thought you would have gotten special transportation for our nurses. When we were in Government, we ensured that we catered for the nurses late at nights and in the afternoons, *et cetera*. Do you have a plan? I do not know what the cost is per person of the subsistence and transportation you are giving them. I hope that you will be able to have proper transportation for these nurses. These are our frontline workers. They have gotten their 7% but I think we need to take better care of the nurses of Guyana. They are doing fantastic work and I think we need to go above and beyond to provide some means of transportation to cater for those who do not have their own cars. [**Ms. Teixeira:** What is the line item?] It is line item 6261.

**Dr. Anthony:** Mr. Chairman, thank you once again.

**Dr. Cummings:** Which transportation are they using?

**Dr. Anthony:** I would like to thank the Hon. Member, Dr. Cummings, again. She introduced the words compassionate, *et cetera*. I am just wondering how compassionate the Hon. Member's party was in Government. When the APNU/AFC was in Government, how compassionate were they in providing personal protective equipment (PPE) to the nurses that needed? This is because there was an acute shortage of personal protective equipment. Persons could not get N95 masks. Persons could not get surgical masks. [**Mr. Duncan:** [Inaudible]].

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, Mr. Duncan...

**Dr. Anthony:** The same nurses that you speak so much about could not get gloves. The same nurses could not get gowns. They could not get hair covers or shoe covers. All the PPEs that the nurses needed to protect themselves from this virus were unavailable to them. Let us start there. [**Mr. Duncan:** *Inaudible*].

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, Mr. Duncan...

**Dr. Anthony:** Even if those nurses wished to be tested to see whether or not they had the COVID-19, at the time, the APNU/AFC Government was rationing the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests that they had. There were a couple tests that they were giving – five tests to this region, three tests to that region, two to this region. Was that the way you managed the COVID-19 pandemic, and you were compassionate? I must also tell you that we provided transportation for many of these nurses who were working late in the evening. Transportation was provided for them to get home and to return, especially those nurses working at the Infectious Disease Speciality Hospital. We are providing subsistence for them out of these funds. That is why this provision came to this House today.

2.45 p.m.

We needed additional moneys to make sure the service that we provided, especially for the healthcare workers who did the vaccination, which is keeping this country safe. All those thousands of vaccines that have been administered were administered by these healthcare workers. That is why we came back here to make sure that we have adequate provision to ensure they continue to their jobs.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, Hon. Minister. I saw the Hon. Member, Ms. Amanza Walton-Desir, appear on the screen. Is she online? No. The Hon. Member, Ms Annette Ferguson... Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul, go ahead.

**Ms. Ferguson:** Are you calling me, Mr. Chairman?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul, just have a seat. Yes, Hon. Member, that is because your name appeared on the monitor as having a question. Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul go ahead.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Thank you, very much, Cde. Chairman. This amount here, \$51,484,423, caters for subsistence for and transportation of staff. Could the Hon. Minister disaggregate

this sum to say how much would be for subsistence and how much will be for transportation?

**Dr. Anthony:** Thank you, Hon. Member, for that question. Approximately 40% of this sum will go for subsistence and the rest would go for transportation.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Cde. Chairman, the Hon. Minister indicated earlier that the persons who are dealing with the vaccination campaign are vaccination staff, retired persons who returned, and a lot of them are in the primary healthcare system. Is there a figure, in terms of the subsistence, that will be given to specifically vaccination staff, a specific figure for retired persons, and a specific figure for the other persons within the primary healthcare system? I would appreciate if we could have specific figures for specific categories of workers within the vaccination campaign. Thank you.

**Dr. Anthony:** Again, we do not differentiate in terms of one set of persons getting more than the other. It is standardised for everybody who is working to do the vaccination. We have been paying a standard fee to everybody.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to tell us the number of persons who are within the vaccination campaign zone or programme? That is, the total number of persons the Ministry is looking at to give subsistence to within the campaign.

**Dr. Anthony:** On average, we have about 100 to 110 vaccination sites. At each vaccination site, there would be about five staff. For this particular advance that we are asking for, it is to cover specifically about 300 persons. There are persons who have worked in Regions 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10. You would also know that we have been having some difficulty with vaccine hesitancy in some of the regions. Therefore, staff had to go back to some of these communities, repeatedly, which has increased some of the costs over what we had previously budgeted.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Cde. Chairman, I heard the Hon. Minister mention Regions 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10. May I ask why there was no mention of Regions 1, 6, 7 and 9?

**Dr. Anthony:** Again, this is coming out of a voted provision, so this is additional moneys that are required. We had allotments that we have used in some of these other regions already. We are asking for this additional money to cover these other extra visits and so forth that we have done in those regions.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** May I ask if the voted provision of \$191,136,000 has been exhausted or are we still using from this voted provision for the consideration of Regions 1, 6, 7 and 9?

**Dr. Anthony:** The voted provision has been exhausted and that is the reason we are here to get extra money.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Noting that the voted provision has been exhausted and considering there was no mention of Regions 1, 6, 7 and 9 in this sum that is now been requested, is the Hon. Minister saying to this honourable Committee that there will be no additional visits to those regions to ensure that vaccines are provided to the persons who are not vaccinated there?

**Dr. Anthony:** As we speak, vaccination continues in every single region of this country. We have not stopped any vaccination because this is an essential service that is done during a pandemic. In every single region, there are vaccination sites. Vaccinations are continuing. We estimated that we will need to spend \$51,484,423 in those particular regions because we have incurred expenses. That is where it is going to be spent.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** I want to some further clarity with reference to the exclusion of Regions 1, 6, 7 and 9. Is the Hon. Minister saying to this ...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul, I did not hear about exclusion. I heard the Hon. Minister say that, for those regions you are persisting on, moneys are there, and it is being used. These are additional funds for additional visits in the additional areas.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Cde. Chairman, I am guided by you. I heard the Hon. Minister...

**Mr. Chairman:** I am guided by what you asked and what the Hon. Minister answered.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Thank you, Sir. Just for clarity, I heard the Hon. Minister say that the \$191,136,000 has been exhausted. I heard the Hon. Minister say that the \$51,484,423 will be catering for vaccination campaigns in Regions 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10. I am asking if there is no consideration for the staff in Regions 1, 6, 7 and 9 that are in the vaccination campaign, in terms of their subsistence and transportation.

**Dr. Anthony:** Thank you very much, Hon. Member. Let me repeat for clarity. First of all, we have 100 to 110 vaccination sites in the whole country. Different regions have different

number of sites. All of those regions have been doing vaccination. This portion of money that we are requesting now, which is \$51,484,423, will be spent on these specific regions that I have outlined. In fact, we have already spent the moneys in these regions. Basically, we need to clear those liabilities, if you like, for those particular regions.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Cde. Chairman, vaccination drive is ongoing. The Hon. Minister answered that the voted provision has been exhausted. My interpretation of that is that there is no more money there for the voted provision. This is a Contingencies Fund advance. The sum of \$51,484,423 is an addition to the \$191,136,000. The Hon. Minister said to us that this \$51,484,423 catered for Regions 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10, as they continue with vaccination, and it is dealing with subsistence and transportation. I am asking if there is no continuation of the vaccination drive in Regions 1, 6, 7 and 9 and whether there will not be a need for subsistence and transportation in those regions, as the Ministry continues the vaccination drive. It is very simple. I would appreciate an answer. Thank you very much.

**Dr. Anthony:** A very simple answer to the Hon. Member. For Regions 1, 6, 7 and 9, we have adequate provision and they have already received subsidies. There is no need for additional subsidies in these regions. The ones that we are asking for is where we have a need. I do not know how much clearer I could make that to the Hon. Member.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Sir, the clarity is that Regions 1, 6, 7 and 9 have already received subsidies. The vaccination drive is an ongoing process. Is the Hon. Minister saying to us that the Ministry has already paid these vaccination staff, retired persons and persons from the primary healthcare system for work that is ongoing? Is the Hon. Minister saying that staff may have not completed the work as yet, but the Ministry has paid them a one-off amount to cater for this vaccination drive?

**Dr. Anthony:** Mr. Chairman, I do not know what else to tell the Hon. Member. I think we have gone through this about six or seven times already. The Hon. Member could keep asking the same question and I will keep giving him the same answer. We could go down that road and waste another hour here. Hon. Member, you could keep asking the same question and I will give you the same answer because that is where we are using the money. I cannot invent another answer for you.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Cde. Chairman, I trust that this will be the last time that you are entertaining me on this very point. The vaccination drive is an ongoing process. Every day, there are

people travelling. Every day, the Ministry caters for them so that it could provide them with their subsistence. We have already established that the \$191 million plus dollars is exhausted. We are now looking at the request for the \$51 plus million dollars. The Hon. Minister indicated that they have already provided subsistence and travel for Regions 1, 6, 7 and 9. I am asking if there will not be a need for more travel and subsistence, in addition to what was provided, based on this process of vaccination being a continuous process.

**Mr. Chairman:** The Hon. Minister has previously stated that the answer is the same.

**Dr. Cummings:** Just for clarity, we know that we have 10 regions. Health is decentralised. We also know that each region has its budget. Normally, the money would be warranted to the Ministry of Health. Is the Hon. Minister saying that the regions cannot cater for subsistence and transportation for its members?

3.00 p.m.

Could you just clarify for us? We want to empower the regions. We just want to know if the central level is taking care of all the different regions or if the region of itself is empowered to look after its people, to give subsistence, and so forth. Please clarify.

**Dr. Anthony:** Again, the Hon. Member should know the structure of the Ministry of Health's budget. From the structure of this budget here, you would see the line that we are dealing with has to do with:

“Ministry of Health – Family and Primary Health Care Services”

Here is where we have been using sums under the subheading of local travel and subsistence to pay the workers who are doing the vaccination programme in all the regions of the country. That is why we came back here to get a contingency to finish this programme for this year.

*Item 4: 47-473 Ministry of Health – Family and Primary Health Care Services – \$51,484,423 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

#### **Capital Expenditure**

**Item 5: 51-512 Ministry of Home Affairs – Guyana Police Force – \$60,180,000**

**Mr. Cox:** Mr. Chairman, \$60 million was spent for containerised offices and bridges as a result of the fire in

October. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister whether the offices and bridges have already been tendered for. If yes, what was the process used for tendering?

**Mr. Benn:** Naturally, this situation placed the police force and the Ministry's response to it in an emergency. It was single sourced.

**Mr. Cox:** Hon. Minister, since it was sole sourced, could you state when the National Procurement and Tender Administration Board (NPTAB) was approached for approval and when did Cabinet grant its no-objection to this contract?

**Mr. Benn:** The purchase of standard units for the Regional Police Division 4 'A', Brickdam Police Station – [*inaudible*], for self-contained units – \$4.480 million; for male and female washroom units, fully assembled with steel doors; the rehabilitation of the lower flat of the historic barracks of the Brickdam Police Station, which is practically the only building which was left standing after the fire except for the prison block; the rehabilitation of those lock ups for \$14 million; and the construction of two entry bridges and gates as temporary locations. The approval was given by the Cabinet in October.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** What is the name of the company that was awarded the contract for the procurement of the eight containerised offices through sole sourcing?

**Mr. Benn:** The emergency sourcing of these self-contained units was given to Snapins Cabins, an outfit at Rahaman's Park which deals with the provision of similar units for the oil and gas industry.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Could the Hon. Minister state the name of the company that was awarded the contract for the construction of the two entry bridges and gates at the Brickdam Annex?

**Mr. Benn:** Ele's Trading and Hardware was the company which was given the job to do the two emergency entry bridges.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** For the procurement of eight containerised offices, could the Minister be specific and say if these offices are being rented or were they bought and are now owned by the Government?

**Mr. Benn:** Mr. Chairman, I thought that I said we purchased these items.

**Mr. Shuman:** I had my microphone cued when the Hon. Minister was seated. I am sorry if I am beyond your periphery on this side. I still do sit in Parliament and I still, at some point, appreciate asking some of these questions. Let me first say how disappointed, how flabbergasted and how saddened I am at the loss of public structures in Guyana, for example, an important institution such as the police force. I am really very saddened that citizens in Guyana could look at those things and think that it is normal. Let me say to the Hon. Minister, congratulations in pulling the police force through that process and getting it to this point. I want to, hopefully, get the Minister's clarification. We understand that the fire ripped through several structures. We understand that there are deficiencies in terms of the response to those fires. My question to the Hon. Minister is, if you are coming for a supplementary budget, Sir, why is no funding made available for the refurbishment of those fire hydrants that are so desperately needed across the city?

**Mr. Benn:** I believe the Hon. Deputy Speaker may not have read his papers because, if he did, it would have appeared that fire hydrants are being dealt with or should be dealt with at this session.

*Item 5: 51-512 Ministry of Home Affairs – Guyana Police Force – \$60,180,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

#### **Current Expenditure**

#### **Item 6: 71-711 Region 1: Barima/Waini – Regional Administration and Finance – \$1,148,827**

**Mr. Cox:** One of our country's largest budgets was passed mere months ago. Several millions were allocated for security services. What has caused a such a request from the Contingencies Fund for the provision of security services? Is it that the security workers rates were increased from \$377 per hour? If no, could the Hon. Minister indicate what Government has done or its intention, if there is any, to raise or increase these wages?

#### **Minister of Local Government and Regional Development**

**[Mr. Dharamlall]:** I would think that is a policy question in terms of whether we are going to be raising rates and the total allocation to security. At a forum like this we should not be dealing with polices. Except to say that, in Region 1, the fire service report has indicated that there was an arson at one of the public buildings, the secondary school – the same school that Mr. Cox is an absent teacher. **[An Hon. Member: Inaudible.]** Yes, another one. Security is very important for

us as a Government. Since we took Office, we found that there have been many threats by the elements of the Opposition. There have been many threats by activists of the Opposition to destabilise Government installations. We believe that we have to up the security and we have to find the best companies to provide security.

**Mr. Jones:** Mr. Chairman, a Point of Order. **[Ms. Ferguson:** Mr. Dharamlall is always out of place.]

**Mr. Jones:** Standing Order... impugning improper motives on the Members of the Opposition. We ask that those be withdrawn.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, Mr. Jones, he is talking about the opposition. There could be opposition inside Guyana, outside Guyana. He did not say the Hon. Members of the Opposition in the House. Minister Dharamlall, you could continue.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Mr. Chairman, I think I answered the question.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** The increase of the \$1 million, is it for additional security officers to complement Government buildings within Agency Code 71-711?

*3.15 p.m.*

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Mr. Chairman, I do not know which increase in \$1 million; we have increases in \$1.148 million, \$2.704 million, and \$5.838 million. I do not know to which one exactly is Mr. Mahipaul is referring.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Cde. Chairman, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to clarify. We are dealing with Agency 71, Programme 711. The amount there is \$1,148, 827. If I may, I am asking if it is to cater for additional security officers?

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Mr. Chairman, yes.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** May I ask how many additional security officers are we catering for under this programme and where will they be placed?

**Mr. Dharamlall:** There are 27 security officers that we will cater for.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** May I ask where will these security officers be placed?

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Mr. Chairman, those security officers are already placed in installations of the Regional Administration and Finance programme.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, I put the question. I am sorry. I may have to move the Hon. Deputy Speaker, closer. Hon. Deputy Speaker, you have the floor.

**Mr. Shuman:** Mr. Chairman, I sat in this very chamber, three days ago, when the Hon. Minister of Home Affairs complimented the Administration's handling of crime in Guyana. He stated that crime has an upward 20% decrease in this country. I want to ask the Hon. Minister of Local Government and Regional Development if his Cabinet Colleague said that crime is on the decrease and has dropped by over 20%, why are we expending so much more money on security at this juncture?

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Mr. Chairman, I noticed that the Opposition is very gleeful about Mr. Shuman's question. Mr. Shuman is asking me a question about a statement made by the Minister of Home Affairs. I believe that Mr. Shuman is out of order to ask me a question that the Minister of Home Affairs pronounced on. I would happily inform Mr. Shuman that if he would like to ask the Hon. Minister of Home Affairs, then he can do so. Insofar as I am aware, you are out of order to ask me that question.

**Mr. Shuman:** Mr. Chairman, I thank you and the Hon. Facebook Member – I mean, the Hon. Minister – for his comments. Now, I posed the question because I think the Hon. Minister was sitting in this very chamber when the statistics were presented by the Hon. Minister of Home Affairs. As a Member of the Cabinet, Sir, I would have anticipated that the Minister would have been more prepared to defend what he is asking this House for. If crime is on its decrease in this country, why is the Hon. Minister asking for more money for security? It is simple.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Mr. Chairman, I believe it is very irresponsible of the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Guyana to be 'grazing' on this security issue. I think that the Hon. Member is fully aware that elements of the Opposition – that I have said before – have been targeting Government installations. Since we signed the security contracts in May of this year, we have to ensure that all the installations are well protected. That is as far as I can respond to the Hon. Deputy Speaker. Again, if he does not know how to ask and who to ask the question, I believe that he should stop asking questions.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Thanks, Sir. I have one question that I forgot to ask when you gave me the floor. The 27 security officers who we are catering for under this programme, are these the ones that will come from the already contracted firm which is providing the service to Agency 71-711? Are they going to be a part of the Regional Administration and Finance staff complement?

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Mr. Chairman, I shudder to think that someone who is aspiring to be the General Secretary of the People's National Congress (PNC) does not know something as basic as what we are discussing here. This is extremely basic. Security services are contracted out.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Well, answer the question.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul...

**Mr. Mahipaul:** No, I am good there, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister, are you finished?

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you.

**Mr. Cox:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. [**Mr. Dharamlall:** Did someone send you a question?] I think that I am capable enough to write my own questions. Mr. Chairman, I want to draw the Hon. Minister's attention to article 220 (1) of the *Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana* which outlines the condition that will allow one to spend from the Contingencies Fund. In addition to that, article 218(3)(a) also outlines conditions from the Consolidated Fund. Now, listening to the explanation from the Hon. Minister, it is clear that the Hon. Minister is in breach of the Constitution. Having said that, I want to know what is unforeseen, unavoidable, and urgent about this expenditure, since his explanation did not suggest this when the earlier questions were asked?

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Mr. Chairman, I am happy to respond to the Hon. Ronald Cox. This Government, the PPP/C Government, is the only party in Government that respects the Constitution. The APNU/AFC has never respected the Constitution. As a matter of fact, in this very room where we are, the APNU/AFC disrespected the Constitution. We had to recount votes here five months after an election. Mr. Chairman, article 106 of the Constitution also speaks about a no confidence motion which the APNU/AFC did not respect. As a matter of fact, when they were supposed to have been out of Government via a General and Regional Elections,

three months after it was booted out as a result of the no confidence motion, they remained in Government one year after and spent hundreds of billions of dollars without constitutional compliance. Just to bring it to your attention, the very party that you are a part of does not respect the Constitution. You have no right to question our Government, which has always stood by the Constitution, and impugn that our party and Government do not respect the Constitution.

**Mr. Cox:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to assure the Hon. Minister that, as the people’s representative, I have the right to ask all the questions. The Hon. Minister has not answered my question. I am still asking what is unforeseen, unavoidable, and urgent about this expenditure. Thank you.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Mr. Chairman, because we believe in freedom and in the true principles of democracy, we thought that, when we came into Government, we were going to be dealing with partners in the Opposition who were credible and who were well-intentioned to ensure that good governance prevails in our country. What have we found? We found missing documents. What have we found? We found threats on public installations. So, we have to make sure that all our installations in every region... I am going to repeat this for every question that you ask for all 10 regions. We have to protect the Government installations from the APNU/AFC’s and its activists’ threats on installations of our country.

**Mr. Ramjattan:** These are contingencies funds which have already been taken out of the Consolidated Fund. When were these sums taken out and spent?

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Mr. Chairman, we are here today requesting the support of the Opposition so that we could protect the installations of our country. The presentation of a financial paper of this extent, the supplemental request, comes from the Minister of Finance. I am here to represent Regions 1 to 10 on the line items that you are asking me. Unfortunately, you have not been asking me those questions. You are asking me a question that is supposed to be sent to the Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Ramjattan:** Mr. Chairman, if you were to look at the heading here:

“Schedule of Contingency Fund Advances...”

And then:

“Contingency Fund Advances for the Period July 22... to December 9...”

These are advances that were made already to this Ministry. I am just asking, when did it happen? This is a contingency; this is not like a supplementary appropriation that we will come to. It seems that you do not understand the budget process.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ramjattan should be the last person who should speak about this because of the egregious misspent of the national treasury under the APNU/AFC. I can tell you, Mr. Chairman... [**Mr. Ramjattan:** These are contingencies funds.] Why are you heckling me? Do you not want me to answer you? Are you ashamed that we are going to expose what the APNU/AFC has done? Are you ashamed? Why are you ashamed?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister, if you could address the Chair...

**Mr. Dharamlall:** I am sorry, Mr. Chairman, but I wonder if Mr. Ramjattan is ashamed.

**Mr. Chairman:** It is the Hon. Member.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** The Hon. Member, Mr. Ramjattan, is ashamed that, today, they are going to be exposed for their egregious misspent of the national treasury. I must let you know, Mr. Chairman, that, when we perused the security services that were provided under the last Government, practically everyone was handpicked. Everyone was handpicked and they had very close associations with the upper echelons, not aspirants, of the APNU/AFC. We are now dealing with due process. It is a due process because Parliament was in recess. Do you want to recall the Parliament in August, yes or no? That was rhetorical, Mr. Chairman. We are, at this sitting, seeking to address all the issues of the nature of the contingency funds.

*Item 6: 71-711 Region 1: Barima/Waini – Regional Administration and Finance – \$1,148,827 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

3.30 p.m.

**Item 6: 71-712 Region 1: Barima/Waini – Public Works – \$2,704,048**

**Mr. Mahipaul:** May I ask how many security officers are being catered for under this Programme, 71-712, and where are they located?

**Mr. Dharamlall:** There are 27 security officers, and they are attached to the public works programme of the regional administration of Region 1.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Sir, may I just ask for clarity? I did not hear the figure. Is he saying 27?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister, clarity please.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, 27.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Thank you, Sir. Is the rate for the payment of these security officers different from the rate that is used to pay for security officers in the first programme, Regional Administration and Finance?

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Yes, my Colleague is correct, but there is also a substantial increase in the number of security officers in this programme.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** When the contract is awarded, it is awarded at a rate and the Hon. Minister was kind enough to say that the first programme, Regional Administration and Finance, caters for 27 security officers. The request for that programme is \$1,148,827. Here we have 27 officers again, but the amount is \$2,704,048. Would the Minister be kind enough to give clarification?

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. I do not know if Mr. Mahipaul is bereft of reasoning. I did say that the number that is being paid now is substantially more than what was previous. Naturally, it would be more. If it is that the difference was seven before, the difference can be more now so the number will go up. Do you understand? [**Mr. Mahipaul:** Talk again. I am serious; I do not understand what you are saying?] I said the number of guards is substantially more in this programme than what we inherited from the last Administration. Twenty-seven is the total but the difference we have is much more than in the first programme that I mentioned.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, Hon. Minister.

*Item 6: 71-712 Region 1: Barima/Waini – Public Works– \$2,704,048 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 6: 71-713 Region 1: Barima/Waini – Education Delivery – \$5,838, 353**

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Sir, may I ask the number of security officers catered for here in this programme with reference to the \$5,838,353?

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Mr. Chairman, as I indicated to you, there is a fire service report which states that one of our schools in Region 1 was destroyed by arson. I must let you know that our schools are very important. I was just listening... some of you were clapping when one of your colleagues was against the distribution of cash grant for our school children. Someone, most naturally associated with the Opposition, was the arsonist in Region 1. We had to upgrade the number of security agents to 66.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Sir, it is 66 as in that is the number now or are there 66 new security officers?

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Mr. Chairman, I said “upgrade” to the number 66.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Sir, may I ask what was the number before 66?

**An Hon. Member (Government):** It is 65.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** They would have to do a division; I do not know if they will be able to do that. Mr. Chairman, in the national estimate, I did recall that this issue was on the agenda, and I would request Mr. Mahipaul to refer to the national estimates of 2021.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** This is a contract that was awarded after the passage of the Budget and this question was not asked in the national Budget, so I am asking how many security guards we had before we moved the number to 66 within his Programme 713 – Education Delivery?

**Mr. Dharamlall:** The discussion of the line by line occurred many months ago and the APNU/AFC did not ask me any of these questions. I am saying that those answers are already documented in the national estimates.

*Item 6: 71-713: Region 1 Barima/Waini– Education Delivery – \$58,838,353 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 7: 72-721 Region 2: Pomeroon/Supenaam – Regional Administration and Finance – \$2,930,248**

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Sir, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister to provide the number of security officers being catered for with this \$2,930,248.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Mr. Chairman, 32.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** May I ask the location of these 32 officers, please?

**Mr. Dharamlall:** These officers are located in Region 2 and are attached to the Administration programme.

*Item 7: 72-721 Region 2: Pomerook/Supenaam – Regional Administration and Finance – \$2,930,248 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 7: 72-722 Region 2: Pomerook/Supenaam – Agriculture – \$3,122,248**

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Thank you, Cde. Chairman. May I ask how many security officers are being catered for with this \$3,122,248?

**Mr. Chairman:** Are you going to ask the locations too?

**Mr. Mahipaul:** No, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Okay. Hon. Minister, you may have the floor.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Mr. Chairman, 32.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Sir, I am trying to understand this \$37,283,000 which was the voted provision. Is this exhausted, that which catered for the 32, that we are asking for an additional more than \$3 million, or does this more than \$3 million caters for new security officers?

**Mr. Dharamlall:** This is to cater for the 32 officers in total.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Cde. Chairman, may I ask if, before this request for the \$3,122,248, the sum of \$37,83,000 was for the very 32 officers?

**Mr. Dharamlall:** I would like to respond by saying that there was an increase, a very slight increase.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Sir, this is just for clarity. Was there an increase in the payment to the security firm for the \$32 security officers or was there an increase in the number of security officers?

**Mr. Dharamlall:** As I said, it is for an increase in the number. We are speaking about the number, but if you would like to know, security officers are paid more since these new contracts have been like this. We also found that almost all eight companies that were there before were reticent in paying National Insurance Scheme (NIS) on behalf of the security officers. That also was one of the major issues that many of these poor people were raising when we were campaigning. They complained that security companies

which APNU/AFC contracted were not paying NIS for many of these poor people.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** May I ask the number of officers that were catered for with the \$37,283,000, so that I can understand what is the number that is now catered for with the addition of the more than \$3 million? I know that it is 32 in total. How many was it before this request of more than \$3 million dollars?

**Mr. Dharamlall:** I will provide that figure to Mr. Mahipaul at a later time.

*Item 7: 72-722 Region 2: Pomerook/Supenaam – Agriculture – \$3,122,248 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 7: 72-723 Region 2: Pomerook/Supenaam – Public Works – \$877,976**

**Mr. Mahipaul:** The same question as before – what is the total number of security officers that we are catering for with this sum, and would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say what was the number of officers before when there was a voted provision of \$10, 486,000? If there was an increase in that number, how many was the increase?

**Mr. Dharamlall:** There are nine currently, and I can provide, at a later time, the 2019-2020 rollover contract to Mr. Mahipaul in terms of the number.

*Item 7: 72-723 Region 2: Pomerook/Supenaam – Public Works – \$877,976 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

3.45 p.m.

**Item 7: 72-724 Region 2: Pomerook/Supenaam – Education Delivery - \$19,809,792**

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Mr. Mahipaul, you have the floor.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Sir, thank you very much. I have the same question with reference to the number, with what it was to what it has increased to.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Mr. Chairman, I will give the same answer, except to say that the number now is 203.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** How much?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister, could you repeat, he did not hear you properly?

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Mr. Chairman, I said that it is the same answer, except that the number now is 203.

*Item 7: 72-724 Region 2: Pomeroun/Supenaam – Education Delivery - \$19,809,792 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 7: 72-725 Region 2: Pomeroun/Supenaam – Health Services - \$11,582,856**

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Mr. Mahipaul, you have the floor.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Thank you, Cde. Chairman. The same question: how many security officers were there, how many are there now, and the difference?

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Mr. Chairman, there are 59. As I indicated before, it is a standard position. But I could supply the information.

*Item 7: 72-725 Region 2: Pomeroun/Supenaam – Health Services - \$11,582,856 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 8: 73-734 Region 3: Essequibo Islands/West Demerara – Education Delivery - \$46,704,427**

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Mr. Mahipaul, you have the floor.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Cde. Chairman, if I may seek your guidance, all of these expenses will fall under the Hon. Minister and they are for the same purpose, which is:

“Provision caters for increased security charges.”

It is Regions 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10. All I am interested in is knowing what the number was in terms of the security officers before the request for this additional sum and what the current number is that we have that was catered for. I do not know if it is parliamentary for the Hon. Minister to just provide that. That is the only question I have for all of them. Could he just provide the answer in writing? It will be, I think, in the best interest of all of us in terms of saving time. I do not know if any other Member on my side has any other question in reference to this topic.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much, Hon. Member Mr. Mahipaul. Hon. Minister, are you prepared to lay over in writing the same question that recurs for all of these line items under the different agency codes?

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. I am willing to do so, but I can give Mr. Mahipaul now, the number of security officers we have in every region. In Region 3, there are 544; Region 4, there are 731.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Sir, in the interest of time...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister, just one second. Yes, Mr. Mahipaul.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Sir, he is bringing it together for every region, but each programme has an amount.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister, he is asking to lay over for each programme, because it is the same question.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Mr. Chairman, I have the number for each programme now that I could share.

**Mr. Chairman:** Go ahead.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Mr. Chairman, it is 19, 64, 358 and 162 for the different programmes in Region 3; Region 4: 44, 19, 546, 125. And I must say, regarding Region 4, we found that there were a lot of persons who were being paid but there was a high level of absenteeism. When we investigated it, we found that many of these people were like phantoms or ghosts. I do not know if the Government at that time was just paying these security companies and the services were not provided. I shudder to think that is what happened under the last Government, where security for regional installations costed hundreds of millions of dollars, and in some cases, there was no security at some of these installations. In Region 5: 46, 231, 75; Region 6: 18, 55, 17, 253 and 107; Region 7: 42, 90, and 33; Region 8: 12, 42, and 3; Region 9: 16, 24, 43 and 15; and Region 10: 25, 15, 170, and 72.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, Hon. Minister. Hon. Member Mr. Mahipaul, you have the floor.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am expecting in writing, the numbers that it was before.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, I think the Minister had answered that we could refer to the Estimates that were presented. Hon. Members, we had just begun Region 4... Sorry. Yes, you are correct, Hon. Member Mr. Mahipaul.

*Item 8: 73-734 Region 3: Essequibo Islands/West Demerara – Education Delivery – \$46,704,427 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 9: 74-744 Region 4: Demerara/Mahaica – Education Delivery - \$63,552,619**

*Item 9: 74-744 Region 4: Demerara/Mahaica – Education Delivery - \$63,552,619 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 10: 75-751 Region 5: Mahaica/Berbice - Regional Administration and Finance – \$8,661,658**

*Item 10: 75-751 Region 5: Mahaica/Berbice - Regional Administration and Finance – \$8,661,658 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 10 75-754 Region 5: Mahaica/Berbice – Education Delivery - \$64,994,415**

*Item 10 75-754 Region 5: Mahaica/Berbice – Education Delivery - \$64,994,415 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 11: 76-761 Region 6: East Berbice/Corentyne - Regional Administration and Finance - \$9,349,517**

*Item 11: 76-761 Region 6: East Berbice/Corentyne - Regional Administration and Finance - \$9,349,517 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 11: 76-762 Region 6: East Berbice/Corentyne – Agriculture - \$28,156,604**

*Item 11: 76-762 Region: 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne – Agriculture - \$28,156,604 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 11: 76-763 Region 6: East Berbice/Corentyne – Public Works - \$20,214,898**

*Item 11: 76-763 Region 6: East Berbice/Corentyne – Public Works - \$20,214,898 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 11: 76-764 Region 6: East Berbice/Corentyne – Education Delivery - \$139,733,852**

*Item 11: 76-764 Region 6: East Berbice/Corentyne – Education Delivery - \$139,733,852 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 11: 76-765 Region 6: East Berbice/Corentyne – Health Services - \$53,914,805**

*Item 11: 76-765 Region 6: East Berbice/Corentyne – Health Services - \$53,914,805 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 12: 77-771 Region 7: Cuyuni/Mazaruni – Regional Administration and Finance - \$1,496,974**

*Item 12: 77-771 Region 7: Cuyuni/Mazaruni – Regional Administration and Finance - \$1,496,974 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 12: 77-773 Region 7: Cuyuni/Mazaruni – Education Delivery - \$10,539,101**

*Item 12: 77-773 Region 7: Cuyuni/Mazaruni – Education Delivery - \$10,539,101 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 13: 78-783 Region 8: Potaro/Siparuni – Education Delivery - \$12,700,988**

*Item 13: 78-783 Region 8: Potaro/Siparuni – Education Delivery - \$12,700,988 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 14: 79-791 Region 9: Upper Takatu/Upper Essequibo – Regional Administration and Finance - \$2,377,524**

*Item 14: 79-791 Region 9: Upper Takatu/Upper Essequibo – Regional Administration and Finance - \$2,377,524 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 14: 79-794 Region 9: Upper Takatu/Upper Essequibo – Education Delivery - \$2,293,207**

*Item 14: 79-794 Region 9: Upper Takatu/Upper Essequibo – Education Delivery - \$2,293,207 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 15: 80-801 Region 10: Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice – Regional Administration and Finance - \$6,725,579**

*Item 15: 80-81 Region 10: Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice – Regional Administration and Finance - \$6,725,579 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 15: 80-803 Region 10: Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice – Education Delivery - \$29,915,807**

*Item 15: 80-83 Region 10: Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice – Education Delivery - \$29,915,807 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 15: 80-804 Region 10: Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice – Health Services - \$12,640,824**

*Item 15: 80-804 Region 10: Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice – Health Services - \$12,640,824*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, this concludes the line-by-line consideration of the items in Financial Paper No. 3 before us.

*Question*

“That the Committee of Supply approves of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No.3 of 2021 – Schedule of Contingency Fund advances on the Current and Capital Estimates totalling \$5,112,355,210 for the period 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2021 to 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2021.”

*put and agreed to.*

*Assembly resumed.*

**Dr. Singh:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to report that the Committee of Supply has approved of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No.3/2021 and I now move that the Assembly doth agree with the Committee in the said resolution.

*Motion put and agreed to.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, this concludes consideration of Financial Paper No. 3 of 2021.

**Motion to approve Supplementary Financial Paper No. 4/2021**

“BE IT RESOLVED:

In accordance with Article 171 (2) of the Constitution, I signify that Cabinet has recommended for consideration by the Assembly, the motion for the approval of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 4 of 2021 - Supplementary Estimates (Current and Capital) totalling \$21,477,833,982 for the period ending 31st December, 2021.”

*[Senior Minister within the Office of the President with responsibility for Finance]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, we could now revert to the Committee of Supply to consider Financial Paper No. 4/2021.

*Assembly in Committee of Supply.*

*Motion proposed.*

*4.00 p.m.*

**Capital Expenditure**

**Item 1: 02-023 Office of the Prime Minister – Power Generation - \$42,346,488**

*Item 1: 02-023 Office of the Prime Minister – Power Generation – \$42,346,488 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 1: 02-024 Office of the Prime Minister – Telecommunications and Innovation - \$13,502,580**

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Cde. Chairman, the request for \$13,502,580, it states in the Remarks column:

“Provision of additional resources to purchase computers for the National Data Management Authority.”

May I ask how many computers will be purchased with this amount, what is the unit cost per computer, and if all the computers will have the same specifications?

**Prime Minister [Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips]:** Mr. Chairman, may I?

**Mr. Chairman:** Go ahead, Hon. Prime Minister.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** Mr. Chairman, I rise to answer the question posed by the Hon. Member. A total of 61 computer systems will be purchased and they will not be of the same specifications.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** From the voted provision of \$41,500,000, may I ask the Hon. Prime Minister if this amount was exhausted and if that is why we are requesting \$13.5 million for the purchasing of computers?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** To answer the Hon. Member, yes, that sum was exhausted. However, to add additional information for you, the National Data Management Authority (NDMA) has completed its lifecycle assessment, asset management for in-user device report. This has led to us making this request because many of the computers that they have and are using now are past their warranty.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** May I ask how many computers were bought with the voted provision of \$41,500,000 that was exhausted?

**Brigadier (Ret'd) Phillips:** From the voted provision, the sum of \$6.4 million was used to purchase 30 computers.

**Mr. Chairman:** Sorry, Hon. Member, I did not notice you.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a quick follow-up on the same line item. Could the Hon. Minister state whether the procurement process has already started for... [**An. Hon. Member: (Inaudible)**] Sorry about that. The Hon. Prime Minister. I did not mean to... Could the Hon. Prime Minister state whether or not the procurement process has started to get the 61 computers?

**Brigadier (Ret'd) Phillips:** To answer the Hon. Member, the procurement process has started.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Could the Hon. Prime Minister state whether a decision has yet been made as to where they are going to be getting the computers from and if so, who?

**Brigadier (Ret'd) Phillips:** To answer the Hon. Member, the process has started, and we have reached the stage where there is an award, and it is divided into two lots. The name of the two companies are NT Computeac and Digital Technology Group of Company Incorporated of Guyana.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Could the Hon. Prime Minister state what procurement method was used to arrive at these two companies?

**Brigadier (Ret'd) Phillips:** I wish to advise the Hon. Member that it was an open tender.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Sir, I just want some clarity. Is the Hon. Prime Minister saying that the contract for the procurement of the 61 computers have already begun, it has already been awarded, and they now have to be provided?

**Brigadier (Ret'd) Phillips:** I would just like to make it clear to the Hon. Member that we do not have a contract. We have just concluded the tender process.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** This is a schedule of the supplementary provisions. The Hon. Prime Minister is before the House requesting moneys for a purpose. I would like to ask the Hon. Prime Minister if he can provide some guidance as to why is it that the process has started when the moneys have not been approved as yet?

**Brigadier (Ret'd) Phillips:** I wish to advise the Hon. Member that nothing is wrong with what we did here. We are following the Procurement Laws of Guyana.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** I want to seek further clarity, Sir. Suppose this House does not approve this sum of money, are you saying that we have wasted time to go into a process?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Prime Minister, you have the floor.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Should we not... Sir, I am not yet completed.

**Mr. Chairman:** Sorry, Hon. Member.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Should we not have waited on the National Assembly to give approval? Even though the Hon. Prime Minister is saying that there is no contract, the fact that the tender board process has begun, and the fact that there were two awards, it means that there was already an allotted sum that was bid. There is also a lowest responsive bidder. It means that a process has commenced with figures. How is it that can be allowed on the basis of us not even knowing if the National Assembly would approve this sum for this process?

**Brigadier (Ret'd) Phillips:** I hear the Hon. Member, but to put it simply, intelligent anticipation of future tasks. You cannot criticize me, or you should not criticize me for using my initiative. I am here to serve the people.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** The number here is \$13,502,580 which is, in my view, understanding the process, an estimated amount. When this is approved, an advertisement will have to be placed in the media for there to be a public tendering for this process. Companies will then bid, they will buy the bid documents and the lowest responsive bidder is going to be awarded based on the approved sum that we have here, which comes to us as an estimate from whatever the Government did to arrive at this number. I am registering my concern that the Hon. Prime Minister and his Office began a process without the necessary approval of this House. I would like for the Hon. Prime Minister to provide some guidance as to whether or not he believes this was basically making the Opposition and the National Assembly a rubber stamp.

**Brigadier (Ret'd) Phillips:** I wish to assure the House that, at no time, did I set out to make this House a rubber stamp. It is just, as I mentioned before, intelligent anticipation. However, in doing that, I have respected the House at all times. No contract was awarded.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** The two companies that the Hon. Prime Minister named that were awarded the tenders or bid, they had to be awarded with an amount. Could the Hon. Prime Minister tell us what is the amount that was awarded for the first company and what was the amount that was awarded for the second company for the provision of the 61 computers?

**Brigadier (Ret'd) Phillips:** The three lots and two companies are as follows: Lot one – 10 computers at \$2,644,680; Lot 2 – 11 computers at \$2,429,900; and Lot 3 – 40 computers at \$8,428,000.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Sir, one minute please or less than that.

**Mr. Jones:** In the meantime, he is doing that, there are Members of Parliament (MPs) who are online trying to get your attention.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you. Hon. Member Mr. Mahipaul, you have the floor.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Thank you, Sir. I was just doing some calculations and it adds up here.

**Ms. Hughes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Are you able to hear me?

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, we can.

**Ms. Hughes:** To the Hon. Prime Minister, as you would know the National Data Management Authority (NDMA) has been very instrumental in the past in implementing the Guyana REDD Plus Investment Fund (GRIF) project. This has supported a lot of the work that was done between 2015 and 2019, that is, the expansion of internet connectivity, the connections of free internet access to over 250 schools, over 170 the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Hubs. Could you tell me if any of these computers that you are seeking to procure now are part of a strategy to continue that process? The second part of the question is, are the 61 computers in addition to what you would be getting under the GRIF funded hinterland Poor and Remote Communities project?

4.15 p.m.

**Brigadier (Ret'd) Phillips:** I wish to inform the Hon. Member that these computers are purchased for use by the staff at the NDMA, not for the projects that she mentioned.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you Hon. Prime Minister. Hon. Member Ms. Hughes, is that all right?

**Ms. Hughes:** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, Hon. Member.

**Ms. Hughes:** I realise not much more is being done in the expansion of that project, but that is all right.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Cde. Speaker, the Hon. Prime Minister was kind enough to name the two companies that were awarded, Lot one and Lot two, but we learned, after a question here, that there is a Lot three. Could the Hon. Prime Minister name the company that was awarded Lot three, please, or went through the process?

**Brigadier (Ret'd) Phillips:** I am sorry, Mr. Chairman, I did not mean to confuse you. Lot one, NT Computeac, Lots two and three, Digital Technology Group of Company Inc.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, Hon. Prime Minister.

*Item 1: 02-024 Office of the Prime Minister – Telecommunications and Innovation - \$13,502,580 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

#### **Current Expenditure**

#### **Item 2: 03-031 Ministry of Finance – Policy and Administration – \$4,000,000,000**

*Item 2: 03-031 Ministry of Finance – Policy and Administration – \$4,000,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

#### **Capital Expenditure**

#### **Item 3: 13-133 Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development – Regional Development – \$16,613,458**

*Item 3: 13-133 Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development – Regional Development – \$16,613,458 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

#### **Capital Expenditure**

#### **Item 4: 16-162 Ministry of Amerindian Affairs – Community Development and Empowerment – \$434,000,000**

**Mr. Shuman:** [*Inaudible*].

**Mr. Speaker:** Deputy Speaker, I had acknowledged the Hon. Member.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Could the Hon. Minister state what additional resources would be required under this sum?

**Minister of Amerindian Affairs [Ms. Campbell-Sukhai]:** The sum that we are invited to request from the National Assembly caters for the 50% payment for additional tractors for Amerindian communities, including trailers and

equipment, chipper and plough. In addition, we also cater for some requests as was submitted within the year for projects from Amerindian villages.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Just for clarity, I am not sure if I heard correctly, did the Minister say that 50% of the sum would go to tractors? Is that what I heard?

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Mr. Chairman, we intend to continue the programme to supply Amerindian villages with tractors and trailers, an implement which was started in 2020, where our Government procured 112 tractors to support agricultural development in the hinterland, and, also, to provide a means of transportation for road building, forestry, *et cetera*. The supplemental is intended to procure an additional 71 tractors, 71 trailers and 71 chippers. For the purpose of the House, \$205,900,000 will go towards a 50% payment for the cost of tractors and trailers. A sum of \$35,429,000 will go towards 50% payment for 71 implements which includes chipper and plough. In addition to that, we will, also, be using \$192,671,000 for projects to various communities across the hinterland regions and, also, some of the Amerindian coastal villages which covers requests from those villages for support for projects within the communities and villages. Mr. Chairman, that will add up to \$434 million.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Mr. Chairman, last year around this time there was a supplementary provision that came requesting tractors. Based on that, I figured that there is some policy of giving tractors to the Amerindian communities. I am wondering whether or not, if this is a clear policy, why is it that the Minister keeps coming at the end of the year for another? Has a decision been made as to how many tractors they want to give to the Amerindian community within the five years, so that they could budget for it the right way, and do not have to come with a supplementary at the end of the year? I am just trying to figure out if there is a policy or is this an *ad hoc* approach to budgeting and development in the Amerindian communities.

**Ms. Sukhai:** The People's Progressive Party/Civic Government has a clear policy in support of accelerating development in Amerindian villages and hinterland communities. The Hon. Member should recall that, in 2020, there was no supplemental requested for tractors, trailers and chippers, it came within the budget. Therefore, in this year, we are continuing to add to the programme of distribution of tractors to support all the sectors in the Amerindian villages, which has never been done before. It is a very significant project, and the Amerindian communities and hinterland

communities, alike, are expected to benefit tremendously and significantly from this investment in their communities and villages.

**Mr. Shuman:** Let me first thank the Government or the Administration for providing some needed equipment to Indigenous communities. For my clarity, before I get into the question, Mdm. Minister, are you at this juncture saying that the \$1.5 billion that was previously allocated, has been expended 100%?

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** I would agree that the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs has expended, totally, the budget of 2021, the \$1.5 billion allocated for the Amerindian Development Fund under the head for 2021.

**Mr. Shuman:** I am very cautious not to comment on anything *sub judice* at this junction. I would like the Hon. Minister to maybe clarify if any of this more than \$434 million will be used for the cash for contracts components within the Ministry.

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Mr. Chairman, could he repeat, I did not get most of what he said.

**Mr. Shuman:** Mr. Chairman, I opened by saying that I do not want to comment on something *sub judice*, that is currently before the courts. What I am trying to clarify is if within the Ministry there is an arrangement out of this more than \$434 million that is being sought from this House, being sought for cash for contracts within the Ministry.

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Mr. Chairman, I think I was very clear when I said that the PPP/C Government is here to request approval for \$434 million to invest in equipment, machinery, and also for request of projects that were requested and were not fulfilled over the period. Every day, there are requests coming in from the Ministry, and we are proactively trying to address those requests for developmental support. Our Government intervention is merely seeking to advance the development of the Amerindian villages and communities.

**Mr. Shuman:** Thank you Minister. Mdm. Minister, while I appreciate that the Government is seeking value for dollar, and that the previous procured equipment does provide the kind of value for dollar, what component of the \$434 million that you are currently asking for from this House will be utilised in a single source component?

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Mr. Chairman, as a Minister with oversight over the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, I wish to

say very clearly that I believe that the procurement process that would be exercised will deliver to the Ministry and support our programme in delivering to the people of this country, the Amerindian people.

**Mr. Cox:** I want to also thank the Hon. Minister for engaging the Indigenous communities. Could the Hon. Minister state, specifically, what projects she is hoping to embark on and which communities will benefit, if all the regions, if not, which region?

4.30 p.m.

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** The projects that will be expending the \$192,671,000 will basically be spread across the various coastal Amerindian and hinterland communities. Communities in Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8 and 9 will be beneficiary villages of this investment. He did ask about the types of projects. It ranges from the purchase of Wood-Mizers to develop the ability...and the use of wood products within communities to poultry farming, organic agriculture, cassava processing, extension of cattle rearing in some communities, expansion of village ranches – more than one – and the establishment of guest houses. We have more than one of those in different regions – at St. Cuthbert’s Mission and the completion of the Eco-Lodge cabin, to name a few. It goes across various projects requested by those communities within the hinterland and a few from the coastal areas.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** I am still young, and my brain is quite okay. I just asked the Hon. Minister about the budgeting process. I was able to find Financial Paper No. 2/2020. It states that the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs requested \$130 million as:

“Provision for additional resources to facilitate payments with respect to procurement of tractors and trailers for hinterland communities”.

This came in December, 2020. I asked the Minister – since this was a Supplementary Financial Paper – whether or not it was the policy of the Government to give out tractors and trailers to the communities, and if it is the policy whether they can do that in the budget and not come at the end of the year, like she did last year, asking for supplementary provision for 71. Could you not determine that every year you want to give 100 or 500 and put it in the substantial budget, instead of requesting moneys at the end of the year to try to procure tractors?

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** A little more checking would also reveal that, in the budget, we had \$300 million for tractors, which was a supplementary for the remaining payments. On this occasion, we want to add to the complement already procured for support. Therefore, I do not see why our Ministry, on behalf of the Amerindian communities and villages, should not seek to ensure that we advance development in those communities by providing developmental support to enhance their livelihood.

*Item 4: 16-162 Ministry of Amerindian Affairs – Community Development and Empowerment – \$434,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule*

#### **Capital Expenditure**

#### **Item 5: 21-212 Ministry of Agriculture – Agriculture Development and Support Services - \$755,000,000**

**Mr. Ramjattan:** Could the Hon. Minister indicate whether there was documentation that caused this sum to be the sum that they want provision for in the next couple of weeks?

**Mr. Mustapha:** These equipment are necessary. It is very important and critical now for us to ensure that we mitigate flooding in the country. We have been stretched out. I am hearing mumbling from an Hon. Member about us not doing anything in July. I want to inform this Assembly that when the APNU/AFC was in Government, they procured nine fixed pumps and three mobile pumps from the Indian line of credit. All those pumps were below the specification. Now we are trying to get back our money from the Indian company. That was under the APNU/AFC. That is the reason we are now short of pumps around the country. We have to replace those pumps. As I said, over the last few months, we have seen heavy rainfall and the pattern of heavy rainfall. That is why these equipment are necessary. What we are doing now is correcting, again, the wrongs that were committed by the APNU/AFC.

**Mr. Ramjattan:** Would there be a procurement process for purpose of the purchase of the equipment?

**Mr. Mustapha:** Sure, there will be a procurement process. We will abide by all the procurement rules and regulations. I am sure that we will be able to accomplish these projects.

**Mr. Ramjattan:** The procurement process now just has almost two weeks to be completed. [**Mr. Persaud:** Do not worry about that]. Please, that is why it is another slush fund. Are you saying, Mr. Minister, that the procurement process –

from advertisements right down to the award – will finished before 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2021?

**Mr. Mustapha:** I want to assure the Hon. Member that yes, we will complete the procurement process according to the rules and regulations.

**Mr. Ramjattan:** Apart from pumps, what are the other equipment for \$755,000,000?

**Mr. Mustapha:** We will be procuring three hydro flow mobile pumps – 40 Q set – at \$39 million each for a total of \$117 million; five 80 Q set hydro flow diesel power mobile pumps at \$65 million each, giving a total of \$325 million; four excavators at \$38.5 million for a total of \$154 million, and three 14-foot motor grader at \$54 million each, giving a total of \$159 million. This gives a grand total of \$755,000,000.

**Mr. Jordan:** Could the Hon. Minister state the areas where these pumps will be installed? How many of the excavators will be given to the Mahaica/Mahaicony/Abary-Agricultural Development Authority (MMA/ADA), if any?

**Mr. Mustapha:** Mr. Chairman, these are mobile pumps. These pumps will be moved around the country. Excavators will also be moved around the country. There is no one area where we will be putting these pumps. These are mobile pumps that we will move around, depending on the condition in certain regions.

*Item 5: 21-212 Ministry of Agriculture – Development and Support Services – \$755,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

#### **Capital Expenditure**

#### **Item 6: 26-264 Ministry of Natural Resources – Petroleum Management - \$125,907,376**

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Could the Hon. Minister state what consultancies are currently ongoing under this project code?

**Minister of Natural Resources [Mr. Bharrat]:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me thank the Hon. Member for the question as well. This provision would cover the cost of legal consultancy for the cost audit, the independent administrator consultancy and preparation for the Second Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) report. It will also cover the review of the field development plan for the Phase 2 and the building of the petroleum website. If I may add, the cost audit that I speak is the cost audit up to 2017.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Could the Hon. Minister state who are the consultants that will be doing these different consultancies?

**Mr. Bharrat:** The consultant for the audit is IHS Markit Consultancy Services. The consultant for the legal aspect of it is Mr. Peter Stewart.

*Item 6: 26-264 Ministry of Natural Resources – Petroleum Management - \$125,907,376 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule*

#### **Capital Expenditure**

#### **Item 7: 31-312 Ministry of Public Works – Public Works – \$48,000,000, \$1,607,064,762 and \$115,000,000**

#### **Bridges**

*There were no questions under this head.*

#### **Road Network and Expansion Project**

*There were no questions under this head.*

*4.45 p.m.*

#### **Sea and River Defence Works**

**Ms. Ferguson:** Project code 1501400 – Sea and River Defence Works. I note here that the voted provision was in excess of \$3 billion. The Government is now asking for a new provision of \$115 million. According to the remarks stated in Financial Paper No. 4/2021:

“Provision of additional resources for sea and river defence works in critical areas including the Essequibo Coast, Leguan, Zeelugt, Mahaicony and Glasgow.”

My question to the Hon. Member is: could he provide us with a status report as it relates to the percentage expended from the initial voted provision? Could he also detail to us the disaggregated amount for the various areas? Would he be able to expend this money on or before 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2021, taking into account that is the time the accounts for all Government ministries are expected to close? What procurement method or methods was or were used to effect these additional works? Thank you very much.

**Minister of Public Works [Bishop Edghill]:** I thank the Hon. Member for the question. The fact that we are here asking for this additional sum indicates that we have already executed the programmes for the appropriated amount that

we received by way of the budget. In fact, what we are doing is more. We have moved the country from a state of underperformance to a place where we are performing beyond expectations and that is responsible for the request that is being made.

To the Hon. Member, the areas in which we are seeking to do works with the sums that we requested are riprap sea defence between Manilla and Bygeval, a total of \$43,930,880. These works are ongoing. Construction of riprap sea defence between Fairfield and Zealand, Mahaicony, Region 5, for a sum of \$9,464,633. These works are substantially completed, and we are getting to closure on this. Construction of riprap sea defence at Better Hope, Essequibo Coast, Region 2, for a sum of \$11,788,963. These works are ongoing and are expected to be completed before the end of the year. We also have construction of riprap river defence at Amsterdam, Leguan Island, Region 3, phase 1 for a sum of \$37,179,800. The works are also ongoing there. Construction of riprap sea defence at Zeelugt on the East Bank of Essequibo, Region 3. Supplementary provision is being sought for \$2,921,600 and the works are ongoing. Like I said, the reason we are asking for money is because we are doing more than what was initially anticipated. Finally, construction of riprap sea defence at Glasgow, Heathburn, East Bank Berbice, Region 6. The sum of \$9,714, 024 was requested and these works are ongoing as well. In terms of the procurement process that was used, it was open tender.

*Item 7: 31-312 Ministry of Public Works – Public Works – \$48,000,000, \$1,607,064,762 and \$115,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 7: 31-313 Ministry of Public Works – Transport – \$420,000,000 and \$213,152,427**

#### **CJIA Corporation**

**Ms. Ferguson:** Project code 1601500 – CJIA Corporation. The voted provision was \$150 million. The Government is now seeking an additional \$420 million which will be for the provision of additional resources for a baggage handling system. My first question to the Hon. Member is: what percentage of the initial voted sum has been expended as of today? Secondly, what additional resources are catered for with the \$420 million now being sought? Thirdly, what procurement system was used for the provision of services? Fourthly, would the \$420 million be expended by 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2021, taking into account that all Government accounts close at midnight on 31<sup>st</sup> December?

**Bishop Edghill:** Mr. Chairman, absolutely nothing that is being done at the Cheddi Jagan International Airport is a secret. It is open. Everything is open tender. It has been advertised in the newspapers. People know about it. To the Hon. Member, the \$150 million is already committed. Regarding the \$420 million that is being sought, Sir, unashamedly, I have to say that in the revised contract we inherited there was no provision to deal with the handling of baggage when one checks in at the airline.

When one checks in at an airline counter right now, one has to fetch his or her bag and carry it to a screening machine. Sir, you would know that is a security risk because things can happen in transit. This provision is for the provision of a conveyor belt service so that when one checks in his or her bag, the agent will put it on a conveyor belt, it will go straight to the screening and then one's bag will go to the holding area or secondary screening before boarding a flight. This is to improve service at the airport and to continue modernisation. It is also correcting what should have been done in the first place. No modern international airport should have a check-in system without a conveyor belt and baggage handling equipment to move one's baggage to security screening and then, ultimately, for loading and dispatch out of the country. That is what this is for.

To answer the Hon. Member about if we will get this money spent before the end of the year, while we are seeking the House's approval for this money, we have been actively following the procurement process. On the approval of this money, immediately, we will be able to engage the contract and get this process moving.

#### **Ferry Vessels and Stellings**

*There were no questions under this head.*

*Item 7: 31-313 Ministry of Public Works – Transport – \$420,000,000 and \$213,152,427 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

#### **Current Expenditure**

**Item 8: 40-402: Ministry of Education – Training and Development – \$100,484,314**

**Dr. Henry:** Could the Hon. Minister indicate the reach and modality of delivering this training for teachers? Once that question is answered, I may have a few other questions.

*5.00 p.m.*

**Ms. Manickchand:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. As I was saying earlier this morning, prior to 2021...Let me back up a little. When we came into Office in August, 2020, the Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE) was closed, and there was no indication of if or when it would be reopened. As a result of that, what would have happened, not only this year, next year and the following year, but four years from now, is we would not have had teachers to graduate in the system. We would have been in a serious deficit. We took some serious, bold, practical, sensible and very-needed decisions to go fully online, although not solely online.

Instead of 535 teachers, which is the most we have ever accepted at the Cyril Potter College of Education for face-to-face learning, this year, our intake was 2,374, almost five times the number of teachers that we were training. Four years from now, when many countries are going to be feeling the effects of the 2019-2020 COVID-19, Guyana is actually going to be producing more trained teachers because we took these initiatives during this period. We are delivering online, and we will begin face-to-face learning again shortly. The mode of delivery will be online as well as face-to-face. We have in-service teachers. Those are teachers who, while they are being trained, are teaching in the classroom. We have preservice teachers, where our teachers are not in the classroom as yet but are learning to teach.

**Dr. Henry:** Thank you, Hon. Minister. I wish to have a follow-up question. Is the Hon. Minister aware that there has been no training, to date, for many of the teachers who are enrolled in this programme, particularly in the hinterland regions? If the Hon. Minister is aware, could she provide an explanation on when and how this situation is intended to be remedied?

**Ms. Manickchand:** Sir, I am not aware of the large number of teachers that the Hon. Member is speaking of, clearly, because if I were aware of it, I would have fixed it. If the Hon. Member is aware of any teacher who is unable to access this training, I would be happy to know. During the lunch break, the Hon. Member, Ms. Dawn-Hastings, raised with us that two teachers claimed they were not able to access the programme. We were able to show the Hon. Member a signed receipt stating that they had received the information through flash drives and other means. In this infrastructure, where internet connectivity is not available everywhere, we have to find ways to allow people everywhere to access all of our services. We cannot say that only because one is in Georgetown, one could attend CPCE, but the person at Gunns

Strip, who really wants to become a teacher, cannot teach. We had to find a way around it, and the way around it was to load our materials onto different modes and send it out to them.

We used to have about 350 Trained Teacher's Certificate (TTC) teachers. That is, the teachers doing just the Trained Teacher's Certificate because that is all we offered in the hinterland. Prior to now, all we offered in the hinterland was the Trained Teacher's Certificate. A person had to come to a centre to be able to do the associate degree and then go on to do their degree at the University of Guyana (UG). We now have only 35 students doing the TTC programme, that is, the Trained Teacher's Certificate Programme. It is a remarkably low number compared to what used to happen before. It is because all of the other teachers are actually qualified and are doing the associate degree programme. This time, because they got the opportunity, they are doing the associate degree programme. We are very happy and pleased about that.

**Dr. Henry:** Thank you, Hon. Minister. For what it is worth, I would hope that the Hon. Minister will take a look at both the qualitative and quantitative value of the programme. I trust that this is not an expansion of the 'No Child Left Behind' policy, where we have 'no teacher left behind' and teachers who have not had access to training will end up graduating from that programme.

My other question has to do with the fact that this programme, perhaps, was not contemplated early in the year because it was not budgeted for in 2021. I would like to know if the expansion of teachers' training was a consideration at the passing of the budget, and if that were to be the case, why the sum not requested for at that point in time?

**Ms. Manickchand:** I think it is important for us in this House to be straight and honest with the public. The policy referred to as the 'No Child Left Behind' was met by the Hon. Member and the APNU/AFC when they went into Office. They continued it for five years and they left Office without changing that policy. Clearly, they saw the benefit of not having children repeat form after form and be kept back. The APNU/AFC must never speak derogatively of the 'No Child Left Behind' policy because they kept it. They kept it for all of the time they were in Office, and they left Office without changing it. The APNU/AFC, through its then Presidential candidate, the Rt. Hon. Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger, said that he was going to stop the One Laptop Per Family Programme and was going to give one laptop per teacher. Everybody remembers that. That was a whole

campaign promise. That never happened. [An Hon. Member: *Inaudible*] That gentleman may have gotten a laptop, but every teacher in this country did not get a laptop. We had a revolving fund left active, where we gave teachers laptops from that revolving fund. We came back into Office and met money in that revolving fund. We are currently procuring laptops for teachers under that same revolving fund, again. At that time, the Hon. Member, asker of the question, had charge of the entire system.

It is important that we look at both quality and quantity. We do not want to produce many teachers so that we could tick a box. We must have, as our end product, the effect of our students doing better. As we speak, short term, there is a diagnostic management team at CPCE, so that we could diagnose what the problems are, look at what their suggesting solutions are and then go to the Ministry of Finance with a budget for that and fix them.

The question was whether we anticipated and why we did not budget for this earlier in the year. We could not have anticipated that, once we opened our lines, we would have moved from 535 persons to 3,000 people. Why we are here, now, is because 3,000 new teachers have said that they want to teach. It is something this country needs. We, on this side of the House, will fund that because our children need it. What is a happy occasion we are seeing is that a lot of these teachers who are training now in the programme are coming from Regions 1, 7, 8 and 9 and deep on the Mahaicony Abary Pomeroun River. We are going to see trained teachers where we never seen trained teachers before. The aim of the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) Government is to have, by the end of this first term, 100% of our teachers in the classroom trained or in training. That is something that we are working towards and something we intend to deliver.

*Item 8: 40-402 Ministry of Education – Training and Development - \$100,484,314 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

#### **Capital Expenditure**

**Item 8: 40:405 Ministry of Education – Secondary Education – \$45,300,400 and \$5,683,000**

#### **Secondary Schools**

**Dr. Henry:** Thank you, Cde. Chairman. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister if we could be provided with the listing of which secondary schools the Ministry is targeting, whether it national or confined to Georgetown.

**Ms. Manickchand:** The schools that this money is going to be used to design are the burnt out North Ruimveldt Multilateral Secondary School, the burnt out, by arson, North West Secondary School in Mabaruma, and an extension of the Saint Joseph's High School, Queen's College, Saint Stanislaus College and the Bishop's High School.

**Dr. Henry:** Just one other follow-up question. Is there not a mechanism usually where the funding comes through the region for secondary education and the Ministry would only request for Georgetown? Is there a shift in that, in any way? This is because there is a North West Secondary School or something to that effect (*inaudible*).

**Ms. Manickchand:** No, there have been different models. Generally, education is dealt with through the regions, but, as the Hon. Member would know, the Westminster Secondary School which we funded, designed, started building and had to come to and finish off is in Region 3. It was done centrally. Some of the schools are done centrally, and some are done through the regions. In this case – the Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance might want to elaborate – it may have been more convenient for all the designs to come in one place. This is just a design. This is not money for building as yet. This is just designing the various extensions and buildings.

**Dr. Henry:** Thank you for that explanation. In the former case, it was because it was donor funded; that is why the provisions were made. As the Hon. Minister is saying, this is the initial phase or design phase. I am not sure whether it would be the Government of Guyana in the long term that would fund the infrastructural work or whether it would be donor funded or if this mechanism would just be used interchangeably.

**Ms. Manickchand:** I am not the expert, but I am advised by the expert, the Hon. Minister, Dr. Ashni Singh, who is sought throughout the world for his expertise, that it does not matter.

*5.15 p.m.*

Once it comes from the State's budget and it is accounted for properly, whether it comes from the Ministry of Education, centrally or through the region, it does not matter. The aim is to serve children in a particular area. For example, central Ministry was responsible for building the Martyrs' Ville Nursey School which we are about to open. It does not matter much. There seems to be no distinction of worth about whether it is a foreign-funded project or a locally funded project.

**Dr. Henry:** Just as an observation, it does matter in terms of the oversight and supervision required to be provided. I think those conclude my questions. Thank you.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Could the Hon. Minister state whether or not the Ministry has determined who will be fulfilling these consultancy services?

**Ms. Manickchand:** No. It is going to go through the procurement process.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** For clarity, is the Hon. Minister saying that the procurement process to determine who would be... has not yet started?

**Ms. Manickchand:** The process has started. The process for the design has started. The process for the furniture that we are going to be procuring has started. We expect that nobody in this House is going to stop the design of the extension of schools. We have not spent any of the money as yet. We are waiting for this approval here before we begin to spend.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Could the Hon. Minister say how far along they are in the procurement process?

**Ms. Manickchand:** Regarding the furniture, we usually get that from the Linden Technical Institute. We use our technical institutes and the students at those institutes to build. They earn from it. I suspect we may have told them already that we need 'x' number of pieces in terms of class A, class B, because there are different levels of furniture.

In terms of the design, we may have begun to look at our shortlisting for the consultancies to design the schools.

#### **School Furniture and Equipment**

**Dr. Henry:** I do not have any questions for that item. I would be happy if they could really get some good furniture for the school. Thanks.

*Item 8: 40-405 Ministry of Education – Secondary Education – \$45,300,400 and \$5,683,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

#### **Capital Expenditure**

#### **Item 9: 45-452 Ministry of Housing and Water – Housing Development – \$7,704,039,798**

**Ms. Ferguson:** This is a whopping \$7 billion now being sought on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2021. Before I go to my question, I wish to draw to this honourable House that, so far,

February to June 2021, we approved \$8.8 billion for the housing sector. Now, coming in December, on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2021, the Ministry is now looking for a further \$7.7 billion and change, bringing the total, thus far, to over \$16 billion in the housing sector.

Cde. Chairman, my question to the Hon. Member is: Could he explain the rush at this 9<sup>th</sup> hour for the \$7.7 billion?

Secondly, what systems are in place to ensure moneys are expended within adequate time knowing the accounts for all Ministries closes at the 31<sup>st</sup> day of December, 2021, to be precise, at midnight? I would like the Hon. Member to answer those two questions, and I have some other questions to follow thereafter. Thank you.

**Minister of Housing and Water [Mr. Croal]:** The work of the Ministry of Housing and Water does not stop at midnight. The work to make the lives of citizens of our country... [**Ms. Ferguson:** This is taxpayer's money [*inaudible*]]. You had your chance. Allow me now, or I could sit and allow you to ask all the questions. The work of the Ministry to make the lives of our citizens and families happy does not stop at midnight. I find the question pretty strange. This Minister, earlier in the week, was asked a question about contracts that were signed, which represented over \$13.9 billion for works for new and existing schemes. I do not understand how the Hon. Member could be alarmed at the whopping figure that is being requested.

Mr. Chairman, allow me to outline. This supplementary is going to provide ongoing infrastructural works for new areas, existing areas, as well as the mobilisation advance for the new extended four lane road that will take us from Eccles to Diamond. Additionally, because of the increased works and the amount of infrastructural works that we have, we have to pay also for surveying works.

This whopping figure that is being asked about is for infrastructural works for roads, bridges, drainage, water, networking, land preparation in areas such as Plantation Stewartville – there are three lots and more information could be provided – Mon Repos; Annandale; Vigilance; Bladen Hall; Strathspey; Le Bonne Intention (LBI); Plantation Cummings Lodge – both 1767, 1768; Plantation Great Diamond; Plantation Little Diamond; Plantation Prospect, Phase III; Plantation Providence 115; Plantation Experiment; Williamsburg; Hampshire; Number 79 Village; Number 75 Village; the ongoing Mandela project; Anna Catherina; Edinburgh; Cornelia Ida (CI); Meten-Meer-Zorg. I could go on and on.

There are ongoing works for contracts that are existing. Additional sums are required to ensure that these works are completed to make accommodation available for land space for occupancy for over 10,000 new homes, which are to be built for persons to take up their spaces. How are we ensuring that this money is, probably, prudently being spent? There is a competent project team that implements our project execution and do them in a timely manner. Hence, we could do much more. That is why we are able to do much more and accommodate much more in a fast-tracked mechanism. We have a commitment to the people of Guyana to deliver a minimum of 50,000 house lots in this our first term in Office.

**Ms. Ferguson:** Cde. Chairman, may I continue, please?

**Mr. Chairman:** Yea, you can.

**Ms. Ferguson:** On the 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2021, we approved the supplementary sum of \$2.838 billion. The explanation given then was that works were ongoing in existing and new schemes. The Hon. Member identified the areas and gave percentage of works done as at... the sums being sought at that time. In his responses to the questions which I asked earlier, he made reference to some areas. I would like the Hon. Member to state for this National Assembly and for the people of Guyana, the percentage of works completed to date, as at 16<sup>th</sup> December, 2021, in the areas for which the \$7.7 billion is now being sought. I will have him respond to that question. I will also ask him to provide to the National Assembly when these works are expected to be completed, since he boasts about having a competent and reliable project team. I would like for him to respond to those two questions and then I will continue.

**Mr. Croal:** Correct. We had an original budget of \$6 billion, then a supplementary of another \$2.838 billion. On new areas alone, we have expended, to date, as at 30<sup>th</sup> November, a total of \$7,397,723,809. I am giving you this figure for you to understand. First of all, let me repeat what the \$7 billion is being asked for now, and then we will go into some details.

5.30 p.m.

There is \$2,754,390,000 for infrastructure works in new areas, and there is the mobilisation advance of \$1,999,000,000 for the four-lane road from Eccles to Diamond. I am rounding it off. There are infrastructural works in existing areas to the tune of \$2 billion dollars. There are survey works. As I said, we have to do a number of survey works, which is part of the exercise and our programme, and it is over \$521 million. Those are what the

\$7.7 billion entails. Now, let me go to some specifics. For the Eccles to Mandela road, the total that will be awarded would be \$13,327,912,019. A 15% mobilisation advance will give \$1.999 billion. That is one.

Two, for the survey works, these are for cadastral surveys in a number of areas which include Charity, Onderneeming, Vive la Force, and Good Hope. There is the current alignment of the Mandela to Eccles, Ordnance Fortlands, and Eccles, *et cetera*. I could go into a number of details. We then have existing works within Great Diamond and Covent Garden. There is the upgrade of roads at Mon Repos, Prospect commercial area, Ordnance Fortlands, Zeelugt, and Belle West. There is a long list.

Then we come to some details that you might be interested in. The Stewartville award was for three lots. These cost \$169.5 million, \$189.2 million, and \$220.2 million. At Mon Repos, these were awarded in two lots for \$61.3 million and 105.2 million. At Annandale, there are three lots for \$119.1 million, \$101.9 million, and \$113.8 million. At Vigilance, Bladen Hall, and Strathspey, there are seven lots at \$169.5 million, \$201.3 million, \$180.888 million, \$187.5 million, \$177.7 million, and \$199 million. At La Bonne Intention (LBI) Estate, there are four lots for \$128.4 million, \$89.6 million, \$179 million, and \$177.1 million. There are six lots for Cummings Lodge, Block 1767. These cost \$259.9 million, \$298.7 million, \$294.2 million, \$165.1 million, \$204.7 million and \$137.9 million. Then for Cummings Lodge, Block 1768, there is \$134.6 million. For Great Diamond, there is \$162.9 million, \$134.7 million, 149.2 million, \$166.4 million, \$148 million, \$187 million, \$122.1 million, \$147.9 million, and \$208 million. Those are for Plantation Great Diamond.

Maybe I omitted to give some details on... Let me give some more details. For Stewartville, there are 430 lots. It is for the occupancy of 430 persons. For Mon Repos, there are for 202 lots. For Annandale, there are 373 lots. For Vigilance, Bladen Hall, Strathspey there are 852 lots. For LBI, there are 445 lots. For Cummings Lodge, there are 1176 lots, and this is for Blocks 1767 and 1768. There is Great Diamond for another 1044 lots and Little Diamond for 524 lots.

For Plantation Prospect, there is \$141.6 million. That is for one lot. There is a second lot for \$181.7 million, \$173.4 million, and \$242.7 million. Those are for 790 lots. We have Plantation Providence 115, Phase III, for \$14.8 million and \$120.8 million. We also have Plantation Experiment for \$130.7 million. There is Lot 2 for \$140.6 million, Lot 3 for

\$85 million, and Lot 4 for \$91 million. This is at Experiment and there are about 669 lots.

We then have Williamsburg, Hampshire. There is \$230.5 million and \$190 million for 245 lots. At Number 79 Village, there are 34 lots for \$58.7 million. At Number 75 Village, there is \$113.8 million, \$123.1 million, and \$128.5 million for three lots. There is \$113.1 million for about 277 lots at Ordnance Fortlands. There is \$114.8 million for about 341 lots. At Plantation Edinburgh, Anna Catherina and Cornelia Ida (CI), there is Lot 1 for \$244 million; Lot 2 for \$240.1 million; Lot 3 for \$299 million; and Lot 4 for \$222 million, \$231 million, \$337 million, \$233 million, and \$230 million. Those are for 1,076 lots. We also have, for example, at Met-en-Meerzorg, the sum of \$293.7 million and \$350.2 million for Lot 1. Those are for 676 lots. There are also, for example at Providence Phase 4, \$18.4 million as well as \$12.6 million. These are for both Phase II and III at Providence – \$12.7 million, \$12.1 million, \$19 million, \$18 million, \$19 million, \$19 million, \$12.6 million, \$8.6 million, \$18.6 million, and \$12 million. These are for about a total of 539 lots. We can go on and on. I hope the details are self-explanatory.

In terms of works in progress, Mr. Chairman, these are ongoing. It is intended to be completed so that persons can occupy them.

**Ms. Ferguson:** Thank you very much, Cde. Chairman. If I may continue, but even before I do so I want to say that I am indeed happy to hear that infrastructural development has commenced in the following areas: LBI, Annandale, Cummings Lodge, Plantation Prospect, Experiment, Williamsburg, and Edinburgh. These are all areas that were created by the Coalition Government. Also, allottees were provided allocations under the Coalition Government. We must give kudos to the Coalition Government where these areas are concerned.

That being said, Cde Chairman, I want to go back to my earlier question as it relates to the supplementary provision which was approved on 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2021. The Member, when asked questions by yours truly, did provide this august Assembly with percentages of works done from the \$6 billion which was approved in March, 2021. I ask the Hon. Member to provide me, provide this honourable House and provide the nation, with details of area per area. I need to know that, as of 16<sup>th</sup> December, 2021, in the Mon Repos area.... I forgot to mention that we also allocated lands in Mon Repos. You said earlier that 15% of the work was completed. I need to know, today, for the areas that you provided earlier, what percentage

of works have been completed to date? I have the Official Report, the *Hansard*, before me here and I am relying on the information contained therein. I need to know what percentage of works were completed in Annandale. In June you said that 15% of the work was completed. Between June to now, we should have moved from 15% to a greater percentage. That is the kind of information that I wish to get from you, Hon. Member.

My last question to the Hon. Member with regard to this particular line item, Cde. Chair is: Could the Hon. Member say when the allottees are expected to access these areas? Could you give a time period? That is one. Could you say why is it that allottees who were given allocations under the Coalition Government in these areas – whether Annandale, LBI, Strathspey, Williamsburg, or Number 75 Village – are yet to receive their agreement of sale or their title? Payments were made for these documents, so I need for you to provide this honourable House, all of Guyana listening, and even those who were given allocations, with information about when they will be able to access their lands to commence building their dream homes. Thank you.

**Mr. Croal:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is, yours truly reply. There were three comments and questions basically. So, let me start with the first one. I cannot believe that the Hon. Member referred to areas where they allocated lots during their period. Yours truly would like to remind the Hon. Member of the track record from 2015 to July... [**Ms. Ferguson:** I do not need to hear that. Guyanese do not need to hear that.]

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, the Minister is on the floor. If you want to rise on a Standing Order, you can state it.

**Mr. Croal:** Mr. Chairman, let us remind ourselves. Take this into context that, in our very short period in Office, we allocated 10,000 lots. Let me give some statistics of the Hon. Member's tenure in Office. For 2105, there were 161 allocations; for 2016, there were 2,020 allocations; for 2017, there were 1,131 allocations; for 2018, there were 934 allocations; and for 2019, there were 1,301 allocations. As part of the General and Regional Elections gimmick in the run-up to the short period in 2020, there were 1,987 allocations. That gives a total of 7,534 allocations which were done under the APNU/AFC tenure in Office of over five years. I hope that I put the first comment to rest. Let us go to the second comment. Mr. Chairman, let me provide some information.

5.45 p.m.

The information that I am giving here are the expenditure as at 30<sup>th</sup> November of this year for the works that I identified earlier. Let us go. Lot 1 for Stewartville, the contract sum is \$169.5 million. Mind you, we have made additional payments. Let me give the amount as of now. We have a total of \$83.1million. For Lot 2, there is \$189.2 million and the expenditure as of now is 86.1 million. For Lot 3, there is \$220 million and the expenditure as of now is \$88.9 million. For Mon Repos Lot 1, there is \$61.2 million and the expenditure to date is \$56 million. For Mon Repos Lot 2, there is \$105 million and the expenditure to date is \$39.7 million. For Annadale Lot 1, there is \$119.1 million and the expenditure to date is \$86 million. There is \$101 million for Lot 2 and the expenditure to date is \$66 million. For Lot 3, there is \$113.8 million and the expenditure to date is \$85 million. For Vigilance and Bladen Hall, Lot 1, there is a contract sum of \$169.4 and the expenditure to date is over \$85 million. For Lot 2, there is \$201 million and the expenditure to date is \$85 million plus another \$23 million. There is \$180 million for a contract sum for Lot 4 and the expenditure to date is \$116 million. For Lot 5, there is \$187 million and the expenditure to date is \$77 million. For Lot 6, \$177.7 million is the contract sum and the expenditure to date is \$101 million. The sum of \$199 million is the contract sum for Lot 7 and the expenditure to date is \$92 million. I can go on and on. If the Hon. Member would like me to go on, she could just tell me.

**Ms. Ferguson:** In the interest of time, I would request that that Hon. Member layover the necessary information.

**Mr. Croal:** The Hon. Member is willing to give information now since I have them, Mr. Chairman.

**Ms. Ferguson:** Thank you very much, Hon. Member. Mr. Chairman, just to remind the Hon. Member that I asked two questions for which he did not proffer responses. When would the allottees be able to access their lands and, secondly, why is it that allottees have not yet received their agreements of sale and their titles for which full payments were made? Thank you very much.

**Mr. Croal:** First of all, let me make this statement: The first thing the PPP/C Government did was honour all the few applications that were done by the APNU/AFC Government.

Secondly, I am surprised that we are getting this question. I cannot believe that it is coming from a former Minister. That Hon. Member would be aware that titles would not be able to be processed until the allottees are able to have their lands identified physically, and to be able to occupy. The

infrastructural works that we are doing now is to guarantee and to ensure that happens, and it is happening. For example, we already started to identify in portion of areas in Number 79 village, Number 75 Village, Mon Repos, and Little Diamond and Great Diamond on the East Bank. As the blocks are completed and as the works are completed within those areas, we will take the allottees to the location and show them where their lots are physically. Before this, they would have been able to identify them on a plan or a map only. We now take them to the area and from there we will be able to process the ownership of such land. We cannot do that before persons are able to start occupying.

**Ms. Ferguson:** The Hon. Member is fully aware that, even if the titles are not processed, once the allottees pay in full, they must be able to receive an agreement of sale from the Ministry. He is yet to respond to that. Why is it that allottees who paid in full, since 2019 and early 2020, have not received their agreement of sale?

**Mr. Croal:** The processing for the agreement of sales has to be done with precision. Even in the Hon. Member's tenure, they did not cater for even a number of cadastral surveys for a number of those areas to which the Hon. Member is referring. There is absolutely no hindrance once the process reaches a stage. That we are doing and that we are continuing to do. It is an ongoing process. When we reach to a certain level we will be able to do all of the documentations so that we can have the lots that are being identified with precision, Before the cadastral surveys, we were working with a plan.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, Ms. Ferguson, do you have more questions?

**Ms. Ferguson:** I have a whole lot of questions on the Ministry of Housing and Water. In the interest of time, Cde. Chairman, I will provide my questions in writing because I think the Hon. Member has not given satisfactory responses to the questions asked. To stand in the National Assembly to say that allocations or an agreement of sale are given by way of precision and cadastral survey, I beg to differ where this is concerned, Cde. Chairman.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much, Hon. Member. We look forward to receiving those questions...

**Ms. Ferguson:** Cde. Chairman, do not amend them when I submit them.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, this is a good time to...

**Ms. Fernandes:** Mr. Chairman, I had my microphone on, sorry.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Ms. Fernandes, you may have the floor.

**Ms. Fernandes:** Sir, I have just one question. Could the Hon. Minister say, of the more than 10,000 house lots that have been allocated thus far, how many of those persons have actually been able to see the physical lot?

**Mr. Croal:** The infrastructural works that are ongoing are for allocation exercises that were done during the PPP/C tenure when it got into Office last year, and for the very areas, the very few allocations that were done under the APNU/AFC tenure. They understand...similarly what happens. We are working to clear that, and then then next stage will commence. You will see that in full when you see the 2022 budgetary programme. If one looks at the newspapers, one would see that there are advertisements that are out and that are opening on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>. That will be catered for in the 2022 programme for the recent allocation exercise.

**Ms. Fernandes:** Follow-up: Could the Hon. Minister please say, of the more than 10,000 house lots, if any of those persons have titles? Based on your response, Sir, I believe that you are indicating that none of those persons were actually able to see their physical lot. My follow-up question is: How many of those persons actually received their title or agreement of sale?

**Mr. Croal:** For those new areas for which there was the allocation exercise, where the infrastructure work is not done, it is not practical to have that final document issued to the allottee as yet.

*Item 9: 45-452 Ministry of Housing and Water – Housing Development – \$7,707,039,798 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 9: 45-453 Ministry of Housing and Water – Water Service Expansion and Management – \$66,750,000 & \$1,115,000,000**

#### **Hinterland Water Supply**

**Mr. Jordan:** With this very line item:

“Provision of additional resources to facilitate the completion of upgrade and expansion projects in the hinterland areas.”

I would be happy if the Hon. Minister could detail for me the nature of the upgrade works and expansion projects that are to be completed or if completed already.

**Mr. Croal:** Mr. Chairman, the new system at Kaibarupai that is progress... It is additional resources to the tune of \$20 million for a new system for Kaibarupai, Region 8, for first time access. The additional resources that are being asked for is for a new system in Region 7 at Kaikan where there is an army base. You may be familiar. This is for the installation of a new water supply system in Kaikan in Region 7 and for Kato in Region 8. All are projects that are expected to be done this year.

**Mr. Jordan:** Follow-up: Could the Hon. Minister state, out of the \$66,750,000, how much was spent on each project or is to be spent?

**Mr. Croal:** For the system at Kaibarupai, \$12.3 million is to be spent. For Kato and Kaikan, those will be fore new systems so we would not have an expenditure to date.

**Mr. Jordan:** Hon. Minister, are you saying to me that, for the others, apart from the \$12.3 million, you do not have a plan or an estimate as to what will be spent?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister, do you have a plan?

**Mr. Croal:** Let me give you a breakdown of the \$66 million I think this will allay you. There is the sum of \$20.015 million for Kaibarupai, \$10 million for the photovoltaic system and the pipe fittings for the very two wells that we will put at Kaikan and Kato, \$10.6 million for well drilling materials and \$26 million for the actual drilling of the wells.

*6.00 p.m.*

#### **Coastal Water Supply**

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Mr. Jordan, you have the floor.

**Mr. Jordan:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Hon. Minister state, of the amount of moneys allocated here, what amount was catered to purchase meters and how many meters are expected to be purchased – water meters, that is?

**Mr. Croal:** Mr. Chairman, the supplementary would be for the meter boxes. The additional resources that are required is \$110 million, to be exact, for procurement and installation of the meter boxes. Then, the other meter related would be for \$295.7 million, and these are for the service connection materials for new services – to put over 5,200 new services

and, of course, the meter installation. Those are the meter related expenses under this supplementary provision.

**Mr. Jordan:** Thank you, Hon. Minister. Continuing, Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister state what are the expected expansion or upgrade works that are expected to be done at the Covent Garden, Grove, Friendship and Vergenoegen water treatment plants?

**Mr. Croal:** Mr. Chairman, the sum requested here is \$47 million, and that is to fulfil the full contract sum of \$137 million. The other expansion request here is for another \$41.3 million to complete a contract sum of \$91.3 million for the expansion of the Sophia and Eccles water treatment plants. These will be benefitting over 60,000 beneficiaries.

**Mr. Jordan:** Just for the sake of the National Assembly and the population at large, could the Hon. Minister state what the pumping hours of these water treatment facilities are?

**Mr. Croal:** Mr. Chairman, the areas that were identified for the plants, those are working 24 hours. But the Hon. Member would recognise for the East Bank... And that is why there is additional drilling taking place for the East Bank, which is to increase supply on the East Bank. There will be in some areas, what you call the rotation of the water supply. But the plant is working 24 hours.

**Mr. Jordan:** Final question, Mr. Chairman. You are saying, Sir, that the plant is designed to work for 24 hours, but how much are you producing at this time?

**Mr. Croal:** For example, for the Eccles plant, it is currently producing at 5 mega litres (ml), but this upgrade that we are seeking is to take it to 10ml. That is for Eccles. For the one at Covent Garden, it is at 5ml too.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, Minister.

*Item 9: 45-453 Ministry of Housing and Water – Water Service Expansion and Management – \$66,750,000 & \$1,115,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

#### **Current Expenditure**

#### **Item 10: 47-471 Ministry of Health – Policy Development and Administration - \$150,506,426**

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Dr. Cummings, you have the floor.

**Dr. Cummings:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This Chart of Account, 6294, under the Description “Other”, there was a voted provision for \$313,180,000. The Minister of Health is seeking \$150,506,426 to “Cater for medical treatment for approved applicants”. I would like the Minister to tell this noble Assembly who these applicants are, how many there are, and the category of age group – is it a younger age group with cardio pathology, are they seniors? The category of age group and how many there are.

**Dr. Anthony:** Basically, we are requesting \$150 million more so that we can continue to provide assistance to patients who need this type of assistance. The pathologies range from cardiac pathologies, there are persons who are also seeking dialysis, some people who need overseas treatment, some people who need special treatment for cancer. It is a range of disease conditions that we are assisting people with here. Mr. Chairman, in 2019, the Ministry provided assistance to 684 patients, and in 2021, it is seeking to provide assistance to close to 1,119 patients. So, it is almost doubled the amount that we are giving assistance to.

**Dr. Cummings:** Mr. Chairman, as you mentioned dialysis treatment, I know we are trying to decentralise this service, for instance, at Linden and so forth. I noticed when I went to Linden that it was not operational. And so, I am wondering if these patients have to come to the... For the dialysis patients, is it at central Georgetown or is it decentralised?

**Dr. Anthony:** Again, that is a very good question. The services that we are providing for dialysis are mixed. At the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC) Inpatient facility, persons who are in the hospital can access dialysis, once they are a patient at the hospital. We have also started to provide dialysis treatment for patients at the National Infectious Diseases Hospital, Liliendaal. These are our inpatients – persons in the hospital who would get dialysis. That is one category of patients.

Another category of patients would be that, if you are a first-time person diagnosed with end stage renal disease, you will come to the Ministry and get a one-off package. You can go to any one of the dialysis providers and use that sum of money and get a dialysis treatment. That is another option that is available to persons. Then there are some, I would say, public/private partnerships. We have one such public/private partnership in Linden with the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the 5G Dialysis Centre, where we provide the space, the electricity, the water, and so forth. We provide, in some cases, the nurses, the medical personnel, and the 5G

Dialysis Centre manages that system. It would get the distillates and other things to manage the service. That is a collaboration, a public/private collaboration, that we have in Linden. We also, recently, resumed such a collaboration at the New Amsterdam Public Hospital. This time, it is between the Ministry of Health and the Doobay Medical and Research Centre. That has been resumed about two weeks ago, and so we are providing services to Region 6. There are a number of other collaborations that we are looking at, similar types of arrangements where we will be able to extend and decentralise more the dialysis services that we provide.

**Dr. Cummings:** Hon. Minister, you did say that the New Amsterdam Public Hospital Dialysis Centre is operational. What about the Linden Hospital Complex, is it operational as well? Thank you very much.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, Hon. Members.

*Item 10: 47-471 Ministry of Health – Policy Development and Administration - \$150,506,426 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 10: 47-472 Ministry of Health – Disease Control – Communicable Diseases - \$3,352,229,664 and \$30,998,300**

#### **Drugs and Medical Supplies**

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Dr. Cummings, you have the floor.

**Dr. Cummings:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. There was a voted sum of \$3,861,074,000, and we now have a current sum almost similar to the voted provision. I know that COVID-19 is real, it is ongoing, it is always with us, but I am wondering, regarding the provision of medical supplies for COVID-19, medical gas and so on, has the procurement started? Could you tell us some more about that?

**Dr. Anthony:** What this additional sum would help us to procure is medical supplies such as personal protective equipment (PPEs). We have allocated approximately \$1.5 billion for the additional procurement of PPEs.

*6.15 p.m.*

As you know, because of the influx of inpatients, we need to have oxygen being available at the National Infectious Diseases Hospital, Liliendaal. We made an allocation there of \$300 million for medical gas for the National Infectious Diseases Hospital, Liliendaal. We are also asking here for \$1.3 billion for consumables. These are laboratory reagents

and consumables to do the Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test at the National Public Health Reference Laboratory. We have also requested, \$73 million for other reagents for the National Public Health Reference Laboratory.

**Dr. Cummings:** Would the consumables be available in 8 days?

**Dr. Anthony:** We have started the process and we feel confident that we will be able to get the supplies necessary within the timeframe.

#### **Cleaning and Extermination Services**

**Dr. Cummings:** Could the Minister tell us which company has gotten this bid, do you have someone in mind or is it going to be advertised?

**Dr. Anthony:** The funding here is for cleaning at the National Infectious Diseases Hospital, Liliendaal because this Hospital is considered as an Annex of the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation. They have a contract with a company called A-Plus Janitorial Services. A contract has been extended for them to do the cleaning at the National Infectious Diseases Hospital, Liliendaal.

*Item 10: 47-472 Ministry of Health – Disease Control - Communicable Diseases – \$3,352,229,664 and \$30,998,300 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

#### **Capital Expenditure**

**Item 10: 47-472 Ministry of Health – Disease Control – Communicable Diseases - \$110,271,304**

**Dr. Cummings:** Project code 4402700 – Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)/Tuberculosis (TB)/Malaria Programmes: This extra sum that you are requesting of \$110,271,304 for equipment, which one of the programmes is it for? Is it for the HIV programme, the Tuberculosis Programme or the Malaria Programme?

**Dr. Anthony:** We have been able to work with the Global Fund to repurpose some of the allocations that they gave us for TB, HIV and Malaria. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, they had allowed us to procure equipment that we can use for our COVID-19 patients. We have since gotten an agreement with them and we went on the Wambo.org platform to procure 17 ventilators, and these would be distributed to several regions in the country.

*Item 10: 47-472 Ministry of Health – Disease Control - Communicable Diseases – \$110,271,304 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

#### **Current Expenditure**

**Item 10: 47-474 Ministry of Health – Regional and Clinical Services - \$103,626,535 and \$23,883,495**

#### **Drugs and Medical Supplies**

**Dr. Cummings:** Hon. Minister, I noticed that there was a provision made and sought already for \$1,325,000,000, but now you are seeking \$103,626,535. I am happy to know that the Ophthalmology Department at the Port Mourant Hospital will be having supplies so that they can have their ongoing work like cataract surgery, *et cetera*. I am also seeing here Neonatal Intensive Care Unit for the New Amsterdam Hospital and other areas. There were some neonatal deaths as of recent. I am happy for these improvements, but I am wondering about the timespan. To spend this money within eight days, would that be accomplished and at what stage of the procurement process? Could you tell us more about that?

**Dr. Anthony:** The sum that we are requesting of approximately \$103 million, about \$40.8 million will be spent on ophthalmology supplies. As you rightly said, a lot of this money is going to go to buy lenses so that when cataract surgeries are done, we would be able to implant the lens for different patients. Most of this money will be consumed in buying those lenses. We also have a provision here for medical gas, and through the regional services of the Ministry, we would normally provide medical gas to hospitals like the Linden Hospital Complex, the West Demerara Regional Hospital and the Public Hospital Suddie as well. A number of regional hospitals would get medical gas purchased through the Ministry of Health. A sum of \$54 million has been set aside for those purchases.

In terms of the neonatal units, we are trying to set up all the regional hospitals with neonatal services. Each regional hospital would have a fully equipped neonatal unit. We are asking for \$8.7 million to be used for this period, but certainly next year, we will require a lot more resources, both in terms of the capital side, where we will need additional equipment and ongoing consumer bids that (*inaudible*).

#### **Security Services**

**Dr. Cummings:** I want to ask the Minister which company are we talking about in the region? Is it one company or more

than one companies, and what is the increased rate for the security services?

**Dr. Anthony:** There are three companies that we are talking about. The first company is the Special Constabulary, and we want about \$6 million to pay that particular company. The second company is Safe Security Systems that cost approximately \$7 million and Brans Security Services that cost about \$10 million. In total, the sum comes up to about \$24 million, and most of this money is for the hospital in Region 10. We went to public tender, and the tender came in at a higher price than what was budgeted for, so this would cater for the transferal.

*Item 10: 47-474 Ministry of Health – Regional and Clinical Services - \$103,626,535 and \$23,883,495 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

#### **Capital Expenditure**

**Item 11: 51-512 Ministry of Home Affairs – Guyana Police Force - \$225,000,000**

**Mr. Chairman:** The Hon. Member, Mr. Jones, you have the floor.

**Mr. Jones:** Cde.. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister give the division between the amount that is going to be used for water transportation and land transportation?

**Mr. Benn:** The full sum of money will be used for land transportation.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you Hon. Minister. Hon. Member Mr. Cox, you have the floor. Hon. Member Mr. Cox, you have the floor.

**Mr. Cox:** Sorry, Mr. Chairman. I am hearing some comments that I consider racist from the Hon. Senior Minister, Mr. Anil Nandlall, and I am offended. Sorry, Sir, it is from the Hon. Minister, Mr. Anand Persaud. Could the Hon. Minister state why only now \$150 million, as a supplementary is requested? Was it a case where the Ministry was ill-prepared during the last presentation of the Budget for the year that is being assessed at this time?

**Mr. Benn:** There were many things we were ill-prepared for, including the destruction of the Brickdam Police Station, which included the loss of some operational vehicles, and the loss of other buildings or police stations. The truth is that we had the opportunity, based on the availability of funds, to make available funding for getting, making up and arriving at

the true complement of vehicles which the Police Force requires for its land operations.

**Mr. Jones:** Just for clarification, because I see in the Description it states water and land transportation.

**Mr. Benn:** I believe I clarified this already. It is for land transportation.

6.30 p.m.

The project code name is for land and water transportation, but there were issues in relation to water transportation and we have dealt with those issues already in the budget for the year so far.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Could the Hon. Minister state how many vehicles they intend to purchase with this money?

**Mr. Benn:** Mr. Chairman, we intend to purchase 50 vehicles. Of course, this is to enhance operational response and crime fighting throughout the country. As I said, it is to have us arrive at a point where we have the full or almost the full coverage of vehicles that we need, the full complement for the Police Force's operations.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, Hon. Minister. Hon. Member Ms. Sarabo-Halley, do you have a follow up?

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Yes Sir. Could the Hon. Minister state how current is the procurement process in attaining these vehicles?

**Mr. Benn:** We are fairly well along in procuring the vehicles, in identifying where the vehicles are going to come from and where they will be placed.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** If I heard correctly, the Hon. Minister said they have determined where the vehicles are going to come from. Could he specify where exactly the vehicles are going to be coming from?

**Mr. Benn:** Once we have the approval, we would go through the procurement methods. We have purchased vehicles before, we want to maintain the same type of vehicles which we recently acquired early in the year, so we do not have difficulties in maintenance and fleet management for the total complement or most of the total complement of vehicles that the Guyana Police Force has.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** For clarification purposes, is the Hon. Minister stating that they will be sole sourcing the vehicle

from the place they got vehicles from earlier in the year, or is that the procurement process that they intend to use?

**Mr. Benn:** I did say that we would go through a public procurement process.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Mr. Chairman, I did not hear him because the Hon. Member, Mr. Dharamlall, was speaking too loudly.

**Mr. Chairman:** I did not hear that question Hon. Member.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Could the Hon. Minister repeat, because I was unable to hear him due to the Hon. Member, Mr. Dharamlall, speaking too loudly.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister, please repeat.

**Mr. Benn:** Mr. Chairman, I wish the Hon. Member would give me her undivided attention. I did say that we will go through a public procurement methodology.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Hon. Chairman, I find it to be a bit contradictory, but I am going to get some clarity. The Hon. Minister indicated to this House that they will be getting the vehicles from the same source that they got the other vehicles because they want to ensure that when they are dealing with the mechanics and stuff like that, the full complement would be coming from the same source. The Hon. Minister is also saying to us that they are going through the procurement process. So, will the procurement process not be sole sourced, if not, will it be seen as attempting to... without trying to use very loose language, doing a procurement process to get an intended result, and how independent and transparent is that procurement process?

**Mr. Benn:** Mr. Chairman, I did not say what the Hon. Member is trying to misrepresent or insinuate in respect of what I have said. I did say that we would go through a national procurement process, publicly that is.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, Minister, for making that observation.

*Item 11: 51-512 Ministry of Home Affairs – Guyana Police Force - \$225,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

#### **Current Expenditure**

**Item 11: 51-513 Ministry of Home Affairs – Guyana Prison Service – 37,187,697, 117,075,797 and 40,000,000**

**Other**

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Could the Hon. Minister state where would the tower lights, tents and toilets be provided for? Where will they be going?

**Mr. Benn:** They will be provided for the Lusignan Prison, of course.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Mr. Chairman, I can hardly hear myself think.

**Mr. Chairman:** I can hear you.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Could the Hon. Minister state whether they have gone through the process of maybe buying tower lights, tents and toilets that may be able to save the Government some money at this particular stage?

**Mr. Benn:** Yes, this is exactly the case. We had a situation where we inherited quite a number of rentals, and we are replacing those with our own tower lights, tents and so on.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Mr. Chairman, is the Hon. Minister stating that, come next budget, we will be seeing less of this and more... as we would see something in the budget requesting moneys to buy tower lights, tents and chairs.

**Mr. Benn:** In totality, Mr. Chairman and Hon. Members, there will be less rentals as we bill out the new modules for the complex at Lusignan, and as we put in more permanent lighting facilities around the complex using the Guyana Power and Light (GPL) sources.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** This should be the final question on this item. Could the Hon. Minister state whether or not these rental of tower lights, tents and toilets were in place before *Budget 2021* was actually passed?

**Mr. Benn:** Mr. Chairman and Hon. Members, this is a legacy issue. This started since 2018, and we are now trying to eliminate that kind of arrangement. It was also single sourced.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Could the Hon. Minister state, if it is that this rental was in place since 2018, why was it not accommodated in the substantial budget and why they are coming for a supplementary at this particular stage?

**Mr. Benn:** We actually had expectations of having the lights in place around earlier, and that we would have modified the sewage and other facilities. There have been some delays in that, and it is being rectified now.

**Dietary**

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Could the Hon. Minister state whether the supply of dietary supplies is for the Lusignan Prison as well?

**Mr. Benn:** The supply of dietary supplies is for all of the prisons.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Could the Hon. Minister state why this amount is being proposed at this time? Is there an increased number of prisoners in all of the prisons? Why is there a substantial amount at this time?

**Mr. Benn:** Yes, there has been an increase in the number of persons in the prison population.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Mr. Chairman, I am very sorry, I cannot hear anything that the Minister is saying to be able to ask a question, if I need to.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, let us pay keen attention and focus on the red microphone.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** I am attempting to do so.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister...

**Mr. Benn:** Mr. Chairman, do I have the floor?

**Mr. Chairman:** You have the floor.

**Mr. Benn:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There has been an increase in the prison population. There has been an increase in the range, type and quality of food we are giving to the prison system now, inclusive of having the prisoners plan their own food, raise their own chickens and other items, and giving them fruits. Also, there is the question of some increase in dietary items given in the prison system.

**Other**

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Mr. Chairman, I hope you also recognise that Hon. Members do not even respect your voice, because they are speaking while you are speaking, but I will continue. Could the Hon. Minister state which fire hydrants they intend to repair with this provision?

**Mr. Benn:** Mr. Chairman and Hon. Members, the fire hydrants are being repaired now as we speak. I believe we had 50 or more hydrants which were already repaired over the past few days. The priority pressure lines in the City of Georgetown are the ones being looked at. I think there is a total of 655 hydrants which were identified for repairs. One

hundred and thirty-two of those are priority hydrants, 195 for minor repairs and 100 for major repairs. There is the intention to replace 32 hydrants around Georgetown. In some of the new housing areas, along with the Ministry of Housing and Water, we are working on an effort to put hydrants in the new housing scheme areas, including Diamond, Eccles, Parika and Vreed-en-Hoop. The work is ongoing as we speak.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** The provision states here that they catered for the repairs to fire hydrants, and there is an amount of \$40 million. Could the Hon. Minister state that once the \$40 million would have been exhausted, if all of the current fire hydrants would be repaired and working? I am trying to get at [*inaudible*].

6.45 p.m.

#### Capital Expenditure

**Mr. Benn:** This amount is intended to deal with some 220 hydrants now. We will roll over to next year with a new effort to continue going out to the 455 or so hydrants which need to be attended to.

**Mr. Cox:** I must commend the Ministry for provision in fire service and firefighting. I see here the purchase of aircraft rescue and firefighting vehicles. Could the Hon. Minister give a detailed breakdown of what are the specifics to be spent under this line item and which region is the Ministry specifically targeting?

**Mr. Benn:** We intend, Mr. Chairman and Members, to have a new firefighting asset placed at the Eugene F. Correia International Airport which will have its capability upgraded to deal with aircraft fires. That is what this provision is for.

**Mr. Cox:** Could the Hon. Minister state why this provision was not catered for originally in the budget, since the Eugene F. Correia International Airport is there all the time?

**Mr. Benn:** Mr. Chairman and Hon. Members, Eugene F. Correia International Airport is an international airport, and it has to accord to international standards. These standards are being progressively upgraded and we have to meet those new standards. Some of the equipment we have there have basically arrived at obsolescence and so we are trying to meet the required standards for an international airport, regionally [*inaudible*].

*Item 11: 51-513 Ministry of Home Affairs – Guyana Prison Service – 37,187,697, 117,075,797 and 40,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, I thought we dealt with line item 6284 - Other just now. Now, we are dealing with ...

**Mr. Benn:** Mr. Chairman, the last question from the Hon. Member moved into the question of the firefighting equipment for Eugene F. Correia International Airport.

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, he was a bit premature.

**Mr. Benn:** Yes.

#### Capital Expenditure

#### Item 11: 51-515 Ministry of Home Affairs – Guyana Fire Service - \$150,000,000 and \$100,700,000

#### Land and Water Transport - Fire

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Hon. Minister state what are the additional resources? It states in the Remarks:

“Provision for additional resources to purchase aircraft rescue and firefighting vehicle...”

Originally, the voted provision was \$103 million. I am asking whether or not moneys have already been spent to acquire the purchase and if the \$150 million is to continue or to end that purchase agreement.

**Mr. Benn:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Hon. Members. We did spend money previously and we acquired, I think, four new firefighting tenders and an ambulance earlier in the year. It was kind of celebrated in the newspapers too.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Is the Hon. Minister stating that they are purchasing new vehicles or is it to pay off what was already purchased? I am trying to get clarity.

**Mr. Benn:** Mr. Chairman and Hon. Members, I did say that for the Eugene F. Correia International Airport, which is an international airport, we are getting one new asset – a firefighting vehicle of upgraded specifications to be fully funded by this \$150 million. This is to arrive at new standards for airports. The Eugene F. Correia International Airport is the busiest airport in Guyana. We now have larger aircraft landing at Eugene F. Correia International Airport. That is why we are making the effort.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Thank you for that clarification, Hon. Minister. Could the Hon. Minister state how far along the procurement process this is and whether or not the vehicle that is being procured has already been identified? Would it

be specified to fit what is happening at the Eugene F. Correia International Airport?

**Mr. Benn:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Hon. Members. Thanks for the question, of course. Once we have the supplementary provision a flow, we will go to tender and get this dealt with.

**Mr. Shuman:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like the Hon. Minister to, maybe, clarify for this honourable Committee the level of service that is proposed with the acquisition of this equipment for the two international airports and for Lethem Airport. Are sums allocated within this sum for any upgrade of the fire service delivery at our third potential international airport – Lethem?

**Mr. Benn:** Mr. Chairman and Members, I pointed out that this asset would be for the Eugene F. Correia International Airport. We have basically already satisfied the requirements for the Cheddi Jagan International Airport, Timehri. This is for the Eugene F. Correia International Airport itself.

**Mr. Shuman:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Hon. Minister, for your answer. Just to clarify the question – I think the Hon. Minister may have missed it – it was as it relates to the level of service that is expected to be delivered with the acquisition of this equipment. For the sharing of some knowledge, for every aircraft there is a level of service that is delivered at each airport that ranges from level one all the way up to level 12, depending on what it is that you want to do. I am curious to know, Mr. Chairman, with the acquisition of the equipment that is to be purchased, what level of service are we expecting to be delivered?

**Mr. Benn:** The level of service that would be met would be that which is required for the Eugene F. Correia International Airport. In terms of the provisioning of that service, once the asset is here, the question of training for that particular new type of machine and its specification will continue.

**Mr. Shuman:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Hon. Minister. Hon. Minister, just to clarify, the delivery of services is not only airport specific, but it is also airplane specific. I am sure the Hon. Minister and the House could appreciate that the Government's intent is to grow aviation in this country. This will see diversity of aircraft landing at the Eugene F. Correia International Airport, all of them requiring services that are different from what we currently have and from the aircraft that are currently landing. The more complex an aircraft gets, the higher the level of service will be required. Once again, I am curious to know what level of

service we will attain with the acquisition of these new equipment.

**Mr. Benn:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you Hon. Member for your question. The level of service at the moment at the Eugene F. Correia Airport is category four. Therefore, with the new equipment we intend to achieve category 8.

#### **Tools and Equipment – Fire**

*There were no questions under this head.*

*Item 11: 51-515 Ministry of Home Affairs – Guyana Fire Service - \$150,000,000 and \$100,700,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

#### **Capital Expenditure**

##### **Item 12: 52-521 Ministry of Legal Affairs -Policy Development and Administration - \$56,813,401**

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Could the Hon. Minister state what are the ongoing consultancies that will be catered for under this project code?

**Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs [Mr. Nandlall]:** Thank you very much, Sir. The Hon. Member may recall that this was a programme that was started under the APNU/AFC. [**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** I cannot recall.] When we took over Government in August, 2020, the programme was suffering a tremendous coma. It was about to be scrapped by the funder – Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). We had to invigorate the programme with energy and bring it back to life and, as a result, a number of consultancies were awarded and a number of components of the project implemented. The public is aware of the establishment of the Law Reform Commission, finally, after three years. That body is now up and running.

*7.00 p.m.*

All the Commissioners have been appointed and the secretariat hired. That unit is operational. There is a consultancy to do a bail bill. That consultancy is almost at an end. We have a draft bail bill that we will bring to the National Assembly very early in the new year. There is a restorative justice bill that has been completed and we have done intensive training at the level of the judiciary, the magistracy, the prosecutors' level, as well as in communities, local leadership levels in all our communities across the country to make them understand the concept of restorative

justice. When the bill comes into force, they will understand the principles of the bill and how to administer and execute the bill. That bill will also come here early in the new year.

I have spoken at length about the prosecutorial programme that will recruit persons who are possessed of Bachelor of Laws (LLB) Degrees but have been unable to complete their education at the law school. We intend to bring them into the prosecutorial arm of the State to prosecute in the Magistrate's Courts across the country along with police prosecutors. We have designed a course. A consultant was retained to design a syllabus, a course outline and lecture notes. Tomorrow, coincidentally, I am meeting with a team from the University of Guyana to discuss and conclude arrangements for that programme to be run by and to be certified by the University of Guyana. It will also form part of the LLB Programme run by the University. Of course, we have to pay for that. When those persons graduate after the conclusion of the course, they will be incorporated into the prosecutorial arm of the State and, expectedly, they are to improve the prosecution of offenses in the Magistrate's Court across the length and breadth of Guyana. Those are some of the programmes that are being funded.

We are also partnering with my Colleague from the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security to establish centres across the country to deal with domestic violence and sexual abuse. These are one-off centres that will have a number of important services rendered to members of the public, in particular, victims of domestic violence and victims of sexual abuse. We hope to have counselling services. We intend to have medical services. We intend to have a police station at the centre and legal services if we can afford all of that. That is the ideal, but we are hoping to put as many of those services as possible in those centres and create many of them across the regions. This is quite a small sum for what is intended to be established under the programme. Of course, the programme continues until next year. Hopefully, we can get it to continue the year after. Thank you very much.

*Item 12: 52-521 Ministry of Legal Affairs – Policy Development and Administration – \$56,813,401 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

#### **Capital Expenditure**

**Item 13: 56-561 Public Prosecutions – Public Prosecutions – \$50,000,000**

*Item 13: 56-561 Public Prosecutions – Public Prosecutions – \$50,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

#### **Capital Expenditure**

**Item 14: 72-724 Region 2: Pomeroon/Supenaam – Education Delivery – 101,696,760**

*Item 14: 72-724 Region 2: Pomeroon Supenaam – Education Delivery – 101,696,760 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, this concludes consideration of all the items.

#### *Question*

“That this Committee of Supply approves of the proposals set in Financial Paper No. 4 of 2021 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates totalling \$21,477,833,982 for the period ending 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2021.”

*put and agreed to.*

*Assembly resumed.*

**Dr. Singh:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that the Committee of Supply has approved of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 4 of 2021 and I now move that the Assembly doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution.

*Motion put and agreed to.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, this completes consideration of Financial Paper No. 4 of 2021. We now have to go through the provisions with respective consideration of the Supplementary Appropriation Bill.

#### **Suspension of Standing Orders Nos. 13(n) and 54**

BE IT RESOLVED:

“That Standing Orders Nos. 13(n) and 54 be suspended to enable the Assembly to proceed with the introductions of the Supplementary Appropriation (No. 2 of 2021) Bill 2021, Bill No. 18 of 2021.”

*[Prime Minister]*

**Brigadier (Ret'd) Phillips:** Mr. Speaker, with your leave, I move that Standing Orders Nos. 13(n) and 54 be suspended to

enable the Supplementary Appropriation (No. 2 of 2021) Bill 2021, Bill No. 18 of 2021 to be introduced at this stage.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Standing Orders suspended.*

**Dr. Singh:** In accordance with paragraph 2 of article 171 of the *Constitution of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana*, I signify that Cabinet has recommended the Supplementary Appropriation (No. 2 of 2021) Bill 2021, Bill No. 18 of 2021 for consideration by the National Assembly. I now present the Bill to the Assembly and move that it be read for the first time.

#### **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND FIRST READING**

The following Bill was introduced and read for the first time:

#### **Supplementary Appropriation (No. 2 of 2021) Bill 2021-Bill No. 18/2021**

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 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2021, estimates whereof have been approved by the National Assembly, and for the appropriation of those sums for specified purposes, in conformity with the Constitution.”

*[Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance]*

*Question put and carried.*

*Bill read the first time.*

**Dr. Singh:** Mr. Speaker, I move that the Supplementary Appropriation (No. 2 of 2021) Bill 2021, Bill No. 18 of 2021 be read a second time.

#### **Bills – Second and Third Readings**

#### **Supplementary Appropriation (No. 2 of 2021) Bill 2021-Bill No. 18/2021**

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 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2021, estimates whereof have been approved by the National Assembly, and for the appropriation of those sums for specified purposes, in conformity with the Constitution.”

*[Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance]*

*Question put and carried.*

*Bill read a second time.*

*Assembly in Committee*

*Bill considered and approved.*

*Assembly resumed.*

*Bill reported without amendments, read the third time and passed as printed.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, this brings us to the end of our business for today. As I do not think we are going to meet before Christmas, I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of my family and I, to extend Season’s Greetings to all Hon. Members and their families, to our staff and their families, to the staff of the Arthur Chung Conference Centre and their families, the media and their families and all our country. Merry Christmas to everyone.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** I would also like to take this opportunity to wish you, Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, the Clerk of the National Assembly, the Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly, all staff of the Parliament Office and all Members on both sides of the House and their families a Merry Christmas. Having done that, I now move the adjournment of the Assembly.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Prime Minister, I think we have a few other persons who would like to make comments before we adjourn.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** My apologies. I give the floor back to you.

**Mr. Speaker:** First, let me call on the Opposition Chief Whip, the Hon. Member Mr. Christopher Jones.

**Mr. Jones:** Thank you very much, Cde. Speaker. Let me take this opportunity, on behalf of the APNU/AFC Members of

the National Assembly, to extend best wishes to you, the Deputy Speaker, the staff of the Parliament Office, my Colleagues, Members of the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) and, by extension, the members of the Guyana Police Force (GPF) who provide security services to us and, of course, the staff of the Arthur Chung Conference Centre. We extend best wishes to all of them for a most blessed Christmas season. We pray that 2022 is a most productive year for all of us and us as a nation. We pray that we will indeed be able to live up to that motto which speaks to *One People, One Nation, One Destiny*. I thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Hon. Member Mr. Jones. Hon. Deputy Speaker, you have the floor.

**Deputy Speaker:** Mr. Speaker, thank you.

*7.15 p.m.*

I am very appreciative of this opportunity to wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas. To the Clerk of the National Assembly, the hardworking staff of the Parliament of Guyana, all of the hardworking staff of the Arthur Chung Conference Centre, the Hon. Prime Minister, the entire Cabinet and Colleagues on the People's Progressive Party Civic side, our Colleagues on the A APNU/AFC and all of Guyana that is watching, I just want to say a very Merry Christmas to all of you from the Liberty and Justice Party, A new and United Guyana and the New Movement. Thank you, so much.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker. Hon. Prime Minister, you have the floor.

#### ADJOURNMENT

BE IT RESOLVED:

“That the Assembly do now adjourn to Wednesday the 29<sup>th</sup> December, 2021.”

*[Prime Minister]*

**Brigadier (Ret'd) Phillips:** Mr. Speaker, I move the adjournment of the National Assembly to 10.00 a.m. to Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> December, 2021.

*Motion put and agreed to.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Hon. Prime Minister. Hon. Members, before we adjourn, the Clerk of the National Assembly has extended his normal Christmas cheers. So, as we adjourn, we could reassemble for the Christmas cheers.

The Assembly now stands adjourned until 29<sup>th</sup> December, 2021 at 10.00 a.m.

*Adjourned accordingly at 7.16 p.m.*