

National Assembly Debates

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION (2006-2008) OF THE NINTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA HELD IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BRICKDAM, GEORGETOWN Part I of II

39TH Sitting

14:00h

Thurs 3rd January 2008

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (71)

Speaker (1)

The Hon. Hari N Ramkarran SC, MP (AOL)

Speaker of the National Assembly

Members of the Government (42)

People's Progressive Party/Civic (41)

The United Force (1)

The Hon. Samuel A. A. Hinds MP

(AOL)

(R# 10 - U Demerara/U Berbice)

Prime Minister and Minister of

Public Works and Communications

The Hon. Clement J Rohee MP

Minister of Home Affairs

The Hon. Shaik K Z Baksh MP

Minister of Education

The Hon. Dr. Henry B Jeffrey MP

*Minister of Foreign Trade and International
Cooperation*

The Hon. Dr. Leslie S Ramsammy MP

(R# 6 - E Berbice/Corentyne)

Minister of Health

The Hon. Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett MP

(R# 9 - U Takutu/U Essequibo)

Minister of Foreign Affairs

*The Hon. Dr. Ashni Singh MP

Minister of Finance

*The Hon. S Rudolph Insanally OR CCH, MP

Minister of Foreign Affairs

The Hon. Harry Narine Nawbatt MP

Minister of Housing and Water

The Hon. Robert M Persaud MP

(R# 6 - E Berbice/Corentyne)

Minister of Agriculture

The Hon. Dr. Jennifer R A Westford MP

(R#7 - Cuyuni/Mazaruni)

Minister of the Public Service

The Hon. Kellawan Lall MP - *(Absent)*

*Minister of Local Government and Regional
Development*

*The Hon. Doodnauth Singh SC, MP

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs

The Hon. Dr. Frank C S Anthony MP

Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport

The Hon. B H Robeson Benn MP

Minister of Transport and Hydraulics

**The Hon. Manzoor Nadir MP

Minister of Labour

The Hon. Priya D Manickchand MP

(R# 5 - Mahaica/Berbice)

Minister of Human Services and Social Security

The Hon. Dr. Desrey Fox MP

Minister in the Ministry of Education

The Hon. Bheri S Ramsaran MD, MP

Minister in the Ministry of Health

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEBATE 3 JANUARY 2008

*Non-elected Minister **Elected Member from TUF

The Hon. Jennifer I Webster MP

Minister in the Ministry of Finance

The Hon. Manniram Prashad MP

Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce

Mr. Donald Ramotar MP

Ms Gail Teixeira MP (AOL)

Mr. Harripersaud Nokta MP

Mrs. Indranie Chandarpal MP, Chief Whip

Ms Bibi S Shadick MP

(R# 3 – Essequibo Is/W Demerara)

Mr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali MP

Mr. Albert Atkinson JP, MP (AOL)

(R# 8 - Potaro/Siparuni)

Mr. Komal Chand CCH, JP, MP

(R# 3 - Essequibo Is/W Demerara)

Mr. Bernard C DeSantos SC, MP

(R# 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)

Mrs. Shirley V Edwards JP, MP

(R# 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)

Mr. Mohamed F Khan JP, MP

(R# 2 - Pomerook/Supenaam)

Mr. Odinga N Lumumba MP - (AOL)

Mr. Moses V Nagamootoo JP, MP

Mr. Mohabir A Nandlall MP

Mr. Neendkumar JP, MP

(R# 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)

*** Mr. Steve P Ninvalle MP

*Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Culture,
Youth and Sport*

Mr. Parmanand P Persaud JP, MP

(R# 2 - Pomerook/Supenaam)

Mrs. Philomena Sahoye-Shury CCH, JP, MP

*Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Housing and
Water*

***Mrs. Pauline Sukhai, MP

Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Housing and Water

Mr. Dharamkumar Seeraj MP

Mr. Norman A Whittaker MP (AOL)

(R# 1 - Barima/Waini)

***Non-elected Member

Members of the Opposition (28)

(i) People's National Congress Reform 1-Guyana (22)

Mr. Robert HO Corbin

Leader of the Opposition

Mr. Winston S Murray CCH, MP

Mrs. Clarissa S Riehl MP

Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

Mr. E Lance Carberry MP

Chief Whip

Mrs.. Deborah J. Backer MP

Mr. Anthony Vieira - (Absent)

Mr. Basil Williams MP

Dr. George A Norton MP

Mrs. Volda A Lawrence MP

Mr. Keith Scott MP

Ms Amna Ally MP

Mr. Dave Danny MP

(R# 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)

Mr. Aubrey C Norton MP

(R# 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)

Mr. Ernest B Elliot MP - (Absent)

(R# 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)

Miss Judith David-Blair MP

(R# 7 - Cuyuni/Mazaruni)

Mr. Mervyn Williams MP

(Re# 3 - Essequibo Is/W Demerara)

Ms Africo Selman MP

Dr. John Austin MP

(R# 6 - East Berbice/Corentyne)

Ms Jennifer Wade MP

(R# 5 - Mahaica/Berbice)

Ms Vanessa Kissoon MP

(R# 10 - U Demerara/U Berbice)

Mr. Desmond Fernandes MP

(Region No 1 – Barima/Waini)

Mr. James K McAllister MP

- *(Absent)*

(ii) Alliance For Change (5)

Mr. Raphael G Trotman MP

- *(Absent)*

Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan MP

Mrs. Sheila VA Holder MP

Ms Latchmin B Punalall, MP

Mr. David Patterson MP

(iii) Guyana Action Party/Rise Organise and Rebuild

(1)

Mr. Everall N Franklin MP

OFFICERS

Mr. Sherlock E Isaacs

Clerk of the National Assembly

Mrs. Lilawatie Coonjah

Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly

[The Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly assumes the Chair]

PRAYERS

[**The Clerk** reads the Prayer]

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

- (i) Leave for Hon. Hari N Ramkarran, SC, MP,
Speaker of the National Assembly

Honourable Members, I wish to inform you that the Hon. Speaker of the National Assembly is out of the jurisdiction attending a Conference of Speakers and Clerks in London. I will therefore be presiding as you see at today's Sitting.

- (ii) New Year's Greetings

Honourable Members, as this is the first Sitting for the New Year, I wish to take this opportunity to extend to each one of you and your families, to the Clerk and the Staff of the Parliament Office, to the Press and the Hansard Staff a happy, prosperous and a most productive 2008

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Honourable Members, there are four questions on the Order Paper for oral replies.

1. NEW DIAMOND SECONDARY SCHOOL

Ms Anna Ally: Could the Hon. Minister of Education please inform the National Assembly:

- (i) What is the catchment area of students eligible to attend the New Diamond Secondary School?

The Speaker: Honourable Member, you may wish to ask them one at a time.

The Honourable Minister of Education ...

Hon. Shaik KZ Baksh: Mde. Speaker, the new Diamond Secondary School was built to facilitate the move towards universal secondary education. The first objective of establishing the Diamond Secondary School is to absorb students from the secondary departments of primary schools along the East Bank corridor. Among the schools from which students will be transferred are

- Craig Primary;
- Grove Primary;
- Covent Garden Primary;

- Providence Primary; and
- Diamond Primary.

Ms Amna Ally: My next question:

- (ii) Could the Honourable Minister state why students were taken from the Covent Garden Secondary School, which is an 'A' Grade school, to be sent to the New Diamond Secondary?

Hon. Shaik KZ Baksh: Mde. Speaker, the Honourable Member has been grossly misinformed since students have not been taken from the Covent Garden Secondary and transferred to the new Diamond Secondary School

Ms Amna Ally: Mde. Speaker, I trust that this Honourable House is not being misled

Supplementary Question:

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Speaker, can I ask a follow-up question? Could the Honourable Minister inform the National Assembly whether there is both a Covent Garden Secondary School and a Covent Garden Primary School?

Hon. Shaik KZ Baksh: Yes, Mde. Speaker.

Ms Amna Ally: Question (iii):

Could the Minister state if he recognises that this act of removing students will result in the disruption of classes at Covent Garden Secondary School?

Hon. Shaik KZ Baksh: Mde. Speaker, it is not envisaged that there will be any disruption of classes at the Covent Garden Secondary School.

2. NEW OPPORTUNITY CORP

Member Asking: Mrs. Volda Lawrence MP

Mde. Speaker I have a few questions for the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport and I will do it just as Ms Ally did.

Could the Honourable Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport inform the National Assembly:

- (i) Whether persons who have served time at the New Opportunity Corp are monitored after they are released from that institution?

Hon. Dr. Frank CS Anthony: Mde. Speaker, the Ministry of Culture Youth and Sport do monitor persons after they are released. This is not a requirement of the Training School Act under which the NOC falls. However, the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security Probation Department would monitor the persons from six months to sometimes two years.

Ms Amna Ally: Question (ii):

The number of persons who, having served time at the New Opportunity Corp, repeatedly return to the custody of the New Opportunity Corp for the last three (3) years?

Hon. Dr. Frank CS Anthony: Over the last three years, we had seven persons who came back to the NOC. In 2005 there were none; in 2006 there were five and in 2007 there were two.

Ms Amna Ally: Question (iii)

Could the Honourable say what is the number of persons who, having served time at the New Opportunity Corp continue to commit offences against the law for the last three years?

Hon. Dr. Frank CS Anthony: What I am aware of is the seven persons who would have come back to us if there are persons who would have exceeded the age of eighteen, then I think that information might be had from the Police or other agencies.

Ms Amna Ally: Question (iv):

What is the number of persons who, having served time at the New Opportunity Corp , go on to live criminal life styles for the last there years?

Hon. Dr. Frank CS Anthony: I would not be able to answer that except again for the seven persons who have returned to us.

Ms Amna Ally: Question (v)

Whether there are any programmes in place to assist those persons who have swerved time at the New Opportunity Corp to, on their release, find meaningful employment and/or enrol in a suitable educational institution?

Hon. Dr. Frank CS Anthony: We have a programme at the NOC where we have 110 persons who are in the vocational training programme, which would include agriculture, metal works, electrical wiring, sewing, welding and carpentry. We also have a school programme where we teach remedial maths and English and there are thirty persons who are enrolled in that programme.

When people are released from the institution, because of the skills that they have acquired at the institution, they are able to find jobs and can also enrol in other educational institution.

We have also started a programme with the parents of these children and on 15 November 2006, we were able to train thirty-five parents to help them to accept back their children in their homes and also to help them to re-integrate these children in their communities. In that year we had thirty-four releases and we had thirty-five parents who attended the training. In 2007 on the 21 March, we had forty-six releases from the institution and we were able to train forty-five parents in accepting back and reintegrating the children into their homes. *[Applause]*

We also know that a lot of parents do not visit NOC and therefore on the 9 May, we had a special programme,

where we were able to take sixty-five parents to NOC so that they can visit the children there.

Supplementary Question:

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Speaker, may I ask a follow-up question?

The Speaker: Yes

Mr. Winston S Murray: Would the Minister agree that lack of employment could be a factor in a persons return to or indeed first engagement in crime and if he does so, would he not agree further that in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, it may be worth the while to explore the possibility of having employment opportunities provided for these persons or at least assisting them in finding meaningful employment.

The Speaker: Honourable Minister

Hon. Dr. Frank CS Anthony: The persons who are below sixteen years of age, I do not think would be able to find employment, because we have a minimum age for work, so they can continue schooling, and that is what we are laying the basis for at the institution. In fact, I must also tell you that we had cases where we would send children from NOC to the schools in the nearby communities and we had three students in 2006 and two of those persons wrote the CXC; they wrote six subjects each and they were both successful. So what we are doing in

the school is laying the basis for them to have a good education; so that is one of the things.

In terms of employment, we do not place people, but that is something certainly we can look at.

**3. JUVENILE DETENTION CENTRE AT THE
RUIMVELDT POLICE STATION**

The Speaker: The Honourable Member Mrs. Lawrence

Mrs. Volda A Lawrence: Mde. Speaker, I have three questions for the Minister of Home Affairs:

(i) What plans are there for the rehabilitation of the Juvenile Detention Centre housed at the Ruimveldt Police Station?

The Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Home Affairs

Hon. Clement J Rohee: Mde. Speaker, I am not aware that there is a Juvenile Detention Centre at the Ruimveldt Police Station so this is news to me.

The Speaker: The Honourable Member Mrs. Lawrence

Supplementary Question:

Mrs. Volda A Lawrence: Mde. Speaker, this is a follow-up to Question (i) - May I ask the Minister, what plans he has for the rehabilitation of the Holding Centre at the Ruimveldt Police Station?

The Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Home Affairs

Hon. Clement J Rohee: Mde. Speaker, I am not aware that there is a holding Centre at the Ruimveldt Police Station either.

Mrs. Volda A Lawrence: Mde. Speaker, I will deal with this question at another time. I will now go to question (ii).

Mde. Speaker; I will refrain from, asking the other two questions.

The Speaker: Yes, Mrs. Lawrence, are you saying something?

Mrs. Volda A Lawrence: Mde. Speaker, I have another question on the Order Paper.

4. SEPARATION OF JUVENILES AND ADULT PRISONERS

Question 4 in my name is to the Minister of Home Affairs.
[Interruption]

The Speaker: Honourable Member, I thought you had exhausted all your questions to the Minister of Home Affairs.

Mrs. Volda A Lawrence: No, Mde. Speaker, before I was speaking to Question 3.

The Speaker: How many questions do you have in question 4?

Mrs. Volda A Lawrence: Three questions, Mde. Speaker.

The Speaker: Mrs. Lawrence, I thought you have exhausted all the questions, because I see Home Affairs. Alright, go ahead and ask the questions.

Mrs. Volda A Lawrence: Thank you, Mde. Speaker.

(i) Could the Honourable Minister of Home Affairs say whether suitable arrangements have been made for the separation of Juveniles and adult prisoners at the Georgetown Magistrates Court?

The Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Home Affairs

Hon. Clement J Rohee: Mde. Speaker, for the benefit of the Honourable Member, juveniles are placed in separate cells from the adults at the Georgetown Magistrates Courts. There are two lock-ups at the Georgetown Magistrates Courts and as far as I am aware the juveniles are usually housed in one when they are male offenders and when they are female offenders, they are housed at the Inquiry Office.

Mrs. Volda A Lawrence: Mde. Speaker, it was the Georgetown Magistrates Court I was referring to. I will go on to the next question:

(ii) Could the Minister say whether Juvenile prisoners are usually transported with adult prisoners to the Juvenile Detention Centres?

The Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Home Affairs

Hon. Clement J Rohee: I do not know about the use of the word usually, what I do know is that juvenile offenders are transported in separate vehicles from adult prisoners.

Mrs. Volda A Lawrence: The next question:

(iii) Could the Honourable Minister of Home Affairs say what arrangements are in place for the separation and transporting of Juveniles at Magistrates Courts outside of Georgetown?

The Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Home Affairs

Hon. Clement J Rohee: Mde. Speaker, juveniles are transported separately outside of Georgetown and are kept at the nearest Police Station and taken to court as required by the various magistrates.

The Speaker: Does that exhaust your questions, Mrs. Lawrence?

Mrs. Volda A Lawrence: Yes, Mde. Speaker, thank you.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

(i) GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MOTIONS

**ITEM 1 - CONSIDERATION OF FINANCIAL
PAPER NO. 3/ 2007**

BE IT RESOLVED:

*That this Assembly
approve the proposals set out in
Financial Paper No. 3/2007 -
Supplementary Estimates
(Current and Capital) totalling
\$1,459,063,444 for the period
2007-11-21 to 2007-12-21*

ASSEMBLY IN COMMITTEE

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Finance

Hon. Dr. Ashni K. Singh: Mde. Chairperson, in accordance with Article 171 (2) of the Constitution, I signify that the Cabinet has recommended for consideration by the Assembly the Motion for the approval of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 3/2007 - Supplementary Estimates (Current and Capital) totalling \$1,459, 063,444 for the period 2007-11-21 t6o 2007-12-21 and I now move the Motion.

Question proposed.

The Chairperson: We will now consider the Paper as usual that is the items will be taken from both the Current and Capital Estimates in the order for which the Minister is responsible.

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SECTION 'A' CURRENT ESTIMATES

ITEM 1 - AGENCY 01 - OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT, PROGRAMME 011 - Head Office Administration

Question is proposed that the sum of \$15,000,000 for Agency 01 - Office of the President, Programme 011 - Head Office Administration - Chart of Account 6321 - Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations - stands part of the Estimates.

Mr. Winston Murray: Mde. Chairperson, Could the Honourable Minister inform the National Assembly as to how many months shortfall of rental - \$15,000,000 - represents and further explain to the National Assembly why budgetary provision could not have been made at the time of the presentation of the Budget for the full rental to be paid?

Hon. Jennifer I Webster: Mde. Chairperson, in response to the question raised by the Honourable Member Mr. Murray, this sum here being represents rental due to the Institute of Applied Science and Technology by the Environmental Protection Agency. This rental is meant to be off-set from revenues from the EPA and the EPA for the year 2007 had shortfalls amounting approximately

\$12,000,340 and usually in the EPA's budget the rentals are paid from their revenue projections and as such there is no other alternative, but to ask the House to consider this request.

Agency 01 - Office of the President, Programme 011 - Head Office Administration - Chart of Account 6321 - Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations - \$15,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 2 - AGENCY 02 - OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER, PROGRAMME 021 - Prime Minister's Secretariat

Question is proposed that the sum of \$11,000,000 for Agency 02 - Office of the Prime Minister, Programme 021 - Prime Minister's Secretariat - Chart of Account 6321 - Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations - stands part of the Estimates.

Mrs. Volda A Lawrence: Mde. Chairperson, could the Honourable Minister say whether this additional provision sought here includes the installation for the households which have been lying with this Company for some time now as reported in the Auditor General's Report of 2004 and 2005?

The Honourable Minister of Transport and hydraulics ...

Hon. BH Robeson Benn: Mde. Chairperson, I would not be able at this time to say whether this provision covers the

question of meters as I am unaware that those meters are still laying at the Lethem Power Company. The provision sought is intended to cover for the additional cost due to the rising prices of fuel and to provide support with respect to the generators at Lethem.

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, would the Minister agree that the failure to install the meters that are lying without installation at the present time is a factor in the level of contribution that the central government has to make to subsidise this Company and if he agrees that that is so, then would he not further agree that there is some urgency certainly on the part of the Ministry if not on the part of the power company to see that these meters which are lying abandoned as it were are in fact installed.

Hon. BH Robeson Benn: Mde. Chairperson, I think I did say that I was unaware that these meters are lying at the Lethem Power Company. I will ascertain whether that is so and to find out the reason and if they are still lying and if that is so, to see how we can have them expeditiously put in place.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Norton

Mr. Aubrey C Norton: Mde. Chairperson, I think that in response to the question in this House the Honourable Prime Minister had said that in May 2005 the Government leased the Hydro plant to the Lethem Power Company for ten years thereby granting the utility the right to seek and I quote a simpler alternative option for the rehabilitation works and to operate and maintain the facilities. Could the

Honourable Minister tell us if this decision takes into consideration that objective and if it has been achieved?

The second point is: Could the Honourable Minister tell us if this is the best option that exists vis-à-vis providing electricity to the area?

The Chairman: The Honourable Minister of Transport and Hydraulics ...

Hon. BH Robeson Benn: Mde. Chairperson, I presume that the Honourable Member is referring to options of hydropower versus diesel power. I think at the present time with respect to, it would require, I believe, upward of seventy to 100 million to have the facility repaired, but furthermore there are difficult questions or issues with respect to the actual alignments or perhaps the entire replacement of the power house and the power lines and everything there. It requires much more study and therefore for the while until those studies come into place and are accepted one way or the other, we have to go with the diesel power generation at Lethem.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Norton.

Mr. Aubrey C Norton: Could the Honourable Minister tell this House how far those studies have gone? When are we likely to get the outcome of the studies and which options you think and should it just be restricted to these two or there are other areas in the context of green energy that could be pursued in this context?

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Transport and Hydraulics

Hon. BH Robeson Benn: I think we could shut out any question of green energy. If we are able to restore the Moco Moco Hydropower Plant, we would have a sustainable natural form of the provision of energy for the area. With respect to the time in which these studies could be completed, it is hoped that over this year 2008, we will have a good position on the matter. As I have said, some field studies maybe geo-technical drilling and other issues will have to be pursued with respect to the matter. So I think that hopefully by the end of this year we would be able to conclude on the issue of restoration of the Moco Moco hydropower plant.

Agency 02 - Office of the Prime Minister, Programme 021, Prime Minister's Secretariat - Chart of Account 6321 - Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations - \$ 11,000,000 - stands part of the Estimates

ITEM 3 - AGENCY 03 -MINISTRY OF FINANCE, PROGRAMME 031 - Ministry Administration

Question is proposed that the sum of \$396,235,344 for Agency 03 - Ministry of Finance, Programme 031 - Ministry Administration - Chart of Account 6141 - Revision of Wages and Salaries - stands part of the Estimates

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Basil Williams

Mr. Basil Williams: Mde. Chairperson, Could the Honourable Minister tell us whether this provision is an across-the-board increase for all workers, if not, what category of workers?

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Finance

Hon. Dr. Ashni K Singh: Mde. Chairperson, as I believe as I have indicated in this Honourable House on perhaps at least one previous occasion, the revision of wages and salaries allocation is used to meet the cost of salary increases and also to meet other employment costs such as might be occasioned by shortfalls that might be experienced by agencies for various reasons including for example additional recruitment, et cetera. The amount that is presented in this Financial Paper represents additional allocations that were required to meet the cost of the across-the-board increase that has already been awarded and in fact that has already been paid and also to meet some of the other employment costs that I alluded to earlier.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Basil Williams

Mr. Basil Williams: Would this provision include the recent additional five percent increases for the disciplined services and teachers?

Hon. Dr. Ashni K Singh: No, Mde. Chairperson, I believe the five percent that the Honourable Member is referring to will be paid from January 2008. This amount has no connection with that.

Agency 03 - Ministry of Finance, Programme 031 - Ministry Administration - Chart of Account 6141 - Revision of Wages and Salaries - \$396,253,344 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 3 - AGENCY 03 -MINISTRY OF FINANCE, PROGRAMME 031 - Ministry Administration

Question is proposed that the sum of \$61,902,619 for Agency 03 - Ministry of Finance, Programme 031 - Ministry Administration - Chart of Account 6321 - Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency 03 - Ministry of Finance, Programme 031 - Ministry Administration - Chart of Account 6321 - Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations - \$61,902,619 - stands part of the Estimates

ITEM 4 - AGENCY 16 - MINISTRY OF AMERINDIAN AFFAIRS, PROGRAMME 161 - Amerindian Development

Question is proposed that the sum of \$1,500,000 for Agency 16 - Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, Programme 161 - Amerindian Development - Chart of Account 6231 - Fuel and Lubricants - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 16 - Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, Programme 161 - Amerindian Development - Chart of Account 6231 - Fuel and Lubricants - \$1,500,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

ITEM 4 - AGENCY 16 - MINISTRY OF AMERINDIAN AFFAIRS, PROGRAMME 161 - Amerindian Development

Question is proposed that the sum of \$1,500,000 for Agency 16 - Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, Programme 161 - Amerindian Development - Chart of Account 6264 - Vehicles Spares and Service - stands part of the Estimates.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Dr. Norton

Dr. George A Norton: Mde. Chairperson, under Vehicle Spares and Service, could the Honourable Minister say especially since under Remarks to facilitate urgent repairs to vehicle; is this sum referring to one vehicle?

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Amerindian Affairs

Hon. Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett: Mde. Chairperson, yes, one vehicle that was based in Annai that had an accident.

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, could the Honourable Minister say what is the type of vehicle and what is its age? Because the question that goes on in my

mine is this a worthwhile expenditure \$1.5 million on a single vehicle and if I have information about its age and its condition perhaps I will be better informed, because I believe it will be fair to say that a fairly good reconditioned vehicle could be obtained for \$1.5 million for the use by a Ministry.

Hon. Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett: The vehicle is a Toyota Pick-up and I can tell you that it was purchased not more than three years ago, but I cannot tell you the year of the make.

Mr. Winston S Murray: Could the Honourable Minister say whether such a reconditioned Toyota Pick-up could in fact not be purchased for the sum of \$1.5 million. Which Minister is it; is it the Public Service Minister?

The Chairperson: The Minister of Amerindian Affairs

Hon. Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett: Mde. Chairperson, I think maybe depending on what you want the vehicle to do and if you want to place it in the Rupununi, you have to have a proper vehicle. So I do not think that you can get a vehicle for \$1.5 million to do the work there.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Norton.

Mr. Aubrey C Norton: Mde. Chairperson, I would like to ask the Honourable Minister the same question probably differently. Does it make economic sense ...
[Interruption]

The Chairperson: No, no, no, you cannot do that.

Mr. Aubrey C Norton: Does it make economic sense to spend that large sum of money when with a little addition it can give you a vehicle that will be far more efficacious?

Hon. Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett: Mde. Chairperson, indeed, we went through this process in the Ministry to see whether it is going to make more economic sense and the answer we came up with is yes.

Agency 16 - Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, Programme 161 - Amerindian Development - Chart of Account 6264 - Vehicles Spares and Service - \$1,500,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 4 - AGENCY 16 - MINISTRY OF AMERINDIAN AFFAIRS, PROGRAMME 161 - Amerindian Development

Question is proposed that the sum of \$1,000,000 for Agency 16 - Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, Programme 161 - Amerindian Development - Chart of Account 6265 - Other Transport, Travel and Service - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency 16 - Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, Programme 161 - Amerindian Development - Chart of Account 6265 - Other Transport, Travel and Service \$1,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

ITEM 4 - AGENCY 16 - MINISTRY OF AMERINDIAN AFFAIRS, PROGRAMME 161 - Amerindian Development

Question is proposed that the sum of \$500,000 for Agency 16 - Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, Programme 161 - Amerindian Development - Chart of Account 6294 - Other - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 16 - Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, Programme 161 - Amerindian Development - Chart of Account 6294 - Other - \$500,000 - agreed to and order to stand part of the Estimates

ITEM 5 - AGENCY 21 - MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, PROGRAMME 211 - Ministry Administration

Question is proposed that the sum of \$292,000,000 for Agency 21 - Ministry of Agriculture, Programme 211 - Ministry Administration - Chart of Account 6321 - Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations - stands part of the Estimates

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, would the Honourable Minister of Agriculture agree that the placing of this information within Ministry Administration specifically in Volume 2 of the Estimates, where it is identified under Other Charges is not the most transparent way for the National Assembly to be informed on what the money is to be used for and would he further enlighten this National Assembly as to what are these additional

expenditures in 2007 that were undertaken since there is no place else we can get the information from and is he aware that this sum together with the \$400,000,000 that was already given to the Drainage and Irrigation Board is significantly higher than what was given to it in 2006 when in fact we had a flood.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture

Hon. Robert M Persaud: Mde. Chairperson, first of all the NDIA is a semi-autonomous agency and receives a subvention through that mechanism and perhaps the Ministry of Finance can explain in a bit more detailed to Mr. Murray on another occasion how that mechanism works and its effectiveness.

Regarding the additional allocation of \$292,000,000, these sums were used for the maintenance of drainage systems in utilising CDCs and NDCs in areas such Timehri, Mocha; Hope Haslington, Anns Grove, Two Friends, Friendship, et cetera. \$67,000,000 were spent in utilising NDCs and CDCs; utilising water users association in the nine water users association areas that we have; \$56,000,000 and these areas included Cane Grove, Golden Grove, Vreed-en- Hoop, La Jalousie, Canals Polder, Black Bush Polder, Crabwood Creek; Nos. 52 and 74.

Also some \$77,000,000 were utilised for the maintenance, purchase of fuel and other supplies for the forty-two pumps and twenty-one excavators which are being

operated by the National Drainage and Irrigation Authority.

To be exact nearly \$18.1 million was spent in Region 2 for works such as the installation of tubes, desilting of the Uno Creek, et cetera. \$3.5 million was spent in terms of additional works at Garden of Eden, Friendship and that is for the maintenance of drains and canals.

In Region 5 - \$9.4 million was spent on the cleaning and excavating of drainage canals, installation of tubes.

Region 6 - \$19,000,000 was spent on the excavation of outfall channels at seawall Whim, Letter Kenny, Liverpool, et cetera.

\$42,000,000 was spent within the MMA Area for the heightening of fifty miles of embankment at Abary, Mahaicony, Mora Point, Hyde Park and also for the operation and maintenance of drainage pumps.

Regarding the increase in allocation, I am sure the House appreciates the fact that we need to constantly invest in maintenance, but more so in adjusting and adapting our D and I Infrastructure in deal with the effects of climate change, but also there is a growing demand by our farmers where more lands are put under cultivation, hence we have to expand our drainage work in a number of communities.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan

Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan: Were these expenditures as a result of emergencies?

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture

Hon. Robert M Persaud: Mde. Chairperson, we have recognised that in the May/June rains ... [Interruption: ‘Were they as a result of rains?’] ... Can I be allowed to answer my question? [Noisy Interruption]

The Chairperson: Honourable Members, let the Minister answer.

Hon. Robert M Persaud: The answer to that question is that the May/June rains were a protracted period where we had to incur additional expenses. Hence, in terms of preparing for the end-of-year rains saw us requesting these additional resources, because in some areas we saw the situation was developing and hence we had to make or you can classify them as emergency interventions in some regards.

Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan: So in view in of that then, you did not to go through the regular tender procedures, but the ones require for emergencies; is that so?

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture

Hon. Robert M Persaud: Mde. Chairperson, I am quite sure that the Member is familiar with the procedures that are outlines in terms of government procurement and I

want to assure the House that these services take for instance when we utilised CDCs or the water users associations (we do not need that for the NDCs) there is a prescribed format by which these services are procured.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Carberry

Mr. E Lance Carberry: Could the Minister say now that this \$700,000,000 has been spent that all of the kokers along the sea front on the East Coast are now functioning?

Hon. Robert M Persaud: What I can say, Mde. Chairperson, is that those kokers which are in operation are managed primarily by the Region 4 Administration and we have a good working arrangement and where the NDIA provides support for the regional administration in ensuring those kokers, which are functional function in a way that they can provide drainage relief. Those which are not, for instance to insure the maximum capacity at Hope and Greenfield, we are conducting some amount of dredging there. From time to time we have the problem where koker attendants do not turn up and I have had to speak to the Regional Chairperson on that to ensure that mechanisms are in place.

Also it is interesting that the Honourable Member has raised that point, because he may know that some of the kokers in the 1980s along the East Coast were retired and we are also looking at re-activating some of those kokers which were retired to ensure maximum drainage along the East Coast.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Williams

Mr. Basil Williams: Mde. Chairperson, is the drainage and irrigation of the MMA Scheme area included within this amount?

Hon. Robert M Persaud: I thought I mentioned \$42,000,000 that was given in terms of allocation, but in addition to that as part of the regular work programme of the MMA, they have spent close to \$90,000,000 this year on a number of drainage interventions in the MMA Scheme.

Mr. Basil Williams: A follow-up - Do you consider that it is because of the clogged state of the drains and trenches in that area that you have this massive flooding that is presently going on.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister.

Hon. Robert M Persaud: Mde. Chairperson, can the Honourable Member be a bit more specific where the massive flooding is taking place so that I can answer his question a bit more accurately?

Mr. Basil Williams: If it pleases you, Mde. Speaker, we could take parliamentary notice of those areas, I do not know if the Honourable Member wishes me to indicate every village. Well let us start with Onverwagt for example is that koker in working order?

Hon. Robert M Persaud: Mde. Chairperson, a question was asked about massive flooding. I want to know where is the massive flooding.

Mr. Basil Williams: I was just taking a leaf out of the Honourable Minister's book, but let us go to Belladrum, all of the villages coming down to Region 5 including Onverwagt, where the koker is still not working.

The Chairperson: Minister, do you wish to answer that? Honourable Minister, before you answer that I see the Region 5 lady, I do not know ...

Hon. Robert M Persaud: Should I await her question too?

The Chairperson: That is what I was thinking. If she would be asking a question on Region 5, you should take them together.

Ms Jennifer Wade: Thank you Mde. Chairperson. Minister the area flooded is AD 35 B hundreds of acres of lands.

Hon. Robert M Persaud: I think sometimes we mix up the accumulation of water in the Canals the high rise. Sometimes we also confuse the irrigated fields and think that we are seeing flood. Mde. Chairperson, I was in the West Berbice area last Sunday. I visited Belladrum among other communities. Yes, there are some communities in the cultivation area, because of the rainfall and the need for irrigation has compounded the situation and we are

making intervention that is in the cultivation area. There is no massive flooding as is being described by the Honourable Member. In fact perhaps he has not visited Belladrum in a long time as I did last Sunday and he will see the work there and the koker in that area, there were some sea-defence work taking place and efforts are being made to ensure that the sea defence work does not hamper the true effectiveness of that koker within that community.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Carberry

Mr. E Lance Carberry: I want to come back to the issue I raised concerning the kokers on the East Coast, because the Minister's answer did not address what I was asking, but let me perhaps ask him again. Which agency is responsible for dredging the outfalls and those kokers along the East Coast.

Secondly, if you could tell me whether apart from the dredging of the outfall, what other remedial work has been done in the sea front for those kokers?

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture

Hon. Robert M Persaud: Mde. Chairperson, in the NDIA in collaboration with the Sea Defence Unit from time to time undertake the dredging and clearing of the outfalls. In addition to dredging utilising excavators, there is some amount of manual clearing and cleaning that has been carried out. I must add, for the Honourable

Member's request, we are also looking at the restoration of groins in some of those areas to avoid the siltation that we seek taking place. So in 2008 and beyond it is an issue that we will be working very closely with the Ministry of Public Works in terms of the restoration and the improvement of groins in some of those areas, because it is very costly to undertake the type of mechanical clearing and cleaning, excavation and the dredging that we have to do seasonally.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Carberry

Mr. E Lance Carberry: Mde. Chairperson, I am happy to hear that the Minister is contemplating this thing, but what I want to know is whether the capacity to maintain this dredging is there and whether the funds that have been allocated are adequate to ensure that there is the capacity to continue to maintain these outfalls?

The Chairperson: Yes Minister, go ahead.

Hon. Robert M Persaud: That is a very good question that the Honourable Member is asking. Yes, we are developing the capacity at the NDIA to undertake that in a much more routine way as we are doing our own excavators to undertake work within drainage areas as we will see when we come to the consideration of the capital supplementary resources; \$40,000,000 has been spent on the design of a specialised pontoon on which the NDIA can place its own excavators and routinely engage in dredging. That pontoon will be fitted with hydraulics

spuds and that will allow us to deploy, respond and around the clock to undertake that type of maintenance. The simply answer to that question is yes, we are building that capacity.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mrs. Holder.

Mrs. Sheila VA Holder: Mde. Chairperson, having heard a number of questions and answers so far, I would like to pose this question to the Honourable Minister of Finance and ask him in his opinion whether or not he is satisfied that the Contingency Fund is being used for the purpose intended.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Finance

Hon. Dr Ashni K Singh: If I were not satisfied, I would not have approved the Contingency Fund advance.
[Applause]

Agency 21 - Ministry of Agriculture, Programme 211 - Ministry Administration - Chart of Account 6321 - Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations - \$292,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 6 - AGENCY 23 - MINISTRY OF TOURISM, INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE - PROGRAMME 231 - Main Office

Question is proposed that the sum of \$7,753,090 for Agency 23 - Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, Programme 231 - Main Office - Chart of

Account 6281 - Security Services - stands part of the Estimates.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Danny

Mr. Dave Danny: If you look at the voted sum of \$11,000,000 and you look at the supplementary provision sought it is almost \$7.8 million as compared to \$11 million - could the Minister say that this increase? And you have GICC and NEC, could you also say if it is the same company that provides the security?

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister Prashad

Hon. Manniram Prashad: Mde. Chairperson, the sum being sought represents a shortfall in the budgetary provision now required to meet the cost of the additional security charges. To answer the question, the Guyana International Convention Centre was under the Office of the President, it now falls under the Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce and there are two separate agencies. Most of the expenditure goes to Federal Management System which secures the International Convention Centre and that is basically the reason why this extra amount of money is being sought.

Agency 23 - Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, Programme 231 - Main Office - Chart of Account 6281 - Security Services - \$7,753,090 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 7 - AGENCY 31 - MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS AND COMMUNICATIONS, PROGRAMME 311 - Ministry Administration

Question is proposed that the sum of \$56,077,518 for Agency 31 - Ministry of Public Works and Communications, Programme 311 - Ministry Administration - Chart of Account 6231 - Fuel and Lubricants - stands part of the Estimates.

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, could the Honourable Minister explain what is the basis on which the T&HD functions in relation to earning its way. I ask that question mindful of the fact that the subvention that was usually provided under Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations was withdrawn ... Well let me put it this way, no provision was made in the Budget for such a subsidy or contribution in the year 2007. So in that context, could the Minister say what is the relationship between the Ministry and this organisation now?

And secondly, could the Minister not think that it would be a better idea rather than lumping Transport and Harbours subvention, because that is how I see it, with the Ministry's line item of fuel and lubricants to put that in a separately identified item so at the end of the day we can see what the Government is contributing to the upkeep of the T&HD.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister Benn

Hon. BH Robeson Benn: Mde. Chairperson, let me say fundamentally the issue and the relationship to the Transport and Harbours Department, it is indeed a subvention agency. I would say with respect to the use of fuel and lubricants, we all certainly do know that here has been a steady and great rise in the cost of fuel and lubricants. The Transport and Harbours Department has in fact an improving year in 2007. I myself have been very engaged and involved with the management and the workers too and the operations with respect to improving their services. There has been an expansion of services. We have re-established services to Port Kaituma in the North West District after the absence of more than twenty years and I think based on information we have had from that community, it is in fact working well to ensure the reduction in the cost of living in that area and make sure that there is a reduction in the overall cost of transport.

The Transport and Harbours Department has responded well despite great difficulties in terms of where it is over the years with respect to its improvement mandate. We have recently just had the loss - the unfortunate death of Mr. William Joseph, the General Manager, which we all deeply regret, but I think there is a new spirit above the air. The Ministry is working fairly well with the management and supporting the agency and we can only look forward to better service and more improvements.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Murray

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, I repeat the fundamental question, I am really seeking to have

answered by the Minister and that is whether he thinks in the interest of transparency and accountability, it is a good idea to have fuel and lubricants paid for by the Ministry as a subsidy to Transport and Harbours Department reflected under the line item in the Ministry for fuel and lubricants or should it be shown separately as a subvention to that organisation.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Transport and Hydraulics

Hon. BH Robeson Benn: I am satisfied with where it is. I think we are working with the Transport and Harbours Department and monitoring their operations and beyond any advice that I would have from the Ministry of Finance, I am fairly well satisfied with where it is.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Murray

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, I respectfully submit to the Honourable Minister that Transport and Harbours Department is not an agency of the Ministry and therefore would the Minister not agree that to put fuel and lubricants intended for the Transport and Harbours as a line item under the Ministry of Public Works and Communications is wrong; it is incorrect and inappropriate.

The Chairperson: Mr. Murray, I think the Minister answered the question and said that he is satisfied so let us move on.

The Honourable Member Mr. Danny

Mr. Dave Danny: Mde. Chairperson, having observing the Parika/Adventure route, I see two boats moving, could the Minister say if it more economical to use less fuel with one boat or with two boats. *[Laughter]* Mde. Chairperson, there is a tug that moves the Malali, so there are two boats; so I do not know what Neendkumar is really making a mockery of.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister Benn

Hon. BH Robeson Benn: Mde. Chairperson, I am not sure what the question is, but I will try to explain that on the Parika to Adventure run, we have had the issue where the demand is there for two boats as they stand, which I think is the Malali and the Baramani. We have to keep a flexible Schedule since we have been requiring that the boats ride on the highest tide to avoid them running aground on the sand bars there; we have to run a barge which is Baramani and the larger vessel when the tide is at its highest. It is convenient for us to service the population there by having the barge leaving earlier, because it can leave on a lower tide than the Malali which has a greater drag. It meets the demand. In fact what we provide there currently does not meet the total demand and this is why we are looking at having the new vessels coming in with assistance from the Chinese - a team should be here shortly - and also too, we hope that when the Berbice Bridge comes in this year, which it certainly will do that we will be able to redeploy some of the assets on the Berbice River

to the Essequibo and so improve the service on the Essequibo. [Applause]

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Carberry

Mr. E Lance Carberry: Mde. Chairperson, I must confess that I have difficulty in understanding some of these answers, because the REMARKS Column states:

To offset expenses for products sold and delivered to Transport and Harbours Department (T&HD)

Now I presume that ... [*Interruption: Don't presume; ask questions.*] I believe that you will learn when you go to school the next time. Anyway, I would like to know whether this expense is for the increase in the price of fuel or there is an additional fuel requirement as a result of the delivery of these products. Now, the fact is if these products are going to be delivered, who are they being delivered by? Are they being delivered by the Transport and Harbours itself or by some other agency?

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Transport and Hydraulics

Hon. BH Roberson Benn: Mde. Chairperson, the Honourable Member is long standing in this Parliament and he should know ... I think he has been a Member of the Public Accounts Committee at some time too ... Fuel and Lubricants are purchased from GUYOIL, which has

the most competitive fuel and most competitive supplies into the system and so the products sold and delivered are products purchased from GUYOIL and delivered by GUYOIL to Parika or to the various operating areas of the Transport and Harbours Department.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Franklin

Mr. Everall N Franklin: Mde. Chairperson, just one question for the Honourable Minister; could you state whether or not in the year 2007, the Ministry had cause to check on the use of fuel by Transport and Harbours in terms of auditing the amount of fuel that they bought and what was used? Did you have any problems with alleged corruption or sale of fuel from the Transport and Harbours in that year?

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Transport and Hydraulics

Hon. BH Roberson Benn: Thank you Mde. Chairperson and Honourable Member Mr. Franklin. We have had ongoing issues with respect to the amount of fuel consumed. There have been allegations of fuel and lubricants being stolen and used in other places. I think we have seen some reduction for tonne-mile of fuel used with respect to the vessels and there is stricter auditing regime in place and an operating regime in place for the use of fuel. I think we have seen improvement in that area.

Coming back perhaps to the question that was previously posed, the issue of the total fuel used, the gross amount of

money relates more to the rises in cost of fuel and not necessarily to more fuel used per tonne-mile [1:02] undertaken by the vessels.

Agency 31 - Ministry of Public Works and Communications, Programme 311 - Ministry Administration - Chart of Account 6231 - Fuel and Lubricants - \$56,077, 518 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

ITEM 8 - AGENCY 48 - MINISTRY OF LABOUR, HUMAN SERVICES AND SOCIAL SECURITY, PROGRAMME 482 - Social Services

Question is proposed that the sum of \$32,000,000 for Agency 48 - Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security, Programme 482 - Social Services - Chart of Account 6321 - Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations - stands part of the Estimates

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Murray

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, could the Honourable Minister say whether this is a new item being created under Agency 48 or whether it is intended to be part of Legal Aid Clinic Provision, if not could she say where exactly this expenditure will be placed among the list of items?

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Human Services and Social Security

Hon. Priya D Manickchand: Mde. Chairperson, the description is under Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations and that is what it is. Earlier in the year when we debated the Budget Estimates, we saw that a subsidy was given to the Georgetown Legal Aid Clinic and as the figure says is to strengthen that subsidy; to strengthen services provided by those whom we are duty bound to serve.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Murray

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, would the Minister agree that what has been historically been provided is of the order of \$300,000 and that this rise to \$32,000,000 represents a substantial increase; could she explain to the National Assembly whether this money was all spent in 2007 and where have these legal aid services been provided outside of Georgetown.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Human Services and Social Security

Hon. Priya D Manickchand: To correct the Honourable Member it was \$200,000 that was provided by the Government of Guyana to the NGO, the Georgetown Legal Aid Clinic. That was to provide services in Georgetown and its very immediate environs. After the Budget was passed we were informed (the Executive Arm of the Government) by the Clerk that they had run out of funding and needed more money to continue. As a result the Government as it usually would to maintain the services of those poor people whom we served decided to

increase the subsidy, hence the figure you see here. Legal aid services have been expanded to Regions 5, 10, 6 and 2 to a lesser extent.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Murray

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, I just want to ask the Minister to check the details of subsidies and contributions at the back of the Budget Estimates for 2007 and to note that that is where the figure of \$300,000 is stated as Legal Aid Clinic subsidy.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Norton

Mr. Aubrey C Norton: Could the Honourable Minister give a breakdown of how much will be spent outside of Georgetown and if the Minister can tell us the factors that informed the decision to allocate those resources?

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Human Services and Social Security

Hon. Priya D Manickchand: I cannot tell you how much will be spent, this is currently being spent. The Georgetown Legal Aid Clinic serves Georgetown and its immediate environment - Sparendam, Providence and that is about it. That expenditure was usually in the sum between \$15,000,000 and \$16,000,000 and that is only for there. These expansion services will take care of Regions 2, 3, 5, 6 and 10. They would not have some of the same overhead costs, because the Head Office will be in Georgetown so you would not have some of the same costs

like rent and support staff. If you are asking how much each region will get that will be impossible to answer now; it will be according to the need of those regions. It would perhaps be easier for us to review that after a year, when we determine how many persons were served in each region.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Norton

Mr. Aubrey C Norton: Honourable Minister, you will agree that if you are going to allot money and you are going to give into the future, you have to have a rationale for doing it and what I am merely trying to get from you are what are the factors that in the analysis of the situation that caused the Ministry to go into these regions, et cetera. If we can get that kind of information it would do us well.

Hon. Priya D Manickchand: The Government of Guyana is committed to providing persons with access to justice that is part of a democracy. We are committed to enduring that we uphold that aspect. What I have just said is that \$15,000,000 to \$16,000,000 is spent by the Legal Aid Clinic in Georgetown and its immediate environs. That would mean that \$16,000,000 would be left to spend in the regions. Of course a budget was provided, that budget included things like how much a lawyer would cost, paper, computers. What have always been the requirements for someone to be eligible at the Georgetown Legal Aid Clinic is poverty and need for legal services.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Norton

Mr. Aubrey C Norton: The Honourable Minister did say that it is all part of the Government's intention to ensure justice - access to justice - which I have no problem with, were that the case I would expected that all the regions that have gotten magistrates, courts et cetera would have had, but I did not hear for Region 1 and for some other regions. Therefore I am asking again if justice is the main objective why it isn't for all areas rather than some.

The Chairperson: Honourable Minister, do you want to answer?

Hon. Priya D Manickchand: From 1993 to 2006 Georgetown and its immediate environs were the only persons who had this kind of access to justice. The Government of Guyana has seen it necessary to expand that to as many persons as possible given our context as a developing country. So we have decided to expand it to Regions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10. That is six of the ten Regions where there is more population and where there has been an assessment there is more need for legal aid services.

Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan: So you are saying that from 1993 to 2006, the Guyana Government is denying access to justice to everybody else, but Region 4?

Hon. Priya D Manickchand: No, but the Guyana Government could have been greatly assisted if members from the private could have offered their services to the NGO the Legal Aid Clinic so the persons they swear and say that they are there to serve could have received those services. We are a developing country; we have always

been as a government contributing towards the Georgetown Legal Aid Clinic in many ways, both financially and by support through lawyers that is the Government of Guyana. This is an expansion service that is being provided given the need that has arisen.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mrs. Backer

Mrs. Deborah J Backer: Mde. Chairperson, is the Minister saying that in Regions 2, 3, 5, 6 and 10 there are legal aid centres in those regions? That is the first question. I just want to get that very clear.

Hon. Priya D Manickchand: I said services have been expanded to those regions not centres in the regions ...

Mrs. Deborah J Backer: Yes, thank you.

Hon. Priya D Manickchand: ... which means that a lawyer was based in Region 5 on Mondays, which is when the Mahaicony Magistrates Court sits and on Wednesdays in Region 10 for those and some other day in Region 5.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mrs. Backer

Mrs. Deborah J Backer: Could I ask the Honourable Minister ... the Minister did make some reference to lawyers giving free services ... I suppose those persons who are working are being paid; am I correct? The lawyers who are working for the expansion of legal aid; are they being paid, Minister or are they doing this pro bono?

Hon. Priya D Manickchand: We are talking about 2006, are we? Not all of the lawyers have been paid. Some lawyers did that work pro bono, one of whom ...
[Interruption]

Mrs. Deborah J Backer: I am taking about 2007.

Hon. Priya D Manickchand: Some lawyers worked pro bono.

Mrs. Deborah J Backer: Those who were paid did you advertise; your Ministry in any way that this is a service that is available or were lawyers handpicked by the Ministry to facilitate their practice?

Hon. Priya D Manickchand: The Ministry had very little to do with this. Georgetown Legal Aid Clinic is an NGO run by a Board of Directors headed by no less a person Senior Counsel Aston Chase, Secretary Josephine Whitehead. So I am saying all the Ministry did was to facilitate the expansion of services and to recommend those expansions.

Mrs. Deborah J Backer: Can the Honourable Minister indicate how much money has been allocated or has been paid to the lawyer or lawyers who are doing legal aid work in Region 10?

Hon. Priya D Manickchand: The lawyer who was working in Region 10, I believe was receiving ... Mde. Chairperson, I am asking for two minutes to check that so that I do not misrepresent in this Honourable House what

that figure is, but it is a stated figure for the public records. It is not a problem; I would have to check with the Treasurer of the Georgetown Legal Aid Clinic.

The Chairperson: You can supply that later.

Hon. Priya D Manickchand: I am prepared to supply that later.

Agency 48 - Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security, Programme 482 - Social Services - Chart of Account 6321 - Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations - \$32,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

The Chairperson: We will now go to the next Agency

ITEM 8 - AGENCY 48 - MINISTRY OF LABOUR, HUMAN SERVICES AND SOCIAL SECURITY, PROGRAMME 482 - Social Services

Question is proposed that the sum of \$1,600,000 for Agency 48 - Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security, Programme 482 - Social Services - Chart of Account 6243 - Janitorial and Cleaning Services - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 48 - Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security, Programme 482 - Social Services - Chart of Account 6243 - Janitorial and Cleaning Services - \$1,600,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

ITEM 9 - AGENCY 51 - MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, PROGRAMME 511 -Secretariat Services

Question is proposed that the sum of \$800,000 for Agency 51 - Ministry of Home Affairs, Programme 511 - Secretariat Services - Chart of Account 6231 -Fuel and Lubricants - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 51 - Ministry of Home Affairs, Programme 511 - Secretariat Services - Chart of Account 6231 -Fuel and Lubricants - \$800,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 9 - AGENCY 51 - MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, PROGRAMME 511 -Secretariat Services

Question is proposed that the sum of \$200,000 for Agency 51 - Ministry of Home Affairs, Programme 511 - Secretariat Services - Chart of Account 6261 - Local Travel and Subsistence - - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 51 - Ministry of Home Affairs, Programme 511 - Secretariat Services - Chart of Account 6261 - Local Travel and Subsistence - \$200,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 9 - AGENCY 51 - MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, PROGRAMME 511 -Secretariat Services

Question is proposed that the sum of \$150,000 for Agency 51 - Ministry of Home Affairs, Programme 511 - Secretariat Services - Chart of Account 6264 - Vehicle Spares and Services - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency 51 - Ministry of Home Affairs, Programme 511 - Secretariat Services - Chart of Account 6264 - Vehicle Spares and Services - \$150,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 10 - AGENCY 51 - MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, PROGRAMME 512 - Police

Question is proposed that the sum of \$74,277,064 for Agency 51 - Ministry of Home Affairs, Programme 512 - Police - Chart of Account 6231 - Fuel and Lubricants - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 51 - Ministry of Home Affairs, Programme 512 - Police - Chart of Account 6231- Fuel and Lubricants - \$74,277,064 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

ITEM 10 - AGENCY 51 - MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, PROGRAMME 512 - Police

Question is proposed that the sum of \$142,100,729 for Agency 51 - Ministry of Home Affairs, Programme 512 - Police - Chart of Account 6261 - Local Travel and Subsistence - stands part of the Estimates

The Honourable Member Mrs. Backer

Mrs. Deborah J Backer: Mde. Chairperson - Chart of Account 6261 - Local Travel and Subsistence - We see that the voted provision is \$145,000,000 and the supplementary in fact exceeds the original voted provision; could the Honourable Minister shed some light; give us

some direction to this very vague REMARKS Column - To meet additional expenses resulting from increased activities.

Hon. Clement J Rohee: I think we have enough light in this House, Mde. Chairperson, but if the Honourable Member needs more light to be shed ... We have established two task forces at the Ministry of Home Affairs since the last Budget and what was required was extra resources for these task forces to do their job. Thank you.

Mrs. Deborah J Backer: No, no, no, I think that you are on the wrong line item.

The Chairperson: Honourable Minister, line item No. 10 which ...

Mrs. Deborah J Backer: Chart of Account 6261 - Agency 51 - Programme 512

The Chairperson: Local Travel and Subsistence.

Hon. Clement J Rohee: Mde. Chairperson, this had to do with the activities of the Guyana Police Force during the Christmas Season. The ranks of the Guyana Police Force were in line during the Christmas Season and when ranks are in line during that particular period, we have to provide resources as well as for officers who travel to interior locations to conduct investigations.

Mrs. Deborah J Backer: Is the Minister trying to suggest to the House that it is not usual that we have Christmas

every year, because I would think that this would be fairly routine that we would know that at Christmas our armed forces are in line generally so this is not a 2007 phenomenon. So would the Honourable Minister then accept that it was poor budgeting between himself and the Minister of Finance?

Hon. Clement J Rohee: Mde. Chairperson, I would not accept that it is poor budgeting. I think it is excellent budgeting between the two Ministers and between the two Ministries and as well as the Guyana Police Force. Yes, we do have Christmas every year, but cost escalate every year too - cost of travel; cost of keeping the forces in line so that everyone in this country would be able to sleep peacefully including the Honourable Members on that side of the House.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mrs. Backer

Mrs. Deborah J Backer: Mde. Chairperson, through you, would the Honourable Minister accept that a supplementary provision exceeding the voted provision in the absence of acute crisis is unsatisfactory budgeting.

Hon. Clement J Rohee: I have to say that I do not accept that, Mde. Chairperson, there is no crisis in the country and therefore it is a question of just a routine matter.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mrs. Backer

Mrs. Deborah J Backer: Mde. Chairperson, could the Honourable Minister say from the original voted provision

what part of the \$145,000,000, which is the original voted provision was allocated for the Christmas Season?

Hon. Clement J Rohee: I do not have that information on me right now.

Agency 51 - Ministry of Home Affairs, Programme 512 - Police - Chart of Account 6261 - Local Travel and Subsistence - \$142,100,729 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

ITEM 10 - AGENCY 51 - MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, PROGRAMME 512 - Police

Question is proposed that the sum of \$20,883,697 for Agency 51 - Ministry of Home Affairs, Programme 512 - Police - Chart of Account 6264 - Vehicle Spares and Service - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 51 - Ministry of Home Affairs, Programme 512 - Police - Chart of Account 6264 - Vehicle Spares and Service - \$20,883,697 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

ITEM 10 - AGENCY 51 - MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, PROGRAMME 512 - Police

Question is proposed that the sum of \$1,000,000 for Agency 51 - Ministry of Home Affairs, Programme 512 - Police - Chart of Account 6265 - Other Transport, Travel and Postage - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 51 - Ministry of Home Affairs, Programme 512 - Police - Chart of Account 6265 - Other Transport, Travel and Postage - \$1,000, 000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

ITEM 10 - AGENCY 51 - MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, PROGRAMME 512 - Police

Question is proposed that the sum of \$7,396,896 for Agency 51 - Ministry of Home Affairs, Programme 512 - Police - Chart of Account 6271 -Telephone Charges - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 51 - Ministry of Home Affairs, Programme 512 - Police - Chart of Account 6271 - Telephone Charges - \$7,396,896 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

The Chairperson: We will now move to the next item.

ITEM 11 - AGENCY 51 - MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, PROGRAMME 513 - Prisons

Question is proposed that the sum of \$1,700,000 for Agency 51 - Ministry of Home Affairs, Programme 513 - Prisons - Chart of Account 6222 - Field Materials and Supplies - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 51 - Ministry of Home Affairs, Programme 513 - Prisons - Chart of Account 6222 - Field Materials and Supplies - \$1,700,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

ITEM 11 - AGENCY 51 - MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, PROGRAMME 513 - Prisons

Question is proposed that the sum of \$2,100,000 for Agency 51 - Ministry of Home Affairs, Programme 513 - Prisons - Chart of Account 6231 - Fuel and Lubricants - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 51 - Ministry of Home Affairs, Programme 513 - Prisons - Chart of Account 6231- Fuel and Lubricants - \$2,100,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

ITEM 11 - AGENCY 51 - MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, PROGRAMME 513 - Prisons

Question is proposed that the sum of \$460,000 for Agency 51 - Ministry of Home Affairs, Programme 513 - Prisons - Chart of Account 6261 - Local Travel and Subsistence - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 51 - Ministry of Home Affairs, Programme 513 - Prisons - Chart of Account 6261 - Local Travel and Subsistence - \$460,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

ITEM 11 - AGENCY 51 - MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, PROGRAMME 513 - Prisons

Question is proposed that the sum of \$300,000 for Agency 51 - Ministry of Home Affairs, Programme 513 - Prisons - Chart of Account - 6265 - Other Transport, Travel and Postage - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 51 - Ministry of Home Affairs, Programme 513 - Prisons - Chart of Account 6265 - Other Transport, Travel and Postage - \$300,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

ITEM 11 - AGENCY 51 - MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, PROGRAMME 513 - Prisons

Question is proposed that the sum of \$539,400 for Agency 51 - Ministry of Home Affairs, Programme 513 - Prisons - Chart of Account 6283 - Cleaning and Extermination Services - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 51 - Ministry of Home Affairs, Programme 513 - Prisons - Chart of Account 6283 - Cleaning and Extermination Services - \$539,400 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

ITEM 11 - AGENCY 51 - MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, PROGRAMME 513 - Prisons

Question is proposed that the sum of \$10,000,000 for Agency 51 - Ministry of Home Affairs, Programme 513 - Prisons - Chart of Account 6292 - Dietary - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 51 - Ministry of Home Affairs, Programme 513 - Prisons - Chart of Account 6292 - Dietary - \$10,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

We will now move to the next item

ITEM 12 - AGENCY 51 - MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, PROGRAMME 515 - Fire Service

Question is proposed that the sum of \$500,000 for Agency 51 - Ministry of Home Affairs, Programme 515 - Fire Service - Chart of Account 6223 - Office Materials and Supplies - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency 51 - Ministry of Home Affairs, Programme 515 - Fire Service - Chart of Account 6223 - Office Materials and Supplies - \$500,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

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ITEM 13 - AGENCY 53 - GUYANA DEFENCE FORCE, PROGRAMME 531 - Defence Headquarters

Question is proposed that the sum of \$618,000 for Agency 53 - Guyana Defence Force, Programme 531 - Chart of Account 6263 - Postage, Telex and Cablegrams - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency 53 - Guyana Defence Force, Programme 531 - Chart of Account 6263 - Postage, Telex and Cablegrams - \$618,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

ITEM 13 - AGENCY 53 - GUYANA DEFENCE FORCE, PROGRAMME 531 - Defence Headquarters

Question is proposed that the sum of \$24,514,000 for Agency 53 - Guyana Defence Force, Programme 531 - Chart of Account 6282 - Equipment Maintenance - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency 53 - Guyana Defence Force, Programme 531 - Chart of Account 6282 - Equipment Maintenance - \$24,514,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

ITEM 13 - AGENCY 53 - GUYANA DEFENCE FORCE, PROGRAMME 531 - Defence Headquarters

Question is proposed that the sum of \$2,040,000 for Agency 53 - Guyana Defence Force, Programme 531 - Chart of Account 6284 - Other - stands part of the Estimates.

The Honourable Member Mr. Norton

Mr. Aubrey C Norton: *[Interruption: 'Like you have a problem with the GD.']* ...To answer the person, I do not have a problem with the GDF, but that does not mean that we should not query properly. In fact I do believe that the GDF need far more resources than you give them. Now your quietude is welcomed.

Mde. Chairperson, could the Honourable Minister tell us if any analysis was done to determine if it makes sense to repair the old Bell or to bring a new helicopter that will give us the required service?

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister in the Ministry of Finance

Hon. Jennifer I Webster: Mde. Chairperson, yes, in response to the Honourable Member's question. An analysis was done of the existing condition of the Bell 412 Helicopter. What we are doing here ... I think all are aware that the Bell 412 Helicopter was unserviceable and was at Tacama and what we are doing here, we are basically acquiring two Roto Blades and renting an engine and bringing it to make it serviceable and we are looking at moving it from Tacama and then having technicians come and at some point in time we will look at disposal of that asset and try to acquire new one, but we have to bring it to serviceability before we can dispose of it.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Franklin

Mr. Everall N Franklin: Mde. Chairperson, the Honourable Minister Webster could have explained that a new Bell Helicopter would be about US \$5,000,000. I think that was the actual question. I think that was what the Honourable Member wanted to hear. Could the Honourable Minister state whether any alternative helicopter was sought and the price for a new helicopter that was not a Bell Helicopter? There are cheaper helicopters around.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister

Hon. Jennifer I Webster: Mde. Chairperson, in response to the question a new Bell Helicopter 412 is going to be

excess of US 10,000,000 and we are looking at options of acquiring perhaps newer version. To bring it to serviceability to have the flying hours and so on and make it somewhat serviceable for disposal, you will have to fix these two things.

Mr. Everall N Franklin: Mde. Chairperson, if the Government so desires, when they decide to buy a new helicopter for US \$10,000,000 I would like to have the contract to supply it to the Government, because I can get two for that price.

Hon. Jennifer I Webster: Mde. Chairperson, in response to that question when that decision was taken, I think it is going to be through a very competitive and transparent process. [*Noisy Interruption*]

The Chairperson: Could we have some order please?

The Honourable Member Mr. Norton

Mr. Aubrey C Norton: Mde. Chairperson, I am gaining the impression from the Honourable Minister that they are well set on a Bell 412, if that is not the case you should say to me, but isn't there the option of looking at other options that will be more useful and at the same time perform the jobs we require them to do.

The Chairperson: Honourable Minister

Hon. Jennifer I Webster: Yes, we are looking at other options.

Mr. Aubrey C Norton: Based on the analysis or the comments you are making is as if you are bent on the 412.

Hon. Jennifer I Webster: No, I should say that we are not bent on looking at the 412 only. [Noisy Interruption]

The Chairperson: Honourable Members, could we have now order.

Agency 53 - Guyana Defence Force, Programme 531 - Chart of Account 6284 - Other - \$2,040,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Mr. Carberry, I think you are late on getting on your feet.

Mr. E Lance Carberry: Mde. Chairperson, you did not recognise me before you concluded. Am I allowed to ask what I was going to ask?

The Chairperson: I put the question.

Mr. E Lance Carberry: But before you put the question I was standing, Mde. Chairperson.

The Chairperson: I did not get you. We have passed the motion already, Mr. Carberry. I am sorry

Mr. E Lance Carberry: Mde. Chairperson, you are penalising me.

The Chairperson: Mr. Carberry, I am not penalising you, but we have passed the item. I have put the question.

Mr. E Lance Carberry: I stood up before the item was completed. [*Noisy Interruption*] I was standing before the item was completed.

The Chairperson: I am sorry, I did not get you.

ITEM 13 - AGENCY 53 - GUYANA DEFENCE FORCE, PROGRAMME 531 - Defence Headquarters

Question is proposed that the sum of \$230,400,000 for Agency 53 - Guyana Defence Force, Programme 531 - Chart of Account 6294 - Other - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency 53 - Guyana Defence Force, Programme 531 - Chart of Account 6294 - Other - \$230,400,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

ITEM 14 - AGENCY 55 - SUPREME COURT, PROGRAMME 552 - Magistrates Department

Question is proposed that the sum of \$4,019,000 for Agency 55 - Supreme Court, Programme 552 - Magistrates Department - Chart of Account 6261 - Local Travel and Subsistence - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency 55 - Supreme Court, Programme 552 - Magistrates Department - Chart of Account 6261 - Local Travel and Subsistence - \$4,019,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

**ITEM 15 - AGENCY 71 - REGION 1:
BARIMA/WAINI, PROGRAMME 711 - Regional
Administration and Finance**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$2,484,000 for Agency 71 - Region 1: Barima/Waini, Programme 711 - Regional Administration and Finance - Chart of Account 6211 - Expenses Specific to the Agency - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 71 - Region 1: Barima/Waini, Programme 711 - Regional Administration and Finance - Chart of Account - 6211- Expenses Specific to the Agency - \$ 2,484,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

**ITEM 16 - AGENCY 71 - REGION 1:
BARIMA/WAINI, PROGRAMME 712 - Public Works**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$3,000,000 for Agency 71 - Region 1: Barima/Waini, Programme 712 - Public Works - Chart of Account 6231 - Fuel and Lubricants - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 71 - Region 1: Barima/Waini, Programme 712 - Public Works - Chart of Account 6231- Fuel and Lubricants - \$3,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

**ITEM 17 - AGENCY 71 - REGION 1:
BARIMA/WAINI, PROGRAMME 713 - Education
Delivery**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$1,000,000 for Agency 71 - Region 1: Barima/Waini, Programme 713 - Education Delivery - Chart of Account 6292 - Dietary - stands part of the Estimates

Mrs. Sheila VA Holder: Thank you Mde. Chairperson. I really wish that you will look over in this direction occasionally.

The question I would like to ask the Honourable Minister of Education pertains to the diet for the students. I wonder if the Minister is in a position to say whether or not the diet is reflective of what the students are used to or what is the basis of the diet?

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Local Government and Regional Development

Hon. Kellawan Lall: Mde. Chairperson, this money is being asked for to supply the amount that was supplied for earlier, to provide children with meals in three schools in the North West:

- The North West Secondary School;
- The Port Kaituma Secondary School; and
- The Moruca Secondary School.

As far as I am aware, these schools try as far as possible to utilise the resources and the produce made in those areas and more often or not these are products that the children are accustomed to in those areas.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mrs. Holder, a follow-up?

Mrs. Sheila VA Holder: Yes. I am aware that this project had been abandoned maybe because the payments for the produce purchased in the regions were not expeditious and therefore it fell apart. Can the Minister give the House the assurance that this project where they purchase of materials in the region is ongoing?

The Chairperson: Honourable Minister of Local Government and Regional Development

Hon. Kellawan Lall: Mde. Chairperson, I am not really aware of the matter that is being spoken about.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Norton

Mr. Aubrey C Norton: Just by way of comment first, I was in the region and that complaint was made to me and even though the Honourable Member tried ... Could I ask the Honourable Minister tell us how many children are in the schools and what it costs per meal per child?

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Local Government and Regional Development

Hon. Kellawan Lall: Mde. Chairperson, the North West Secondary School has eighty-four children; the Port Kaituma Secondary School has forty-four children; the Moruca Secondary has eighty-seven children; add them up and divide by \$1,000,000. *[Laughter]*

The Chairperson: Yes, Mr. Morton. Honourable Members can we have some order, please?

Mr. Aubrey C Norton: Mde. Chairperson, while he is known to be Levan Cliffe and to cheat his way out, I would expect a proper answer as a Member of Parliament representing people. *[Applause] [Noisy Interruption]*

The Chairperson: Honourable Members, could we have some order please?

The Honourable Member Mr. Fernandes, could you ask your question please?

Mr. Desmond Fernandes: Mde. Chairperson, I would like to the question: is this amount adequate in the sense that after visiting Port Kaituma, I received information that a number of businessmen were due payments on large amounts of money; also at Mabaruma there was not enough food supply for the students in the school . I want to know whether the meals supplied are adequate

Hon. Kellawan Lall: Mde. Chairperson this was the amount requested by the Region and as it says here the authorities on the ground, this is what they requested through my Ministry to the Ministry of Finance to offset their expenses.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Fernandes

Mr. Desmond Fernandes: A follow-up question: I would like to know whether this fund is to pay off the expenses due to the business community.

The Chairperson: Yes, Honourable Minister of Local Government and Regional Development .

Hon. Kellawn Lall: I do not know if this money is to pay off the business community, this money is to supplement whatever provision was made earlier in the year to meet the cost of providing students with meals; who they will pay, I really do not know.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mrs. Holder

Mrs. Sheila VA Holder: Mde. Chairperson, I would like through the Chair to request of the Minister that he investigates this matter. This is not something we pull out of a hat; it is a genuine complaint that has been received and I really would appreciate if the Minister would undertake to check this out to see whether or not it is impacting adversely on the quality of the diets the children are getting in the region.

Hon. Kellawan Lall: Mde. Chairperson, I can undertake to do that, but all the Member had to do is to give me a call.

Agency 71 - Region 1: Barima/Waini, Programme 713 - Education Delivery - Chart of Account 6292 - Dietary -

\$ 1,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

The Chairperson: We will now move to the Next item.

ITEM 18 - AGENCY 72 - REGION 2: POMEROON SUPENAAM, PROGRAMME 721 - Regional Administration and Finance

Question is proposed that the sum of \$1,025,000 for Region 1: Barima/Waini, Programme 721 - Regional Administration and Finance - Chart of Account 6211 - Expenses specific to Agency - stands part of the Estimates

Region 1: Barima/Waini, Programme 721 - Regional Administration and Finance - Chart of Account 6211 - Expenses specific to Agency - \$1,025,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 19 - AGENCY 72 - REGION 2: POMEROON SUPENAAM, PROGRAMME 724 - Education Delivery

Question is proposed that the sum of \$5,000,000 for Agency Region 1: Barima/Waini, Programme 724 - Chart of Account 6292 - Dietary - stands part of the Estimates.

The Honourable Member Mr. Norton

Mr. Aubrey C Norton: Mde. Chairperson, again I would ask the population of these schools and average cost per meal, because if we can get the average cost, we will be in a position to work out if it is adequate or not and I hope on

this occasion, I would not get the cavalier answer I got before.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Local Government and Regional Development

Hon Kellawan Lall: Mde. Chairperson, I will provide that information at a later date.

Agency 72: Region 1: Barima/Waini, Programme 724 - Chart of Account 6292 - Dietary - \$5,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

ITEM 20 - AGENCY 72 - REGION 2: POMEROON/SUPENAAM, PROGRAMME 725 - Health Services

Question is proposed that the sum of \$3,300,000 for Agency 72 - Region 2: Pomeroon/ Supenaam, Programme 725 - Health Services - stands part of the Estimates.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Franklin

Mr. Everall N Franklin: When I see septic tanks, I get sort of excited. *[Laughter]* Mde. Chairperson, I would like the Honourable Minister to break down this cost here. I see three million, three hundred and something for two trestle and septic tank. I want to know what the septic tank cost; if it is a special design. I will like to check on that.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister

Hon. Kellawan Lall: Mde. Chairperson, the construction of a water trestle at the Suddie Hospital is at a cost of \$1,600,000; the construction at the Charity Hospital is \$1,600,000 and the one in which the Member is mostly interested in, the construction of a septic tank at the Charity Hospital is \$600,000.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Franklin

Mr. Everall N Franklin: Supplementary question: I will give way.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Patterson

Mr. David Patterson: I know that the Honourable Minister is very cavalier to these things, but if you add 1.6 to 1.6, it exceeds the amount being sought by \$300,000.

The Chairperson: Mr. Patterson what is your question? Mr. Patterson, do you have a question?

Mr. David Patterson: Yes, I am trying to work out the Minister's addition and the numbers he just reported to Parliament.

The Chairperson: Honourable Minister. *[Noisy Interruption]* Honourable Members, we are breaking down again.

Mr. Everall N Franklin: Mde. Chairperson, I am just trying to assist the Minister, because what he said just now did not add up, but I think in trying to let out something

much faster than he should have, but could the Minister state if he has that information. What material this trestle was built with and how high it is? *[Laughter]* It could be a six-foot trestle, we do not know. This house wants to know.

Hon. Kellawan Lall: Mde. Chairperson, I am not aware of those details.

Mr. Everall N Franklin: Mde. Chairperson, in order to make an assessment, is \$1.6 million is adequate for a trestle; we need to know what size this trestle is and what materials it is built with. Yes, we need to get that.

The Chairperson: Honourable Minister, are you in a position to answer that question?

Hon. Kellawan Lall: Mde. Chairperson, I am not aware of the fine details that the member is asking, but I would want to presume that the people who designed this will design it in such a way for the functioning of the hospital.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Norton

Mr. Aubrey C Norton: Mde. Chairperson, could the Minister tell us what will become of the extra money based on his addition?

The Chairperson: Honourable Minister, are you in a position to answer?

Hon. Kellawan Lall: I do not wish to answer that question.

Mr. Aubrey C Norton: I thought I asked a question and I did not get an answer.

The Chairperson: The Minister refused to answer. There is nothing I can do.

Agency 72 - Region 2: Pomeroon/Supenaam, Programme 725 - Health Services \$3,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 21 - AGENCY 73 - REGION 3: POMEROON/SUPENAAM, PROGRAMME 731 - Regional Administration and Finance

Question is proposed that the sum of \$1,515,000 for Agency 73 -Region 3: Pomeroon/Supenaam, Programme 731 - Regional Administration and Finance - Chart of Account 6211 - Expenses Specific to the Agency - stands part of the Estimates.

The Honourable Member Mrs. Holder

Mrs. Sheila VA Holder: Mde. Chairperson, will the Honourable Minister indicate to the House what is the stipend and to what it has been increased?

The Chairperson: Honourable Minister

Hon. Kellawan Lall: I am not really aware of the exact amount of the increases. The original voted provision was \$4.7 million and because of the increases to the Toshaos and the persons in the regional administration, there has been a need for an additional \$1.5 million. I am not aware

of the details of what the various categories of people would have, but I can supply that.

The Chairperson: The Minister has undertaken to supply that. Perhaps he will collaborate with the Minister of Amerindian Affairs.

Agency 73 -Region 3: Pomeroon/Supenaam, Programme 731 - Regional Administration and Finance - Chart of Account 6211 - Expenses Specific to the Agency - \$1,515,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 22 - AGENCY 75 - REGION 5: MAHAICA/BERBICE, Programme 751 - Regional Administration and Finance

Question is proposed that the sum of \$1,060,000 for Agency 75 - Region 5: Mahaica/Berbice, Programme 751 Regional Administration and Finance - Chart of Account 6211 - Expenses Specific to the Agency - stands part of the Estimates

The Honourable Member Dr Norton

Dr George A Norton: Mde. Chairperson, while there are different items to deal with all the different regions, in the Remarks column there is a definite mention of the increase in stipend for the Toshaos. Here in Item 22; none is made with respect to the Toshaos. Could the Honourable Minister say how that could be taken care of?

The Chairperson: Honourable Minister

Hon. Carolyn Rodrigues Birkett: Mde. Chairperson, in Region 5 there is only one Toshao, so the increase is not that significant that you have to ask for a supplementary. It could have been met.

Agency 75 - Region 5: Mahaica/Berbice, Programme 751 - Regional Administration and Finance - Chart of Account 6211 - Expenses Specific to the Agency - \$1,060,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

ITEM 22 - AGENCY 75 - REGION 5: MAHAICA/BERBICE, Programme 751 - Regional Administration and Finance

Question is proposed that the sum of \$240,000 for Agency 75 - Region 5: Mahaica/Berbice, Programme 751 - Chart of Account 6231 - Fuel and Lubricants - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 75 - Region 5: Mahaica/Berbice, Programme 751 - Chart of Account 6231 - Fuel and Lubricants - \$240,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

ITEM 22 - AGENCY 75 - REGION 5: MAHAICA/BERBICE, Programme 751 - Regional Administration and Finance

Question is proposed that the sum of \$500,000 for Agency 75 - Region 5: Mahaica/Berbice, Programme 751 - Regional Administration and Finance - Chart of Account

6264 - Vehicle Spares and Service - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 75 - Region 5: Mahaica/Berbice, Programme 751 - Regional Administration and Finance - Chart of Account 6264 - Vehicle Spares and Service - \$500,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

ITEM 22 - AGENCY 75 - REGION 5: MAHAICA/BERBICE, Programme 751 - Regional Administration and Finance

Question is proposed that the sum of \$200,000 for Agency 75 - Region 5: Mahaica/Berbice, Programme 751 - Regional Administration and Finance - Chart of Account 6271 - Telephone Charges - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 75 - Region 5: Mahaica/Berbice, Programme 751 - Regional Administration and Finance - Chart of Account 6271 -Telephone Charges - \$200,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

ITEM 23 - AGENCY 76 - REGION 6: EAST BERBICE/CORENTYNE, PROGRAMME 761 - Regional Administration and Finance

Question is proposed that the sum \$2,300,000 for Agency 76 - Region 6: East Berbice/Corentyne, Programme 761 - Regional Administration and Finance - Chart of Account 6211 - Expenses Specific to Agency - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 76 - Region 6: East Berbice/Corentyne, Programme 761 - Regional Administration and Finance - Chart of Account 6211 - Expenses Specific to Agency - \$2,300,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 24 - AGENCY 76 - REGION 6: EAST BERBICE/CORENTYNE, PROGRAMME 763 - Public Works

Question is proposed that the sum of \$1,253,908 for Agency 76 - Region 6: East Berbice/Corentyne, Programme 763 - Public Works - Chart of Account 6281 - Security Services - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 76 - Region 6: East Berbice/Corentyne, Programme 763 - Public Works - Chart of Account 6281 - Security Services - \$1,253,908 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

We now move to the next item.

ITEM 25 - AGENCY 71 - REGION 7: CUYUNI/MAZARUNI, PROGRAMME 771 - Regional Administration and Finance

Question is proposed that the sum of \$1,820,000 for Agency 71 - Region 7: Cuyuni/Mazaruni, Programme 771 - Regional Administration and Finance - Chart of Account 6211 - Expenses Specific to Agency - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency 71 - Region 7: Cuyuni/Mazaruni, Programme 771 - Regional Administration and Finance - Chart of Account 6211 - Expenses Specific to Agency - \$1,820,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 26 - AGENCY 71 - REGION 7: CUYUNI/MAZARUNI, PROGRAMME 773 - Education Delivery

Question is proposed that the sum of \$2,777,272 for Agency 71 - Region 7: Cuyuni/Mazaruni, Programme 773 - Education Delivery - Chart of Account 6284 - Other - stands part of the Estimates

The Honourable Member Ms Amna Ally

Ms Amna Ally: Mde. Chairperson, I see in the Remarks Column to meet expenditure for salaries of VSOs, WTOs and sweeper cleaners as well as invigilators' fees. I would like to ask whether the Minister did not know that these categories exist and if he did know, why is it that these categories were not budgeted for?

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Local Government

Hon. Kellawan Lall: Not that these were not budgeted for. These are additional sums to meet some of the increases incurred during the course of the year.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mrs. Backer

Mrs. Deborah J Backer: Just a query - Minister, in the Remarks Column, I see to meet expenses for salaries of VSOs, do we pay the VSOs or is it a stipend? Should it read stipend rather than salary?

Hon. Kellawan Lall: They are given a certain sum of money. I do not know what you want to call it, salary or stipend or whatever it is.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mrs. Backer

Mrs. Deborah J Backer: There is a difference in a stipend and a salary and the query that I am asking is it that there is a mistake albeit a genuine mistake of rather than having a genuine mistake really you should have stipend there.

Hon. Kellawan Lall: I think it is a stipend.

Agency 71 - Region 7: Cuyuni/Mazaruni, Programme 773 - Education Delivery - Chart of Account 6284 - Other - \$2,777,272 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 27 - AGENCY 78 - REGION 8: POTARO/SIPARUNI, PROGRAMME 781 - Regional Administration and Finance

Question is proposed that the sum of \$1,540,000 for Agency 27 - Region 8: Potaro/Siparuni, Programme 781 - Regional Administration and Finance - Chart of Account 6211 - Expenses Specific to the Agency - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 27 - Region 8: Potaro/Siparuni, Programme 781 - Regional Administration and Finance - Chart of Account 6211 - Expenses Specific to the Agency - \$1,540,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 28 - AGENCY 78 - REGION 8: POTARO/SIPARUNI, PROGRAMME 782 - Public Works

Question is proposed that the sum of \$1,500,000 for Agency 78 - Region 8: Potaro/Siparuni, Programme 782 - Public Works - Chart of Account 6264 - Vehicle Spares and Service - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 78 - Region 8: Potaro/Siparuni, Programme 782 - Public Works - Chart of Account 6264 - Vehicle Spares and Service - \$1,500,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

ITEM 29 - AGENCY 78 - REGION 8: POTARO/SIPARUNI, PROGRAMME 783 - Education Delivery

Question is proposed that the sum of \$1,000,000 for Agency 78 - Region 8: Potaro/Siparuni, Programme 783 - Education Delivery - Chart of Account - 6231 - Fuel and Lubricants - stands part of the Estimates.

The Honourable Member Mr. Norton

Mr. Aubrey C Norton: Mde. Chairperson, when we look at this particular one, if we work it out, we can see that we end up with an average meal of \$741 per day, which when the figures given earlier you had a higher figure. Could the Minister tell me what is responsible for the disparity in the two regions? [*Interruption: 'Increased cost of living.'*] No, you missed the question; the cost of living is across the country. Could the Minister tell us what is responsible for the disparity in this one and the previous one.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister

Hon. Khellawan Lall: This additional sum being sought is to take care of sixty additional students at the Paramakatoi dormitory.

Mr. Aubrey C Norton: I do not think that the Minister is getting the question. The Minister said to me that I should work it out. I tried to work it out. Now having worked it out, I see a new one coming. I am asking him to explain the disparities between the two - between \$52 for one and \$714 per year.

Hon. Kellawan Lall: I am not in a position at the moment to give any explanation for that.

Mr. Aubrey C Norton: That is better

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mrs. Holder.

Mrs. Sheila VA Holder: Mde. Chairperson, to the Honourable Minister, I would like to say that I am fully aware that there is a problem existing at Paramakatoi,

where the dietary programme with the purchase of local produce has been abandoned, because of non-payment of the produce to the owners. I wonder if the Minister will undertake to investigate the possibility of re-introducing this programme that is extremely beneficial to the residents and the students alike. What happens now is that rice and flour have to be shipped in and flown in to Paramakatoi to feed the students, when in fact the farmers there could benefit from this programme.

The Chairperson: Mrs. Holder, do you have a question?

Mrs. Sheila VA Holder: Will the Minister please undertake to give the assurance that he will undertake to investigate reintroducing such a programme?

Hon. Kellawan Lall: Mde. Chairperson, I will undertake to investigate the matter.

The Chairperson: The Minister has given the undertaking to investigate the matter.

Agency 78 - Region 8: Potaro/Siparuni, Programme 783 - Education Delivery - Chart of Account - 6231 - Fuel and Lubricants - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

We will now move to the next item.

ITEM 30 - AGENCY 78 - REGION 8: POTARO/SIPARUNI, PROGRAMME 784 - Health Services

Question is proposed that the sum of \$1,000,000 for Agency 78 - Region 8: Potaro/Siparuni, Programme 784 - Health Services - Chart of Account 6231 - Fuel and Lubricants - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency 78 - Region 8: Potaro/Siparuni, Programme 784 - Health Services - Chart of Account 6231 - Fuel and Lubricants - \$1,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

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ITEM 31 - AGENCY 79 - REGION 9: UPPER TAKUTU/UPPER ESSEQUIBO, PROGRAMME 791 - Regional Administration and Finance

Question is proposed that the sum of \$3,491,000 for Agency 79 - Region 9: Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo, Programme 791 - Regional Administration and Finance - Chart of Account 6211 - Expenses Specific to the Agency - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 79 - Region 9: Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo, Programme 791 - Regional Administration and Finance - Chart of Account 6211 - Expenses Specific to the Agency - \$3,491,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 32 - AGENCY 80 - REGION 10: UPPER DEMERARA/UPPER BERBICE, PROGRAMME 801 - Regional Administration and Finance

Question is proposed that the sum of \$2,112,000 for Agency 80 - Region 10: Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice, Programme 801 - Regional Administration and Finance - Chart of Account 6211 - Expenses Specific to the Agency - stands part of the Estimates.

The Honourable Member Ms Vanessa Kissoon

Ms Vanessa Kissoon: Mde. Chairperson, could the Honourable Minister say how this amount was distributed?

Hon. Kellawan Lall: I am not very clear as to what the question is?

Ms Vanessa Kissoon: Was it distributed equally?

Hon. Kellawan Lall: I suppose do.

Agency 80 - Region 10: Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice, Programme 801 - Regional Administration and Finance - Chart of Account 6211 - Expenses Specific to the Agency - \$2,112,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairperson: We will now consider the next item

ITEM 33 - AGENCY 80 - REGION 10: UPPER DEMERARA/UPPER BERBICE, PROGRAMME 802 - Public Works

Question is proposed that the sum of \$1,570,000 for Agency 80 - Region 10: Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice,

Programme 802 - Public Works - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency 80 - Region 10: Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice, Programme 802 - Public Works - \$1,570,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 34 - AGENCY 80 - REGION 10: UPPER DEMERARA/UPPER BERBICE, PROGRAMME 803 - Education Delivery

Question is proposed that the sum of \$2,325,000 for Agency 80 - Region 10: Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice, Programme 803 - Chart of Account 6284 - Other - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency 80 - Region 10: Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice, Programme 803 - Chart of Account 6284 - Other - \$2,325,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

We will now move to the Capital Estimates.

Hon. Clement J Rohee: Mde. Chairperson, could I suggest that we forego the break and work through until we complete this.

The Chairperson: We have another one.

Hon. Clement J Rohee: We have Financial Paper No. 4

The Chairperson: Yes, we have another paper.

Hon. Clement J Rohee: I think we have completed one of the papers.

The Chairperson: We are now on the Capital Estimates, which have five items.

Hon. Clement J Rohee: Since we are approaching the hour of four, I thought I should pre-empt your requesting the view of the House on what we should do.

The Chairperson: What do you think we should do? Should we take the suspension now? [Pause] Honourable Minister of Home Affairs, I think we will take the break, because we have the Capital Expenditure on Paper No. 3, we would have work through, but then we have the whole of Paper No. 4 and the way things have been going, we may come back for a short time.

Shall we conclude the Capital Expenditure or shall we leave it? Let me see; we might as well leave it after the break, because it is now four o'clock.

Assembly Resumed.

The Sitting is now suspended for half an hour

16:00H - SUSPENSION OF SITTING

16:32H - RESUMPTION OF SITTING

In Committee of Supply

At the break, we had stopped at the end of the Current Expenditure; we will now move to the Capital Expenditure.

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SECTION 'B' CAPITAL ESTIMATES

ITEM 1 - AGENCY 13 - MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT - CAPITAL EXPENDITURE - Project Code 1900500

Question is proposed that the sum of \$6,957,335 for Agency 13 - Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 1900500 - Urban Development Programme - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 13 - Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 1900500 - Urban Development Programme - \$6,957,335 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 2 - AGENCY 21 - MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE - CAPITAL EXPENDITURE - Project Code 1700800

Question is proposed that the sum of \$27,000,000 for Agency 21 - Ministry of Agriculture - Capital Expenditure

- Project Code 1700800 - Rural Support Group - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 21 - Ministry of Agriculture - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 1700800 - Rural Support Group - \$27,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 3 -AGENCY 44 - MINISTRY OF CULTURE YOUTH AND SPORT -CAPITAL EXPENDITURE - Project Code 1902000

Question is proposed that the sum of \$152,397,000 for Agency 21 - Ministry of Culture Youth and Sport - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 1902000 - National Stadium - stands part of the Estimates.

The Honourable Member Mr. Winston Murray

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, could the Honourable Minister tell the National Assembly whether these additional works for which the sum of \$152+ million is being sought are part of the works for completion of the National Stadium?

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Culture Youth and Sport

Hon. Dr Frank CS Anthony: This is for the installation of the lights to do the foundation works and to do the lights. In the original concept of the Stadium, this was also part of what should have been in the Stadium. So now we are proceedings with these works.

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, if that is the case, would the Honourable Minister then agree that the project identified in Project Profile 136 under National Stadium is misleading in that it says that the sum that was being budgeted of \$270,000,000 was for the completion of the stadium and therefore that was misleading.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Culture Youth and Sport.

Hon. Dr Frank CS Anthony: As I said, this is for the installation of the lights to do the foundation to install the lights. I am not sure that I can answer the Honourable Member's question, because I do not think that is misleading.

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, is the Honourable Minister aware that nowhere in these Estimates - in the Capital provision in the Estimates proper - is there any identification of foundation works and installation of lights listed as part of the process for completion, and would he not agree that to the extent that Profile 136 makes no provision for foundation works and installation of lights to a tune that is more than fifty percent of the project as defined in the Estimates amounts to withholding of information for the National Assembly in that there is no project profile defined the budget as presented to us which identified these works, and even now there is no possibility of us garnering the information that is necessary to help us to see this is a project context?

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport.

Hon. Dr Frank CS Anthony: Again Mde. Chairperson, as I said this is what it says, it is for the installation of the lights and for the foundation work. If the Honourable Member has a problem with that ... I do not know.

Mr. Winston S Murray: I respectfully suggest that to treat this Parliament with such contempt is unacceptable that I am simply seeking to inquire of the Minister where can we find since the project profile is the place where I sensed to find it or in the budget, where could we find information that will enlighten this National Assembly, an enlightenment to which I think the National Assembly is entitled to garner information about this so-called provision of foundation works and installation to the extent of more than fifty percent of the originally voted sum. Are we not owed a proper explanation Madame?

The Chairperson: Honourable Minister, would you care to supply that information.

Hon. Dr Frank Anthony: Mde. Chairperson, I will supply that information to the Honourable Member later.

Agency 21 - Ministry of Culture Youth and Sport - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 1902000 - National Stadium - \$152,397,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

**ITEM 4 - AGENCY 55 - SUPREME COURT -
CAPITAL EXPENDITURE - Project Code 2501400**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$6,700,000 for Agency 55 - Supreme Court - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 2501400 - Furniture and Equipment - stands part of the Estimates.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Murray

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, could the Honourable Minister explain why purchase of furniture and equipment for Court of Appeal Judicial Service Commission and Library could not have awaited a proper supplementary provision; were there no seats for them to sit on and no equipment for them to work with that would have prevented a raid on the Contingencies Fund to the extent of \$6.7 million rather than await a normal supplementary provision?

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Finance

Hon. Dr Ashni K Singh: Mde. Chairperson, the amount provided for here \$6.7 million was as the narrative indicates to purchase furniture and equipment for the Court of Appeal and in addition for the Secretariat used by the JSC and the Library. These items and the amount associated therewith were required to bring into a state of completion of this project.

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, it strikes me ... would the Minister agree that in planning to rehabilitate

the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal and the Judicial Service Commission's Secretariat and Library as part of the planning, we would have made provision for purchase of furniture and equipment for these entities and that is the question whether these are necessary things to have been brought to this Parliament through a Contingencies Fund approach.

Hon. Dr Ashni K Singh: Mde. Chairperson, I would say in response to the question, if we had perfect foresight then indeed we would have included these items. What I would say is that we did provide in the Budget an amount of \$8.3 million, which was found not to be adequate to meet the requirements, hence these additional allocations.

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, is the aware that he came earlier in the year (well not he) but the relevant Minister would have been the Attorney General, for a supplementary provision of approximately \$5 million. Why couldn't the Honourable Minister at that time had had a proper and thorough assessment of the needs of these entities and brought the request then in the normal process of seeking supplementary provisions rather than I say again raiding Contingencies Fund, which is not the purpose for which these funds are intended?

Hon. Dr Ashni K Singh: Mde. Chairperson, by way of clarification, the Honourable Member draws attention to the fact that an amount of \$4.498 million (to be precise) was sought previously that amount provided primarily for the acquisition of furniture and equipment for the Fort

Wellington Magistrate's Court. I do not believe that there is much more that I can add on this issue.

Agency 55 - Supreme Court - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 2501400 - Furniture and Equipment - \$6,700,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 5 - AGENCY 76 - REGION 6: EAST BERBICE/CORENTYNE - CAPITAL EXENDITURE - Project Code 2504300

Question is proposed that the sum of \$3,327,972 for Agency 76 - Region 6: East Berbice/Corentyne - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 2504300 - Furniture and Equipment - Health - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency 76 - Region 6: East Berbice/Corentyne - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 2504300 - Furniture and Equipment - Health - \$3,327,972 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairperson: Honourable Members, this completes consideration of all the items on Financial Paper No. 3/2007.

Is the period 31 December 2007?

Hon. Dr Ashni K Singh: Mde. Chairperson, I assume you are seeking a clarification?

The Chairperson: No, no, I am just seeking that the supplementary estimates ...

Hon. Dr Ashni K Singh: It is in relation to the period from 21 November to 21 December 2007. It is on the front page of Financial Paper No. 3/2007.

The Chairperson: Oh, I see, yes that is true.

Motion put and agreed to

Assembly Resumed

The Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Finance

Hon. Dr Ashni K Singh: Mde. Speaker, I beg to report that the Committee of Supply has considered the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 3/2007 without amendment and I now move that the Assembly doth agree with the Committee in its Resolution.

Question put and agreed to.

Motion carried.

ITEM 2 - CONSIDERATION OF FINANCIAL PAPER NO. 4/2007

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this Assembly approve of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No.4/2007 - Supplementary Estimates (Current and Capital) totalling \$7,919,310,524 for the period 2007-12-31.

Assembly in Committee of Supply

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Finance

Hon. Dr Ashni K Singh: Mde. Chairperson, in accordance with Article 171 (2) of the Constitution, I signify that the Cabinet has recommended for consideration by the Assembly the motion for the approval of the proposals set out in Financial paper No. 4 of 2007 Supplementary Estimates (Current and Capital) for the period ended 31 December 2007 totalling \$7,939,310,524 and I now move the Motion.

Question proposed

The Chairperson: We will now consider the paper as usual. The Items will be taken (as in this case) we only have current expenditure.

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SECTION 'A' - CURRENT ESTIMATES

**ITEM 1 - AGENCY 01 - OFFICE OF THE
PRESIDNET -, PROGRAMME 011 - Head Office
Administration**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$40,000,000 for Agency 01 - Office of the President, Programme 011 - Head Office Administration - Chart of Account 6302 - Training (Including Scholarships) - stands part of the Estimates

The Honourable Member Mr. Murray

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, could the Honourable Minister inform the National Assembly as to how many students went on that flight?

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister in the Ministry of Finance

Hon. Jennifer I Webster: Mde. Chairperson, in respond to the question asked by the Honourable Member Mr. Murray, the answer is 101 students

Mr. Winston S Murray: Personally if that is so that is approximately \$2,000 per student one way. Could the Minister tell this National Assembly whether it was not possible to get a one-way commercial flight between here and Cuba for students for less then US \$2,000 per head?

Hon. Jennifer I Webster: The Government of Guyana did indeed contact Caribbean Airlines -that was the first option - to transport these students to Cuba. However, we had requested a charter one way. Caribbean Airlines because of the Christmas period and their bookings, they were unable to meet such a request as such the Government had no other choice, but to seek an alternative and to charter an aircraft and actually it was done in two flights - two batches.

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, this is even more worrying. Did we charter one aircraft to do two flights; is that what this is suggesting?

Hon. Jennifer I Webster: Mde. Chairperson, the Government of Guyana is also responsible for taking the students to Cuba and whatever personal effects they have for the beginning period of their tuition. So in taking into account the charter of an aircraft, you also have to look at taking their books and their baggage, because they are going for a seven-year period and luggage, et cetera.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Murray

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, the Honourable Minister said in her first answer that they has to send two flights, I am asking her whether it is one aircraft with two flights or two different aircrafts, because this is an enormous amount of money. Why could it not have been possible to put them all in one flight?

Hon. Jennifer I Webster: Mde. Chairperson, I understand that it is one aircraft. Actually the last flight leaves this evening and I think this sum also entails the payment of landing fees and all of that to the Cuban authorities.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mrs. Backer

Mrs. Deborah J Backer: I am personally aware and I think it is an affront to the National Assembly that today two flights were scheduled to leave, one is leaving this afternoon or may just have left and the other flight they do not know when it is leaving, because I know two students who are going to Cuba and they each are going with a backpack ...

The Chairperson: What is your question, Honourable Member?

Mrs. Deborah J Backer: ... so I am saying it is inaccurate for the Minister to come here and say that both flights are leaving today. That is not true.

The Chairperson: Honourable Member, I thought the Minister said that one flight was leaving.

Mrs. Deborah J Backer: Oh, the Honourable Minister wants to clarify.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of the Public Service

Hon. Jennifer RA Westford: That is grossly inaccurate what the Honourable member is saying.

Mrs. Deborah J Backer: What?

Hon. Jennifer RA Westford: There are two flights.

Mrs. Deborah J Backer: Yes

Hon. Jennifer RA Westford: As a matter of fact both flights were supposed to leave today. Unfortunately they have grounded one of the flights, because they are saying that there will be too many flying hours by the pilot of the second flight. So one flight is leaving tonight at 9.00 pm and the people are not taking backpacks. Fifty students are leaving tonight with their full luggage. The other flight is going to be leaving on the 6th of this month. So there is

nothing about people not knowing when the other flight is going. The other reason why we cannot send the students by the commercial flight; there is no commercial flight that we can get all of those students to leave at the same time to arrive in Cuba at the same time. Last year we managed to get Caribbean airline to take them to as far as Trinidad. After Trinidad we could not get them further from Trinidad into Cuba together. They started to go in by fives and fours. The Cuban authority said that they will not tolerate that, because they have to pick up all those students at the airport to transport them to a place called the Isle of Piles which is very far away. So they have requested that all of the students arrive at the same time in Cuba.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Murray

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, may I ask of the Honourable Minister from which company re these planes being chartered.

The Chairperson: I do not know which of the two ministers will undertake to reply. Minister Webster.

Hon. Jennifer I Webster: Mde. Chairperson, I will undertake to provide that in writing.

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, is the Minister really saying that she is sending all these students to Cuba on chartered flight and she does not even know the name of the company whose aircraft she is chartering? No wonder we are hearing another Minister is saying

about too many flying hours; all kinds of risks and these are things that are playing with Guyanese lives and we should be aware at least which is the company we are chartering. I am rather surprised and I ask again could the Honourable Minister get this information for the National Assembly with speed and despatch?

The Chairperson: I do not know if the Honourable Minister Dr Westford, do you want to try and answer Mr. Murray?

Hon. Dr Jeniifer RA Webster: Those aircrafts are Brazilian aircrafts from the Meta Air Company [24:20] They are being handled through the Roraima air services in Guyana. Mde. Chairperson for the benefit for Members in this House, we had public tender out there. The reason we cannot get any other airline and it is difficult to get; we are speaking about Cuba and we have had one experience with North American, who ventured to take up the offer and thereafter they were grounded by the State Department of the US and that is the problem the airlines are suffering.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Norton

Mr. Aubrey C Norton: Could the Honourable Minister tell this House if in the light of the level of cooperation between Cuba and Guyana, what was the opportunity taken to see what are the possibilities taken to have Cubana do it and what cost it will be?

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of the Public Service

Hon. Dr Jennifer RA Westford: Mde. Chairperson, I do not have that letter in my person at this point in time, but we did, in the first instance we did ask the Cubans to provide that transportation for us; we were paying for it exactly the same price that we were paying to any other airline. Unfortunately they told us that they could not have done that flight once again on 31 of December after we were told about the difficulties with the second aircraft, we once again asked the Cubans to provide an aircraft for us at the same cost or whatever cost they would have come up with, because they were telling us about fuel and a lot of expenses. Again they told us that they could not have provided that flight, but they were given the first and the last option of doing so.

The Chairperson: Yes, Honourable Member Mr.s Backer

Mrs. Deborah J Backer: Thank you. Could the Honourable Minister indicate whether these two batches of students, who are going are batches of students who were awarded scholarships for the 2007/2008 academic year and if they are how does that delay, which is now of six months or at least an entire term, how will they make up that delay?

The Chairperson: The Minister of Public Service.

Hon. Dr Jennifer RA Westford: Yes, they are the very students for the 2007/2008 scholarship batch. Like the delay we had last year and that delay was when they were building the new faculty; all that happens is that their

vacation time is cut. They do not get vacations so they make up with their vacations.

Agency 01 - Office of the President, Programme 011 - Head Office Administration - Chart of Account 6302 - Training (Including Scholarships) - \$40,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairperson: We will now move to the next item

ITEM 2 - AGENCY 03 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE, PROGRAMME 031 - Ministry Administration

Question is proposed that the sum of \$636,000,000 for Agency 03 - Ministry of Finance, Programme 031 - Ministry Administration - Chart of Account 6272 - Electricity Charges - stands part of the Estimates.

The Honourable Member Mr. Murray

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, could the Honourable Minister kindly inform the National Assembly as to whether this sum of \$636,000,000 represents all outstanding arrears to the GPL. That is one and two could he also inform the National Assembly over what period these arrears were owed and accumulated.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Finance

Hon. Dr Ashni K Singh: Mde. Chairperson, through you and in response to the question, I would say that we are in

the ongoing process of reconciling particularly with the agencies that are large consumers of electricity. I would say that at this stage the most recent estimate of amounts outstanding to GPL is in the vicinity of the amount that has been requested, but like I say particularly in the agencies that are large consumers of electricity or agencies that have numerous meters for electricity such as for example the Ministry of Education that might have several schools, et cetera, or other agencies that might have several locations. There is an ongoing process of reconciliation, updating of records on both sides, but the amount does represent the latest estimate of arrears owing to GPL. In relation to the period which these arrears would have been accumulated, I would say that obviously as time progresses electricity is consumed, bills are paid, et cetera, and so in some sense it is perhaps I would hesitate to suggest that it is easy to say this amount will go to pay electricity that was consumed in a particular period of time, but I would say that based on the billings that we would have received during the course of 2007 and based on the estimates (like I say) that were coming out of this process of reconciliation this reflects the amount that is outstanding.

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, I noted the Minister very skilfully avoided giving any specificity to the period of arrears and he has done well at it, but I just wanted to ask whether the Minister would agree that government is a large consumer of electricity from GPL and that if and when Government goes into arrears this affects the cash flow situation of GPL and probably the

cost of interest on money that it will have to pay given that it probably has to write cheques and whether efforts are being made as in the case of the normal consumer being required to pay these monies as they become due and payable, and could the Minister say whether in fact any ministry or agency electricity has been cut off the way a normal consumer has been for a lack of payment.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Finance

Hon. Dr Ashni K Singh: Mde. Chairperson, I would say that the Government is a responsible customer of GPL and is working diligently as is evidenced indeed by our approach to the National Assembly this afternoon is indeed committed to making every effort to ensuring that our electricity bills are paid in a timely manner.

Mr. Winston S Murray: Well Mde. Chairperson, the Minister begs a question. If the electricity sums are paid the time they are demanded, then it is not a question of arrears, but you say to meet outstanding electricity charges, which give the impression of arrears, Sir. So I do not see the correlation of between what you say and what is implied here.

Hon. Dr Ashni K Singh: Mde. Chairperson, I do not wish to nit-pick over words. One always has in some sense - every electricity consumer has in some sense - an amount outstanding to GPL to the extent that bills are submitted and paid with a lag. So to the extent that bills are issued and paid with a lag, there is always an amount outstanding, but like I said, we are also in the process of ensuring that

reconciliations are done to ensure that if there are amounts outstanding by Government agencies are cleared.

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson that is a smart answer. None of us interprets a bill that we receive payable by a certain date, if it is paid by that date as treating with an arrear. Is the Minister aware that that is the normal interpretation put to bills and the inference here is that the Government agencies have not been paying in a timely manner and therefore what they are paying now is defined as arrears? They are not paying in response to the bills as submitted.

Hon. Dr Ashni K Singh: Mde. Chairperson that is not the case. Government has been paying its electricity bills in a timely manner.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mrs. Holder

Mrs. Sheila VA Holder: Thank you Mde. Chairperson. I am going to ask the Honourable Minister a very easy question. Has any Government Ministry experienced disconnection at the hands of GPL?

Hon. Dr Ashni K Singh: Mde. Chairperson, I am aware that more than one Government agency would have received threat of disconnection. I can assure you that I am aware of more than one instance where Government agencies would have been in receipt of threat of disconnection. In the event for some reason their bills were not paid in a timely manner and immediately upon

such a threat having been received the situation is being remedied.

The Chairperson: Honourable Leader of the Opposition

Mr. Robert RC Corbin: Mde. Chairperson, I am no economist, but having regard to the draconian increases recently by GPL, does the Minister not see that the \$636,000,000, which the Government failed to pay GPL could have contributed to GPL serious financial situation causing them to raise these tariffs in such a draconian way.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Finance

Hon. Dr Ashni K Singh: Mde. Chairperson, I do not agree with the assertion made.

Agency 03 - Ministry of Finance, Programme 031 - Ministry Administration - Chart of Account 6272 - Electricity Charges - \$636,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairperson: We will now go to the next Item.

ITEM 2 - AGENCY 03 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE, PROGRAMME 031 - Ministry Administration

Question is proposed that the sum of \$341,000,000 for Agency 03 - Ministry of Finance, Programme 031 - Ministry Administration - Chart of Account 6273 - Water Charges - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 03 - Ministry of Finance, Programme 031 - Ministry Administration - Chart of Account 6273 - Water Charges - \$341,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 3 - AGENCY 03 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE, PROGRAMME 032 - Government Accounting Administration

Question is proposed that the sum of \$19,806,883 for Agency 03 - Ministry of Finance, Programme 032 - Government Accounting Administration - Chart of Account 6294 - Other - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 03 - Ministry of Finance, Programme 032 - Government Accounting Administration - Chart of Account 6294 - Other - \$19,806,883 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

ITEM 4 - AGENCY 41 - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, PROGRAMME 415 - Education Delivery

Question is proposed that the sum of \$36,000,000 for Agency 41 - Ministry of Education, Programme 415 - Education Delivery - Chart of Account 6242 - Maintenance of Buildings - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency 41 - Ministry of Education, Programme 415 - Education Delivery - Chart of Account 6242 - Maintenance of Buildings - \$36,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

We will now move to the next item

ITEM 5 - AGENCY 46 - GEORGETOWN PUBLIC HOSPITAL CORPORATION, PROGRAMME 461 - Public Hospital

Question is proposed that the sum of \$60,000,000 for Agency 46 - Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation, Programme 461 - Public Hospital - Chart of Account 6221 - Drugs and Medical Supplies - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency 46 - Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation, Programme 461 - Public Hospital - Chart of Account 6221 - Drugs and Medical Supplies - \$60,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 6 - AGENCY 47 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH, PROGRAMME 474 - Regional and Clinical Services

Question is proposed that the sum of \$300,000,000 for Agency 47 - Ministry of Health, Programme 474 - Regional and Clinical Services - Chart of Account 6221 - Drugs and Medical Supplies - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 47 - Ministry of Health, Programme 474 - Regional and Clinical Services - Chart of Account 6221 - Drugs and Medical Supplies - \$300,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 7 - AGENCY 48 - MINISTRY OF LABOUR, HUMAN SERVICES AND SOCIAL SECURITY, PROGRAMME 482 - Social Services

Question is proposed that the sum of \$201,000,000 for Agency 48 - Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security, Programme 482 - Social Services - Chart of Account 6343 - Old Age Pensions and Social Assistance- stands part of the Estimates

The Honourable Member Mrs. Holder

Mrs. Sheila VA Holder: Mde. Chairperson, could the Honourable Minister give us an indication as to how many pensioners have been in receipt of this facility?

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Human Services

Hon. Priya D Manickchand: In 2006, there were in excess of 36,000 pensioners on the pensioners' role. A person is entitled to the water waiver if he or she is a pensioner and the property is in that pensioner's name. In excess of 12,677 persons are in receipt of the water waiver for 2006.

Agency 48 - Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security, Programme 482 - Social Services - Chart of Account 6343 - Old Age Pensions and Social Assistance - stands part of the Estimates.

The Chairperson: We will now go to the next Item

ITEM 8 - AGENCY 53 - GUYANA DEFENCE FORCE, PROGRAMME 531 - Head Quarters

Question is proposed that the sum of \$2,500,000 for Agency 53 - Guyana Defence Force, Programme 531 - Head Quarters - Chart of Account 6242 - Maintenance of Buildings - stands part of the Estimates

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Norton

Mr. Aubrey C Norton: Mde. Chairperson, I note here to meet the cost of expanded operations, it is not new buildings. What it is that would have caused them not to know that they need to maintain those buildings even without the expanded operations, because they are not new buildings. If it is new buildings with new operations, I can understand, but if you have these buildings, you have to maintain them whether you expand the operation or not. What is it that is responsible?

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister in the Ministry of Finance

Hon. Jennifer I Webster: Mde. Chairperson, I have been advised that the sum being requested here is required to urgently rehabilitate one of the buildings at the base camp where they are expanding for security purposes - conducting security operations in the interior .

Agency 53 - Guyana Defence Force, Programme 531 - Head Quarters - Chart of Account 6242 - Maintenance of Buildings - \$2,500,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 8 - AGENCY 53 - GUYANA DEFENCE FORCE, PROGRAMME 531 - Head Quarters

Question is proposed that the sum of \$5,000,000 for Agency 53 - Guyana Defence Force, Programme 531 - Head Quarters - Chart of Account 6242 Vehicle Spares and Services - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency 53 - Guyana Defence Force, Programme 531 - Head Quarters - Chart of Account 6242 Vehicle Spares and Services - \$5,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 8 - AGENCY 53 - GUYANA DEFENCE FORCE, PROGRAMME 531 - Head Quarters

Question is proposed that the sum of \$40,000,000 for Agency 53 - Guyana Defence Force, Programme 531 - Head Quarters - Chart of Account 6265 - Other Transport, Travel and Postage - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 53 - Guyana Defence Force, Programme 531 - Head Quarters - Chart of Account 6265 - Other Transport, Travel and Postage - \$40,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

ITEM 8 - AGENCY 53 - GUYANA DEFENCE FORCE, PROGRAMME 531 - Head Quarters

Question is proposed that the sum of \$44,272,000 for Agency 53 - Guyana Defence Force, Programme 531 - Head Quarters - Chart of Account 6282 - Equipment Maintenance - stands part of the Estimates

The Chairperson: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition

Mr. Robert HO Corbin: Mde. Chairperson, generally I never asked questions on the military, because I believe as a protocol these are general security matters, but certainly when I see under this item cost of repairs to the Bell 412 helicopter, it does ring a bell, because this helicopter in the past is not being used strictly for security and military operations. We heard of the army entering into commercial transactions, chartering and so on. So it is not really a military question. What I want to know is the location of these Bell 412 helicopter; if it does not breach any national security code and whether it is true that one of these helicopters have been down somewhere in the interior for a long time without an attempt to move it from that position, deteriorating. So I would be happy to hear whether we are approving money here for this helicopter that is somewhere in the interior for the longest while deteriorating.

The Chairperson: Honourable Leader of the Opposition, we have extensive question and answering period on this, but perhaps Minister Webster will respond.

Hon. Jennifer I Webster: In response to the question asked by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, this helicopter has been down at base camp Tacama. I think what we are doing now which I alluded to earlier, at least try to bring the aircraft to some amount of serviceability.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Franklin

Mr. Everall N Franklin: I would just like to ask Minister Webster if the army's core of engineers are still active and if in any way some of the work that I see becoming contractible if the army's core of engineers have any input in some of these headings here.

Hon. Jennifer I Webster: Yes, the army's core of engineers are involved with some additional help from their counterparts in Jamaica.

Agency 53 - Guyana Defence Force, Programme 531 - Head Quarters - Chart of Account 6282 - Equipment Maintenance - \$44,272,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 8 - AGENCY 53 - GUYANA DEFENCE FORCE, PROGRAMME 531 - Head Quarters

Question is proposed that the sum of \$150,000,000 for Agency 53 - Guyana Defence Force, Programme 531 - Head Quarters - Chart of Account 6294 - Other - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency 53 - Guyana Defence Force, Programme 531 - Head Quarters - Chart of Account 6294 - Other - \$150,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

The Chairperson: We will now move to the next item

ITEM 9 - AGENCY 74 - REGION 4: DEMERARA/MAHAICA, PROGRAMME 744 - Education Delivery

Question is proposed that the sum of \$13,999,395 for Agency 74 - Region 4: Demerara/Mahaica, Programme 744 - Education Delivery - Chart of Account 6242 - Maintenance of Buildings - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 74 - Region 4: Demerara/Mahaica, Programme 744 - Education Delivery - Chart of Account 6242 - Maintenance of Buildings - \$13,999, 395 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

**ITEM 9 - AGENCY 74 - REGION 4:
DEMERRARA/MAHAICA, PROGRAMME 744 -
Education Delivery**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$4,520,000 for Agency 74 - Region 4: Demerara/Mahaica, Programme 744 - Education Delivery - Chart of Account 6255 - Maintenance of Other Infrastructure - stands part of the Estimates.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mrs. Backer.

Mrs. Deborah J Backer: Mde. Chairperson, Chart of Account 6242 speaks to pay for emergency maintenance of schools and then Chart of Account 6255 which is a provision of \$4,520,000 to meet additional cost associated with the maintenance of other infrastructure. For the Benefit of the House, I will be grateful if the Minister could indicate to us the infrastructure involved that you are going to do maintenance to.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Local Government and Regional Development.

Hon. Kellawan Lall: Mde. Chairperson, the other infrastructures refer to some work to be done: filling of yards; the construction of sanitary blocks; guard huts; that kind of additional work dealing with schools.

Agency 74 - Region 4: Demerara/ Mahaica, Programme 744 - Education Delivery - Chart of Account 6255 - Maintenance of Other Infrastructure - \$4,520,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairperson: We will now move to the next item.

ITEM 10 - AGENCY 74 - REGION 4: DEMERARA/MAHAICA, PROGRAMME 745 - Health Services

Question is proposed that the sum of \$6,000,000 for Agency 74 - Region 4: Demerara/Mahaica, Programmes 745 - Health Services - Chart of Account 6242 - Maintenance of Buildings - stands part of the Estimates.

The Honourable Member Mrs. Backer

Mrs. Deborah J Backer: Mde. Chairperson, could the Honourable Minister indicate whether the repairs to doctors' quarters; is it the doctors' quarters located at Waterloo and Quamina Streets?

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Local Government and Regional Development

Hon. Kellawan Lall: This money is in addition to the \$9,000,000 budgeted originally to repair doctors' quarters at:

- Kurukururu
- Golden Grove
- Cane Grove
- Nabaclis
- Enterprise and
- Lusignan

Agency 74 - Region 4: Demerara/Mahaica, Programmes 745 - Health Services - Chart of Account 6242 - Maintenance of Buildings - \$6,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

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The Chairperson: We will now move to the next Section

SECTION 'B' CAPITAL ESTIMATES

ITEM 1 - AGENCY 02 - OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER - CAPITAL EXPENDITURE, Project Code 2601100

Question is proposed that the sums of \$777,406 (Specific) and \$700,000,000 (Local) for Agency 02 - Office of the Prime Minister - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 2601100 - Electrification Programme - stands part of the Estimates

The Honourable Member Mr. Murray

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, is the Honourable Minister aware that against an original voted provision of \$500,000,000, we now have supplementary provisions totalling four times that amount without any project profile indicating for purposes of transparency and accountability to this National Assembly how it is that these monies are to be spent, and would he further not agree that this is the most opaque way of dealing with such large expenditures in that you withhold information from the National Assembly at the time of the Budget by declaring a sum of \$500,000,000 and then you bring additional provisions of \$2 billion without any accompanying project profile. So you do a slight of hand; would you not agree that this is a slight of hand you are perpetrating on this Honourable House.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Transport and Hydraulics

Hon. BH Robeson Benn: Mde. Chairperson, I want to object to the inference of slight of hand with respect to this matter. We are aware that more or less a crisis was declared with respect to electricity supply in the country that some difficulties were discerned; that some actions

were taken at the level of the Government; that the President himself got involved with respect to certain interventions and that a statement was made to which it was said ... in fact I think it was said that we will have a black Christmas or a bleak Christmas. We had to have had the specific and rapid intervention to be able to ensure the Guyanese public to have their level of generation capacity in the country at a very sensitive time, when there would be peak demands on the electricity generation facilities. And this simply had to be done. I think the Government moved quickly when it was aware of the situation to the fullest extent and took the requisite action. The result was that we purchase five two megawatts caterpillar generators and four transformers 2.5 mega volt amperes transformers at a cost of about G\$777,000,000. As I said the procurement was to satisfy the country's electricity generation needs and to assure a stable electricity supply particularly over the Christmas time, which we just achieved. It was achieved. Intervention resulted in our achieving the objective stated.

We have also had to finance activities relating to loss reduction components under the Unserved Areas Electrification Programme and this is where we are tempted to use pre-paid meters as a measure to reduce commercial losses and in addition there is some counterpart funding to some \$200,000,000. So local funding for those two things is \$700,000,000 in total. There is no slight of hand here; we had to take action and the action was taken at all levels; responsible sustainable action was taken and we have had the results. *[Applause]*

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Murray

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, would the Honourable Minister not agree that bad planning and poor maintenance are contributory factors to creating emergency needs and that when we create such emergency needs, would he not agree that very often we cannot get and do not get the best buy band for our buck [50:25] , because we have to buy off the shelf without lead time and buy poor consumers of gasoline - high consuming engines, because they want to get them off the shelf at short time whereby increasing the cost of generation to the Guyanese. Is it any wonder then Mr. Minister that the rates have to go up and we have to pay for all these inefficiencies? And could the Minister tell us, because he mentioned commercial losses, by what percentage he has actually cut commercial losses in the distribution system, because I believe not cutting has been done?

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Transport and Hydraulics

Hon. BH Robeson Benn: Mde. Chairperson, let me say first, as I stated before, when we became aware that action had to be taken, condign action was taken and we had the result.

With respect to the issues of the purchasing and bad planning and so on, of course it has to all be related to the information you had at the time to take the type of action that was necessary. Comparatively I would say we had purchases of these generators from Ring power [51:46] in

Florida, which is indeed the largest caterpillar dealer in the United States of America and the price that they quoted was comparative to those prices given by MACORP for similar module, but which only had a lower output of 1.6 megawatts. So I think in terms of the purchases, we did quite well.

With respect to the four transformers, which were purchased from Energy International also from Florida at US \$32,000 each. There was a local code again from MACORP of over \$35,000 for similar transformers without local delivery. So I think in terms of the purchasing and the utilisation of equipment, we got good hours on the machinery purchase; many of the engines had six to seven hundred hours by average, I think the largest hours were maybe sixteen hundred and any one unit. I think we did quite well. Let me say these are not gasoline engines; these are diesel powered machines so they would do much, much better in terms of energy and efficiency. Thank you.

Agency 02 - Office of the Prime Minister - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 2601100 - Electrification Programme - Project Code 261100 - Electrification Programme - \$777,406 (Specific) and \$700,000,000 (Local) - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

The Chairperson: We will now move to the next item.

ITEM 2 - AGENCY 03 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE - CAPITAL EXPENDITURE - Project Code1900400

Question is proposed that the sum of \$30,000,000 (Specific) for Agency 03 - Ministry of Finance - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 1900400 - Basic Needs Trust Fund - 5 - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency 03 - Ministry of Finance - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 1900400 - Basic Needs Trust Fund - 5 - \$30,000,000 (Specific) - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

ITEM 2 - AGENCY 03 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE - CAPITAL EXPENDITURE - Project Code 4401502

Question is proposed that the sum of \$128,785,148 (Specific) for Agency 03 - Ministry of Finance - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 4401502 - Fiscal and Financial Management Programme - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 03 - Ministry of Finance - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 4401502 - Fiscal and Financial Management Programme - \$128,785, 148 (Specific) - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 2 - AGENCY 03 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE - CAPITAL EXPENDITURE - Project Code 4400500

Question is proposed that the sum of \$297,000,000 for Agency 03 - Ministry of Finance - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 4400500 - Student Loan Fund - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 03 - Ministry of Finance - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 4400500 - Student Loan Fund -

\$297,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 2 - AGENCY 03 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE - CAPITAL EXPENDITURE - Project Code 4501300

Question is proposed that the sum of \$31,544,206 for Agency 03 - Ministry of Finance - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 4501300 - Linden Economic Adjustment Programme - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 03 - Ministry of Finance - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 4501300 - Linden Economic Adjustment Programme - \$31,544, 206 (Specific) - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 3 - AGENCY 13 - MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT - Project Code 1900200

Question is proposed that the sum of \$4,640,658 (Specific) for Agency 13 - Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development - Project Code 1900200 - Community Enhancement Services Project - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency 13 - Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development - Project Code 1900200 - Community Enhancement Services Project - \$4,640,658 (Specific) - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 4 - AGENCY 21 - MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE - CAPITAL EXPENDITURE - Project Code 1301600

Question is proposed that the sum of \$40,000,000 for Agency 21 - Ministry of Agriculture - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 1301600 - National Drainage and Irrigation Authority - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 21 - Ministry of Agriculture - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 1301600 - National Drainage and Irrigation Authority - \$40,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

ITEM 5 - AGENCY 31 - MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS AND COMMUNICATIONS - CAPITAL EXPENDITURE - Project Code 1100100

Question is proposed that the sum of \$555,000,000 for Agency 31 - Ministry of Public Works and Communications - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 1100100 - Demerara Harbour Bridge - stands part of the Estimates.

The Honourable Member Mr. Norton

Mr. Aubrey C Norton: Could the Honourable Minister tell us how many residents will be resettled and what is the average cost of resettling each resident?

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Transport and Hydraulics

Hon. BH Robeson Benn: Mde. Chairperson, I was not prepared for such a specific a question, but I think with respect to the number of persons there are slightly about fifty-five persons who are being resettled and I do not have ... if I do a rough average it would be of the order of \$2.5 million; I will present the Honourable Member with the listing and the resettlement range from as low as \$9,464 or the lowest or the block of average to \$75,000 to the highest \$5.2 million. There are some other work services issues in there of \$20 and \$45 million each. So in all I do not think that it would average more than \$2.5 million for those, but I can provide you with the list.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Norton

Mr. Aubrey C Norton: Could the Honourable Minister state whether Government would have identified where they are going to be relocated or is it a case of people being compensated and they find their own place of relocation?

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Transport and Hydraulics

Hon. BH Roberson Benn: I think some interventions were made with the Ministry of Local Government and with the Ministry of Housing with respect to relocating these people; with respect to the provision of lands for those persons and the people have already been relocated.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Norton

Mr. Aubrey C Norton: Well if that is the case then the Minister should be in a position to tell us where they have been located.

Hon. BH Robeson Benn: I will ask the Honourable Minister of Housing and Water to help me with this one, if he would please.

Hon. Harry Narine Nawbatt: For the majority of persons on the West Bank of Berbice have been relocated to a place name Ketting [57:41] on the same West Bank and I think two or three persons on the other side of the river have been relocated in the area just near to where they have been previously living not far away.

Mr. Aubrey C Norton: Could the Minister say if the land that was provided by the Government at what cost it was provided?

Hon. Harry Narine Nawbatt: The persons who have been relocated have not been asked to pay any cost for the land.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Murray

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, my question relates to Project Code 1100100 - Demerara Bridge and my question to the Honourable Minister is whether under a thorough process and procedure for checking the state of pontoons and other equipment on the Bridge, it should not have been possible to discern exactly what was necessary to be done by way of provision of additional or new

pontoons or servicing of pontoons in the course of the year and to make provisions upfront, and if he agrees then would it not be the case that the National Assembly was inadequately informed when they presented us with a project profile for the budget of 2007 for \$90,000,000, describing the project as construction of pontoons and replacement of deck plates, and that information was withheld to a much greater degree involving a sum of \$555, 000,000 a multiple of six times the sum originally voted. Would the Minister not agree that they ought to do better than that by way of planning and keeping the National Assembly informed of the true status of affairs?

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Transport and Hydraulics

Hon. BH Robeson Benn: Mde. Chairperson, I do not agree at all with the Honourable Member. I remember at the time of our budget presentation, I indicated based on the presentations made by way of questions that if we attempted to replace all the deck plates as were suggested and all the pontoons of the Demerara Harbour Bridge, there would not be money left in the budget to do anything else. I think basically what has happened based on the engineering judgement and the judgements made at that time and as I said engineering in terms of the economic side of it; it is optimisation of what he had; you had to make a judgement as to what monies were available to be spent to do the works. The situation has moved a bit better, I think, to the point where money is available to do the works, these funds have been provided and we are

acting on the matter. So there is no issue here; we are far behind on maintenance; maintenance is a thing that people do not want to do, and they do not want to pay attention to, and that is why the bridge and many of our national infrastructure facilities got into the position they are in now, and it is a big task to bring them to a sustainable level. Money is available now and we are spending the money where it is sorely needed to keep things at a sustainable level, and at some point in time soon we could go ahead to build the new things.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Murray

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, is the Honourable Minister in what he just said admitting that he was aware of the fact of the need to spend this amount of money and perhaps much more at the time the budget was presented for 2007 and if he is so admitting, then should he not have written a different kind of project which acknowledged the sum of money necessary, because a provision made here and then to identify of that amount what was being earmarked at that time. At least the Parliament of the country would have been informed of the potential scope of the project, but being made aware of the limitations at that time on the budgetary amount available.

Hon. BH Robeson Benn: Mde. Chairperson, I want to repeat again that I said at the time of the Budget presentation in response to questions that we could not based on standards, engineering judgements and interventions we cannot repair all of these things at the time based on funds available.

Mr. Winston S Murray: That is not the answer.

Hon. BH Robeson Benn: It is not possible and so we do the next best thing. We try to just get by and hope that we would arrive at a position where we can do a little better. The monies required here as you point out are available are enormous sums.

Agency 31 - Ministry of Public Works and Communications - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 1100100 - Demerara Harbour Bridge - \$555,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 5 - AGENCY 31 - MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS AND COMMUNICATIONS - CAPITAL EXPENDITURE - Project Code 1206900

Question is proposed that the sum of \$49,213,483 (Specific) and \$150,500,000 (Local) for Agency 31 - Ministry of Public Works and Communications - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 1206900 - Bridges - Berbice River Crossing - stands part of the Estimates

Agency 31 - Ministry of Public Works and Communications - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 1206900 - Bridges - Berbice River Crossing - \$49,213,483 (Specific) and \$150,500,000 (Local) - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

ITEM 5 - AGENCY 31 - MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS AND COMMUNICATIONS - CAPITAL EXPENDITURE - Project Code 1207900

Question is proposed that the sum of \$361,450,290 (Specific) for Agency 31 - Ministry of Public Works and Communications - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 1207900 - New Amsterdam Moleson Creek Road - stands part of the Estimates.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Carberry

Mr. E Lance Carberry: Mde. Chairperson, looking at the item dealing with the Moleson Creek Road, the original provision was just over \$1 billion. A request was made for almost \$600 million and now another request is being made and the remarks column says provision for additional inflows. I am not sure what that means. Is it that the design for the road has changed; the length of the road has changed; the quality of the road has changed? What has changed?

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Transport and Hydraulics

Hon. BH Robeson Benn: Mde. Chairperson, this is a specific inflow relating to monies coming in from overseas with regard to the project. So it is part of the entire project body; it is just a transfer, an inflow

Agency 31 - Ministry of Public Works and Communications - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 1207900 - New Amsterdam Moleson Creek Road - \$361,450,290 (Specific) - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 5 - AGENCY 31 - MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS AND COMMUNICATIONS - CAPITAL EXPENDITURE - Project Code 1600300

Question is proposed that the sum of \$660,000,000 for Agency 31 - Ministry of Public Works and Communications - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 1600300 - Equipment Civil Aviation - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency 31 - Ministry of Public Works and Communications - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 1600300 - Equipment Civil Aviation - \$660,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 5 - AGENCY 31 - MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS AND COMMUNICATIONS - CAPITAL EXPENDITURE - Project Code 2700200

Question is proposed that the sum of \$232,000,000 for Agency 31 - Ministry of Public Works and Communications - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 2700200 - Reconditioning of Ferry Vessels - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency 31 - Ministry of Public Works and Communications - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 2700200 - Reconditioning of Ferry Vessels - \$232,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson ...

The Chairperson: Mr. Murray we have already considered the item.

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, may I simply point out that in the past and you may want to adopt your own precedent, the Chairman has recommitted items if in his view through oversight and item was missed. May I respectfully ask for the recommitment of Item 5 since I have an important question to ask in respect of civil aviation?

**RECOMMITAL OF ITEM 5 - AGENCY 31 -
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS AND
COMMUNICATIONS - CAPITAL EXPENDITURE -
Project Code 1600300**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$660,000,000 for Agency 31 - Ministry of Public Works and Communications - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 1600300 - Equipment Civil Aviation - stands part of the Estimates.

The Chairperson: Okay Mr. Murray, go ahead.

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, I would like to ask the Honourable Minister whether he is aware that in Project Profile 101, he led this National Assembly to believe at the time that he was merely providing for a feasibility study for the radar equipment. Could the Minister say how come all of a sudden he is putting in \$660,000,000 for the acquisition of this equipment,

whether he was not aware at the time when he was doing the feasibility study of this possibility? Could he say -

- (a) Was the feasibility study completed?
- (b) Has the equipment been acquired? And
- (c) If that is so, we should not have a project profile in which the sum of \$660,000,000 of capital expenditure is going to be committed whereas originally we were led to believe that it was only \$13,000,000 were going to be committed.

Hon. BH Robeson Benn: Mde. Chairperson, I think there was a discussion at some point ... in fact there were some revelations if you may want to call it in the press where there was a suggestion ... in fact the air navigation equipment at the Cheddi Jagan International, Timehri were very, very old and required enormous sums for the rehabilitation ... in fact you talk about project profile and so on and I can give you a document to satisfy you interest on that matter, but there was an overall project cost in excess of (Can) \$15,000,000. At the point in time when we were looking at this matter, we were examining to see where funding could have come to be able to do this project. So it was a matter of scheduling. At the time we looked at the matter, there was not where we saw that we could have gotten funding. In fact we were trying to get overseas funding. At this point in time the position has been taken, given the nature, the age of the equipment and the necessity for maintaining standard and proper navigating equipment to enable landings at the Cheddi

Jagan International Airport, Timehri that the funding which we requested and were seeking all the time would be presented out of local funding, and we have been advised that the funds have been available and this simply has to be done now.

Mr. Winston S Murray: I must press the Minister, because he has brought a sum of \$660,000,000 as a supplementary as against an original allocation of \$13,000,000, which is what was revealed to this National Assembly to undertake a feasibility study. Now he is telling us that he is executing a fully blown project. I am asking the Minister why he did not think it necessary to provide to this National Assembly the necessary information by way of a project profile so for both transparency and accountability the representative of the people of Guyana could have an opportunity to understand and agree to what is taking place. Could the Minister say why?

Hon. BH Robeson Benn: Mde. Chairperson, I think I said issues of scheduling and funding and a proper understanding of what had to be done here. In terms of the full scope of the project, it could not have been done at that time and now that we are at a point where we can execute some phase of the project, we simply have to do it to be prudent.

Mr. Winston S Murray: Could the Honourable Minister tell this National Assembly whether this sum of \$660,000,000 include the cost of having to relocate the site for the installation of this radar having expended money at

an earlier site that has turned out to be the wrong one and an inadequate one.

Hon. BH Robeson Benn: Mde. Chairperson, the Honourable Member is confusing two different types of radar. [*Interruption: 'You are more confusing.'*] I do not think that you will understand it any way. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Winston S Murray: With the greatest respect to the Honourable Minister, it is not for the Honourable Minister to determine whether our capacity is to understand or not to understand, it is his duty to bring to the National Assembly the relevant information. [Applause]

Hon. BH Robeson Benn: Mde. Chairperson, I think maybe and I do not want to sound rude by saying that I have been very open and indulging with this matter. I said that I have documents which I am willing to provide ... [*Interruption*]

The Chairperson: Honourable Minister, if you are in a position to provide some follow-up information.

Hon. BH Robeson Benn: I have said it already that I have information here and I am will to provide any information that would satisfy the Honourable Member's curiosity or genuine interest in this matter. But I am pointing out very clearly; I think I am trying to point out very clearly that we were accused in the press of running some risks with respect to this matter, and that we felt that we had to move immediately to deal with this matter once we are aware that funding was being made nationally, and

that is what we are doing. We are being prudent on the matter.

The Chairperson: Alright, Honourable Member

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition

Mr. Robert HO Corbin: Mde. Chairperson, on the very item and it has recurred in most of those items in this supplementary paper where the Honourable Member Mr. Murray has pointed out that the amount of supplementary provisions being sought quadrupled and in some cases larger amounts than the original voted. At the last discussion on supplementary provisions, I do recall Mr. Murray asking on this issue whether it is not appropriate when supplementary provisions of such large amounts are being sought for the Minister of Finance to ensure that a project profile is also presented and my question to the Minister of Finance is whether he does not feel that the Parliament has an obligation and that the law provides that when projects of a capital nature are being embarked upon that a project profile should be presented to this Parliament. So if it has become necessary as Mr. Benn points out that there was need for a project whether the Minister of Finance does not feel that this Parliament is owed an obligation to be provided with details. It is not a favour he is doing this Parliament and I would like the Minister of Finance to give some assurance that that practice be adopted in the future. We raise it every time; we are not trying to be troublesome here. Our job is to look at how the public's money is being spent [*Applause*] and if no information is being provided that is why we

have to ask all these questions. That is why I am asking whether the Minister of Finance does not feel that as a practice in the future he should not insist that his colleagues provide these profiles to avoid a lot of these questions. Thank you.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Finance, do you care to respond?

Hon. Dr Ashni K Singh: Mde. Chairperson, only to say that firstly we are guided of course by convention in this House and indeed the format that has been used for supplementary provisions has not changed substantially in terms of the provision or the non-provision of project profiles and in fact my recollection is that for at the very least of number of years supplementary provisions have not by convention have not necessarily been accompanied by project profiles. I will go further, Mde. Chairperson, to say that the very purpose of this discussion indeed is to facilitate a discussion that would permit any Member of the House whether opposition or government to ask questions in relation to the particular item and to obtain responses that would be informative and that would clarify the respective item. And so Mde. Chairperson, I would say that that vehicle exists and indeed I believe it has been used very effectively to have information provided in relation to the respective items. I have to say that I am not convinced at this stage that a change is necessary to the approach that has been used in relation to supplementary provisions is necessary or appropriate.

The Chairperson: Honourable Members, we have to move on and I will put the question again.

The Honourable Member Mr. Franklin

Mr. Everall N Franklin: You have to look Madame.

The Chairperson: Thank you for the bit of advice.

Mr. Everall N Franklin: To the Minister of Finance ... Would the Minister agree that if some more information were given on some of these larger items, we would have been home since four o'clock.

The Chairperson: What is your question?

Mr. Everall N Franklin: The point is a lot of the questions that were asked would have been answered with more explanation.

The Chairperson: We will now move on. I will now put the question again.

Agency 31 - Ministry of Public Works and Communications - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 1600300 - Equipment Civil Aviation - \$660,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 6 - AGENCY 41 - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION - CAPITAL EXPENDITURE -Project Code 1200600

Question is proposed that the sum of \$300,000,000 for Agency 41 - Ministry of Education - Capital Expenditure -

Project Code 1200600 - University of Guyana - Turkeyen - stands part of the Estimates

The Honourable Member Mrs. Backer

Mrs. Deborah J Backer: Mde. Chairperson, could the Honourable Minister indicate what portion of the \$300,000,000 is to be used for the removal of the asbestos and what portion for the upgrading of facilities at the University?

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Education

Hon. Shaik KZ Baksh: For the removal of the asbestos it is \$209,414,336 and the remainder will be used for the upgrading of the facilities

The Chairperson: Yes, Mrs. Backer

Mrs. Deborah J Backer: Could the Minister indicate to the Honourable House whether the upgrading of facilities at the University includes the upgrading of the way that registration is done to ensure that students will now be able to register on line; if that is part of the upgrading of the facilities?

Hon. Shaik KZ Baksh: No, Mde. Chairperson.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Norton

Mr. Aubrey C Norton: Could the Honourable Minister give us an indication of the areas to be upgraded and to

what extent based on the problems of the University of Guyana this kind of allocation is adequate?

Hon. Shaik KZ Baksh: There is a very comprehensive report from the University and the removal, the conditions and the question of occupational safety requirements, et cetera, and a committee will be set up to monitor this project. The removal exercise will begin with the buildings listed below:

- Faculty of Social Sciences;
- School of Education and Humanity's Building; then the
- Faculty of Technology Buildings ... [*Interruption: 'The upgrading of the facilities'*]

The upgrading of the facilities...

Mr. Aubrey C Norton: I was not asking you about asbestos; I was asking you on the remainder of the upgrading of facilities. You know that the University has a number of problems and I would like to know what facilities are going to be upgraded and if you are satisfied that adequate provisions are being made for this upgrading at the University. [*Noisy Interruption*]

The Chairperson: Honourable Members, please allow the Minister to respond please.

Hon. Shaik KZ Baksh: For the removal of the asbestos and then we will proceed to look at the other infrastructural requirements.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mrs. Backer

Mrs. Deborah J Backer: Mr. Minister, you indicated, I think, \$209,000,000 was to do the removal of asbestos and the rest is for the upgrading of facilities, but you are now giving the impression that the entire \$300,000,000 is to do with asbestos and the replacement of roofs and so on. Are they two distinct heads that we are dealing with - asbestos removal and upgrading for \$209,000,000 and the remainder for upgrading of other facilities? That is what we are trying to find out.

Hon. Shaik KZ Baksh: We have to proceed to look ... this is a tentative cost the \$209,000,000 ... we do not know when we start removing the roofs and all of these things what other costs will be incurred, thereafter there are other works to be done in terms of the sanitary facilities on the campus, the upgrading of the laboratory facilities and so on, but we will proceed firstly with the asbestos removal. This is just an indicative cost.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Norton

Mr. Aubrey C Norton: Honourable Minister, it is well known in the faculty of Social Sciences that there are at least two deaths that occurred and workers there feel that it was as a result of the asbestos. Has any investigation been

done into that and at the end of such an investigation what are the possibilities?

Hon. Shaik KZ Baksh: No investigation was done for that.

Agency 41 - Ministry of Education - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 1200600 - University of Guyana - Turkeyen - \$300,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

ITEM 6 - AGENCY 41 - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION - CAPITAL EXPENDITURE -Project Code 1207500

Question is proposed that the sum of \$156,672,461 (Specific) for Agency 41 - Ministry of Education - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 1207500 - Basic Education Access and Management Support Programme - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency 41 - Ministry of Education - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 1207500 - Basic Education Access and Management Support Programme - \$156,672,461 (Specific) - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

The Chairperson: We will now move to the next item.

**ITEM 7 - AGENCY 44 - MINISTRY OF CULTURE,
YOUTH AND SPORT - CAPITAL EXPENDITURE -
Project Code 5401800**

Question is proposed that the sum of \$36,000,000 for Agency 44 - Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 5401800 - National Sports Commission - stands part of the Estimates.

The Honourable Member Mr. Murray

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, is the Honourable Minister aware that in Project Profile 143 in the 2007 budget, when the sum of \$60,000,000 was voted for this particular project - swimming pool - that listed as a description of the project was construction of swimming pool and that would it not be right to assume that the \$60,000,000 given that description of the project included the cost of the construction of the swimming pool. If that is so, Mr. Minister, how could you now be having a Legend when you want an additional \$36,000,000 to say provision for an advance payment for construction of a swimming pool? I am afraid there is a great deal of inconsistency between your statement as to the use of the \$60,000,000 and now the seeking of a supplementary provision to pay an advance on the very construction for which you had \$60,000,000.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport

Hon. Dr Frank CS Anthony: Mde. Chairperson, I think if the Honourable Member looks properly at that same sub-heading, he would see that that \$60,000,000 was provided for a swimming pool, the purchasing of gym equipment and sports gears. There is \$40,000,000 that was set aside for the start of the start of the construction of the swimming pool and the additional \$36,000,000 that we are seeking is to add to that to give the firm that has gotten the award so as to start the mobilisation for the exercise. What we are dealing here with is an Olympic size swimming pool, which is fifty meters - a twenty meter practice pool, the stands to go with that and the changing room - so it is a large complex and the approximate cost is close to \$400,000,000. That is what we came for in Parliament in 2007 to start the project and so we need this now to pay the mobilisation to start the project.

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, the Honourable Minister has a problem understanding, I believe, what he himself has written in the project profile. He listed the description of the project as construction of swimming pool, purchase of gym equipment, purchase of sport gears. Total project cost \$60,000,000. Would the Honourable Minister not agree that what he should have done is to put the total project cost as the \$400,000,000 or whatever cost and identify as the amount to be provided for in 2007 at the point at which the budget was presented as some component of this \$60,000,000 and then we will understand when you come for a supplementary provision of \$36,000,000 the relationship between that and the total cost, but as it is here, you presented this National

Assembly and led us to believe that the total project cost was \$60,000,000. I am saying, Mde. Chairperson, the Minister must agree is not playing it all above board with the National Assembly which needs to be kept more fully informed.

The Chairperson: Do you wish to respond Honourable Minister?

Yes, Mr. Norton

Mr. Aubrey C Norton: This question becomes necessary, because of the trend, but could the Minister say if in this whole process of assessing for the swimming pool if there is a projected cost of maintaining the swimming pool and would it be a public enterprise something or would it be done by the private sector?

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport

Hon. Dr Frank CS Anthony: The intention if for it to be a public enterprise venture and we have been working with the Guyana Swimming Association. As we are right now the intention is for them to have use of the facility.

Agency 44 - Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 5401800 - National Sports Commission - \$36,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairperson: We will now go to the next item.

ITEM 8 - AGENCY 45 - MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND WATER - CAPITAL EXPENDITURE - Project Code 2800900

Question is proposed that the sum of \$1,353,000,000 for Agency 45 - Ministry of Housing and Water - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 2800900 - Coastal Water Supply - stands part of the Estimates.

The Honourable Member Mr. Murray ...

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, could the Honourable Minister kindly explain to this National Assembly why he brought a project profile here for the 2007 budget headed Coastal Water Supply Project Profile 152 for \$240,000,000 when he must have known then that he was going to bring a supplementary request for something that is six times that original project amount, which was not being revealed to the National Assembly at the time the budget was being presented? And what is worse, Mde. Chairperson is the Minister seems to suggest, would he not agree that sewerage is part of our water distribution, because he defines coastal water supply as including improvement in sewerage? Does that mean we are to expect sewerage as part of our coastal water supply system, Mr. Minister?

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Housing and Water

Hon. Harry Narine Nawbatt: Mde. Chairperson, I anticipated the question based on my friend Robeson

Benn's experience. When we brought the \$240,000,000 to the National Assembly, we were still in the process of preparing the documentation for the improvement of the water supply system for the Georgetown area as well as the improvement for the sewage system for the same Georgetown area. Mde. Chairperson, I am sure that we will all agree that there is need for immediate, urgent intervention in these two areas in the city of Georgetown. I have the areas that we intend to look at in this instance and I would need to say also that this is not the total cost for the entire rehabilitation of the water or the sewage system in Georgetown.

Agency 45 - Ministry of Housing and Water - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 2800900 - Coastal Water Supply - \$1,353,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairperson: We will now go to the next item.

ITEM 9 - AGENCY 48 - MINISTRY OF LABOUR, HUMAN SERVICES AND SOCIAL SECURITY - CAPITAL EXPENDITURE - Project Code 1206800

Question is proposed that the sum of \$176,000,000 for Agency 48 - Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 1206800 - Buildings - stands part of the Estimates.

The Honourable Member Mr. Murray ...

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, is the Minister aware that at no point in the 2007 budget was there an indication that we were going to be asked for monies for the construction of a new building for the Ministry and would he not agree that for such a large capital project that the Parliament of Guyana is owed the necessary project profile that could provide it with information about such a large project.

And Mde. Chairperson, may I further inquire of the Minister what would be the final cost for the construction of this building given that this provision is for mobilisation and consultancy cost for the building - \$176,000,000. I just want to know what is the total cost and could we be done the favour of being provided with a project profile that explains this project to the people of Guyana through its representatives in this National Assembly? *[Applause]*

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Labour ...

Hon. Manzoor Nadir: Mde. Chairperson, this provision is to accommodate \$160,000,000 in the mobilisation fee for the contractor; the contract was actually signed on the 10 August, but why didn't we put it in the budget - the Ministry since the fire in 2001 has been looking at locations, a site was finally decided on in January and we had to go out for the designs. The Bill of quantity and so forth came in way after the budget was presented. There is a cap we are putting to the building, it is about \$600,000,000; \$16,000,000 has been for the design and the advances for the architect for consultancy and supervision services and \$160,000,000 for the contract itself. In terms

of the provision of the project profile the Minister of Finance has adequately answered that and I am sure that come budget time we will see more on that.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Murray ...

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, it seems as though this Parliament is just a place to be treated with contempt, but my question to the Minister is: was this contract advertised in the national ... [*Interruption: 'Yes, yes.'*] Well let him answer; you seem anxious to reveal ... you got a good answer for once, boy and all of you want to answer ... and could he tell us please, Mde. Chairperson, who is the contractor? This is all in the interest of transparency and accountability. Why not? Could you please inform the National Assembly who the contractor is so that we could know ... [*Interruption: 'Where was that advertised; not in the Stabroek News?'*] ... and certainly not in the New Nation.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Labour ...

Hon. Manzoor Nadir: Mde. Chairperson, I think contemptuous of the Parliament comes from the other side. The contract was advertised and the contractor was Kishan Bacchus competitively.

The Chairperson: The Honourable Member Mr. Murray ...

Mr. Winston S Murray: Mde. Chairperson, since there was no provision in the Estimates for this building for mobilisation and consultancy and other cost, could the Minister say on what authority he committed resources of this country by going ahead and advertising for a contract of a certain sum of money without knowing in advance that he had parliamentary sanction and approval for this project; could he kindly tell the National Assembly on the basis on which he proceed? *[Applause]*

The Chairperson: The Honourable Minister of Labour ...

Hon. Manzoor Nadir: The mandate given by the people of Guyana to the PPP/C.

Agency 48 - Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security - Capital Expenditure - Project Code 1206800 - Buildings - \$176,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairperson: Honourable Members, this completes the consideration of all the items on Financial Paper No. 4/2007.

Question put and agreed to.

Honourable Members, I was asked to put it over. I do not want the records to reveal a mistake

Question put and agreed to.

Motion carried.

ASSEMBLY RESUMED

The Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Finance

Hon. Dr Ashni K Singh: Mde. Speaker, I beg to report that the Committee of Supply has considered the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 4/2007 without amendment and I now move that the Assembly doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution.

Question put and agreed to

Motion carried

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS NOS. 13 AND 54

The Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Home Affairs

Hon. Clement J Rohee: Mde. Speaker, with your leave I move that Standing Orders No. 13, Order of Business and Standing Order No.54, Treating with the number of days for the stages of Bills be suspended to enable the Supplementary Appropriation (No. 2/2007) - Bill No. 31/2007 be introduced at this stage.

Question put and agreed to.

Motion Carried

BILL - FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD READINGS

**ITEM 3 - SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION
(NO. 2 FOR 2007) - Bill No 31/ 2007**

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 Guyana for the fiscal year ending 31 December 2007 estimates whereof have been approved by the National Assembly, and for the appropriation of those sums for the specified purposes in conformity with the Constitution.

The Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Finance

Hon. Dr Ashni K Singh: Mde. Speaker, in accordance with Article 171 (2) of the Constitution, I signify that Cabinet has recommended the Supplementary Appropriation (No. 2 For 2007) - Bill No 31 of 2007 and I now present the Bill to the Assembly and move that it be read the First time.

Question put and agreed to.

Motion carried

Bill read the First time.

The Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Finance ...

Hon. Dr Ashni K Singh: Mde. Speaker, I now that the Supplementary Appropriation (No. 2 For 2007) - Bill No 31 of 2007 be read a Second time.

Question put and agreed to

Motion carried

Bill read the Second time.

The Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Finance

Hon. Dr Ashni K Singh: Mde. Speaker, I move that the Supplementary Appropriation (No. 2 For 2007) - Bill No 31 of 2007 be read a Third time and passed a printed.

Question put and agreed to

Motion carried

Bill read the Third time and passed as printed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS BUSINESS

MOTION

6. GUYANA POWER AND LIGHT CO. INC

Mr. Raphael Trotman MP to move the following Motion

WHEREAS citizens continue to register dissatisfaction with the Guyana Power and Light Co.'s inefficient service and constant blackouts; the practice of estimating electricity bills at rates far above normal monthly billing amounts; back billing for suspected meter tampering and imposing pay-back arrangements that are burdensome to the consumer;

AND WHEREAS the Public Utilities Commission has had cause to inquire into the Guyana Power and Light's service, billing practices, disconnection practices and motives and procedures with respect to making arrangements for customers to repay amounts charged for back billing, but each such inquiry has not led to a reduction of complaints and concerns pertaining to GPL's service;

BE IT RESOLVED:

That a Special Select Committee be established to inquire into and to investigate the services being provided by the Guyana Power and Light Co. and to make recommendations for its improvement;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Special Select Committee be permitted to receive evidence from members of the public and organisations, including

consumers , the Public Utilities Commission, Consumer Associations, the Private Sector and civil society organisations working with affected groups;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Special Select Committee report to this Assembly within three months and the National Assembly communicates the findings and recommendations to the Guyana Power and Light Co for their adoption.

The Speaker: Honourable Members, the Motion on the Guyana Power and Light Company should have been asterisked. There is an agreement between the Prime Minister and Mr. Raphael Trotman that that Motion will not be proceeded with at this stage

Motion not proceeded with.

Honourable Members, this concludes our business for today.

The Honourable Minister of Home Affairs ...

Hon. Clement J Rohee: Mde. Speaker, I beg to move that this House stands adjourned to a date to be fixed.

The Speaker: The Assembly is so adjourned.

Adjourned Accordingly At 18:14 H