

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORT

[VOLUME 7]

**PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY OF THE THIRD PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE
CONSTITUTION OF GUYANA**

52nd Sitting

2 p.m.

Tuesday, 17th December, 1974

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

His Honour the Speaker, Mr. Sase Narain, J.P.

Members of the Government – People’s National Congress (50)

Prime Minister (1)

The Hon. L.F.S. Burnham, O.E.,
Prime Minister

(Absent - on leave)

Deputy Prime Minister (1)

Dr. the Hon. P.A. Reid,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of
National Development

Senior Ministers (8)

The Hon. H.D. Hoyte, S.C.,
Minister of Economic Development

- *The Hon. S.S. Ramphal, S.C.,
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice (Absent)
- *The Hon. H. Green,
Minister of Co-operatives and
National Mobilisation
- *The Hon. H. O. Jack,
Minister of Energy and Natural Resources (Absent)
- *The Hon. F. E. Hope,
Minister of Finance
- *The Hon. S. S. Naraine, A.A.,
Minister of Works and Housing (Absent)
- *The Hon. G. A. King,
Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection (Absent – on leave)
- *The Hon. G. B. Kennard, C.C.H.,
Minister of Agriculture

Ministers (5)

- The Hon. W. G. Carrington,
Minister of Labour
- The Hon. Miss S. M. Field-Ridley,
Minister of Information and Culture (Absent)
- The Hon. B. Ramsaroop,
Minister of Parliamentary Affairs
and Leader of the House
- *The Hon. Miss C.L. Baird,
Minister of Education and Social Development (Absent)
- *Dr. the Hon. O.M.R. Harper,
Minister of Health

Members of State (10)

- The Hon. M. Kasim, A.A.,
Minister of State for Agriculture

***Non-elected Ministers**

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| The Hon. O.E. Clarke, Minister of State – Regional (East Berbice/Corentyne) | |
| The Hon. P. Duncan, J.P., Minister of State – Regional (Rupununi) | (Absent) |
| The Hon. C.A. Nascimento, Minister of State, Office of the Prime Minister | |
| The Hon. M. Zaheeruddeen, J.P., Minister of State – Regional (Essequibo Coast/West Demerara) | (Absent) |
| The Hon. K. B. Bancroft, Minister of State – Regional (Mazaruni/Potaro) | |
| *The Hon. C.V. Mingo, Minister of State for Home Affairs | |
| *The Hon. W. Haynes, Minister of State for Consumer Protection | (Absent) |
| *The Hon. A. Salim, Minister of State – Regional (East Demerara/West Coast Berbice) | (Absent) |
| *The Hon. F.U.A. Carmichael, Minister of State – Regional (North West) | (Absent) |

Parliamentary Secretaries (7)

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| Mr. J.R. Thomas, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Works and Housing | (Absent) |
| Mr. C.E. Wrights, J.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Works and Housing | |
| Miss M.M. Ackman, Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister, and Government Chief Whip | (Absent) |

***Non-elected Ministers**

Mr. E.L. Ambrose,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Agriculture

Mr. S. Prashad,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of
Co-operatives and National Mobilisation

Mr. J.P. Chowritmootoo,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education
and Social Development

Mr. R.H.O. Corbin,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister **(Absent – on leave)**

Deputy Speaker (1)

Mr. R.C. Van Sluytman, Deputy Speaker

Other Members (17)

Mr. J.N. Aaron
Mrs. L.M. Branco
Mr. M. Corrica
Mr. E.H.A. Fowler
Miss J. Gill
Mr. W. Hussain
Miss S. Jaiserrisingh
Mr. K.M.E. Jonas
Mr. M. Nissar
Dr. L.E. Ramsahoye
Mr. J.G. Ramson
Mrs. P.A. Rayman
Mr. E.M. Stoby, J.P.
Mr. S.H. Sukhu, M.S., J.P.
Mr. C. Sukul, J.P.
Mr. H.A. Taylor
Mrs. L.E. Willems

(Absent)

Members of the Opposition – Liberator Party (2)

Mr. M.F. Singh, Leader of the Opposition
Mrs. E. DaSilva

OFFICERS

Clerk of the National Assembly – Mr. F.A. Narain

Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly – Mr. M.B. Henry, AMBIM

17.12.74
2 p.m.

National Assembly

2 – 2.10 p.m.

PRAYERS
ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Leave to Members

The Speaker: Leave has been granted to the hon. member Mr. Jonas.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS ETC.

The following Papers were laid:

- (a) Consumption Tax (Amendment) (No. 2) Order 1974 (No. 151), made under section 4 of the Consumption Tax Act, Chapter 80:02, on the 10th of December, 1974, and published in the Gazette on the 12th of December, 1974.

- (b) Customs (Exemption from Duties) (No. 2) Order 1974 (No. 152), made under section 8 of the customs Act, Chapter 82:01, on the 10th of December, 1974, and published in the Gazette on the 12th of December, 1974.

- (c) Customs (Exemption from Duties) (No. 3) Order 1974 (No. 155), made under section 8 of the customs Act, Chapter 82:01, on the 10th of December, 1974, and published in the Gazette on the 14th of December, 1974. [The Minister of Finance]

INTRODUCTIN OF BILLS – FIRST READING

The following Bills were introduced and read the First time:

- 1. Valuation for Rating Purposes (Amendment) Bill 1974 – Bill No. 39/1974. [The Minister of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation]

2. Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill 1974 – Bill No. 40/1974 [The Minister of Finance]

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE 1975

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply to resume consideration of the estimates of expenditure for the financial year 1975, totaling \$458,687,527.

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: Page 69.

HEAD 25 – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,481,371 for Head 25, Ministry of Agriculture, stand part of the Estimates.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. M.F. Singh): I have a query on subhead 1, item (5) deals with the Principal Personnel Officer. We note that the Approved Estimates provided for \$11,640 for this Officer and nothing has been reflected in the Revised Estimates but the same sum of \$11,640 is to be voted for 1975. It gives one the impression that this post is vacant because nothing was envisaged to be spent in 1974. Will the hon. Minister say whether this is, indeed, so and if this is so he will, perhaps, give us an idea, as to when he expects this post in the top echelon of the Ministry to be filled.

Moving on to item (19), Messengers. Again, there seems to be some question about the veracity of the figures shown here. In the 1974 Approved Estimates, the sum of \$4,380 was

voted for the employment of two messengers. The 1974 Revised Estimates column has the sum of \$8,364, nearly double the amount originally provided for the same two messengers and, of course, in 1975 it has stabilized itself back to \$4,644. We certainly would like to know how it is that such a high amount is envisaged in the Revised Estimates, nearly double the amount originally asked for, for the same two messengers.

Item (23), Temporary Clerical Assistance: We note that the sum of \$13,000 was provided in the 1974 Approved Estimates and the fantastic figure of \$323,115 is reflected in the 1974 Revised Estimates. This is more than what was budgeted for the entire Clerical Establishment. If we look at item (16) we will see that for 1974 the Approved Estimate for the entire Clerical Establishment was \$244,476 yet the Revised Estimate for Temporary Clerical Assistance in 1974 was the sum of \$323,115. There must have been some tremendous special activity in this Ministry during 1974 because we note that all we are asking for in 1975 is the same sum of \$13,000. If that level of expenditure was for 1974 what is happening in 1975? Either this figure of \$13,000 is a gross under-estimate or the hon. Minister would have to give us some explanation for this. We bear in mind that it is a larger amount than the provision for the entire Clerical Establishment. I think my hon. Colleague would like to deal with just one other item.

Mrs. DaSilva: Sir, I just wanted to ask two short questions under subheads 6 and 7. On subhead 6, Subsidy, Guyana Marketing Corporation, I wish to ask the hon. Minister this question: In view of the fact that we subsidise the Guyana Marketing Corporation to help keep down the cost of living for the housewives of Guyana, why is it that usually there are reasonable prices prevailing in the sale of the ground provisions and fruit and so on and the prices of pork products are so very high? What is the principle? We are pleased that the farmers have had an increase in the price of pork. It is well deserved but we find that to pay, for example, \$4.50 for a pound of ham, taking into consideration the processing and all the rest of it, is too much. It cannot be that it costs the Guyana Marketing Corporation so much to process this pork into ham.

I would say that the profit made on the pork products is well over 100 per cent, and that is putting it low. Would the hon. Minister tell us what is the policy? Or is it a question that the pork products are being used to help subsidise the other items? I should like an explanation on that.

2.10 p.m.

Dealing with the subsidy on oil under subhead 7, I see in the Revised Estimate for 1974 that \$754 was spent. We had a token estimate of \$1 in the Approved Estimates of 1974, and we are asked to provide \$1 again as a token estimate for 1975. Could the hon. Minister tell us the position, what problems exist with the supply of oil?

The average housewife has in obtaining oil and flour. It is often asked what system is used to allocate licences to the people who sell, because there are many well-known P.N.C. activists who distribute flour and sell oil from under their houses or in their kitchens. They do not even have a shop. Could the hon. Minister tell us something about this? It is very difficult indeed for housewives to get a little oil. I think they will appreciate hearing about it.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Agriculture

The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kennard): Mr. Chairman, the position with respect to the post of Principal Personnel Officer is that the post has only just been filled. The position with respect to messengers is that the supplementary provision for 1974 accommodated persons who were on leave from the previous year prior to retirement, hence, the need for supplementary provision to pay the cost of their salaries over and above the normal establishment. Now that those salaries have been paid and the persons fully retired we will revert to the normal level of provision, namely, \$4,644 for next year, making allowance for increments to the normal establishment.

With respect to what appears to be the unusual Supplementary Provision under Temporary Clerical Assistance, this is explained by the fact that there has been an adjustment in terms of showing expenditure for open vote personnel in the Ministry. We have regularize the position this year by showing those who are open vote employees on page 72 of the Estimates, Head 26, you will see there a large number of open vote personnel including truly temporary clerical assistance shown under the various categories.

On the question of the subsidy to the Guyana Marketing Corporation and the specific question as to the present cost of pork, the Government recognizes the need to pay producers of pigs a reasonably remunerative price for their labour. Consequently, the Guyana Marketing Corporation purchases pigs from farmers in relation to quality and at prices which reflect the need to give pig-rearers a reasonable return having regard, as I said, to the quality of pork produced.

One would find that the prices of the Guyana Marketing Corporation tend to be higher than the normal price level paid by butchers to pork producers because as a Government agency we have to compensate the pig-rearer better. That cost for good high quality pork to the producers of pork will, of course, reflect itself in the price of the processed products, the bacon, the ham and so forth.

Having regard to the general cost of imports and the general price level for pork and pork products in the world I would not concede that the G.M.C. prices are high and exorbitant; I think they are reasonable. As the efficiency of the production of pork increases – and it will be shown later in the Estimates that in the new year a larger volume of pig feed will be available – we hope to offer more attractive prices to pig-rearers. It is possible that the current price level might show some decline without necessarily being reflected in any reduction in the purchase prices paid to pig rearers.

The explanation with respect to the distribution, mechanism and system for edible oil should have been dealt with by the Minister of Trade under whose portfolio the distribution of goods such as flour and oil properly falls. The Ministry of Agriculture is concerned mainly with identifying whether a subsidy is payable having regard to the purchase price fixed for oil in comparison with the selling prices to consumers. But, as indicated to these Estimates, we do not expect a subsidy with respect to these transactions in oil for the new year.

It is true to say that specific instructions have been issued to the Guyana Marketing Corporation, that distribution should be done on an equitable basis so that all may get oil and no one should get more than the other. If there are any specific instances where any individual or group appears to be getting an inequitable supply each individual case will be examined and dealt with on its merit. I am advised that those instructions are being carefully and meticulously followed.

Head 25, Ministry of Agriculture - \$1,481,371 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 70 to 75

HEAD 26 – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AGRICULTURE

Question proposed that the sum of \$10,128,835 for Head 26, Ministry of Agriculture – Agriculture, stand part of the Estimates.

17.12.74
2.20 p.m.

National Assembly

2.20 – 2.30 p.m.

Mr. M.F. Singh: I will deal this Head, page by page. I have a general question on page 70 under the heading Veterinary and Livestock Science. Could I take this opportunity to mention that recently we did pass in this honourable House, a Bill to curb the indiscriminate slaughter of female animals and young animals. There were some reservations expressed in respect of that legislation at the time. Subsequently, some representations were made in respect of this legislation.

I wonder whether the hon. Minister would like to take the opportunity to tell us how this legislation has been working, whether it has had the desired effect and whether there have been any disadvantages effects as a result of this bit of legislation.

We know that there were times when beef was in short supply. People have been saying that this is as a result of this legislation. Of course it can well be argued that the ultimate result will be beneficial so that we have to make sacrifices now. In those circumstances I think the hon. Minister may well take the opportunity to let us have his views on how the legislation is in fact operating.

There was the other ancillary point as to whether the Ministry was equipped with enough officers to enforce this legislation. I think there were very serious reservations expressed in respect of the certifying officers who would be able to sign the certificates to permit slaughter, for example, of injured animals or barren females. Certainly, the hon. Minister should tell us about that.

Turning to page 71, again this is a matter of enquiry. We go down to subhead 1, item (60), the only item under the heading "Fisheries." I looked in the last volume of Estimates and I could not find this item there. The legend states that it is a new post created by Supplementary Estimates in 1974. It seems as though the Ministry is seeking to identify a new Division for Fisheries. But there are some posts dealing with Fisheries on page 70. For example, item (19),

Fisheries Officers on the salary scale A 24, and then item (29), 2 Fisheries Assistants II and 4 Fisheries Assistants I, so that the question arises as to whether this is separate and apart from those other fisheries officers on page 70 and whether this is a “one-man” department for this Senior Fisheries Officer.

We note that the Revised Estimate is \$4,649 and the estimate for 1975 is \$9,228. Would the hon. Minister tell us exactly what is the proposal in respect of this apparently new Fisheries Division in the Department because we all are aware that the Ministry has been running a Fisheries Department for a long time.

Moving to the penultimate item, item (61) – Agricultural Technical Assistant Trainees: In the 1974 Approved Estimates, the sum of \$102,600 was provided. The Revised Estimate for 1974 is \$201,045. But the estimate for 1975 is merely \$1. This may well be one of the areas in which the Ministry is streamlining its operations and I am going to come to that in a moment. We note further down that there are posts listed for the first time. It may well be that this is one of those. Perhaps the hon. Minister would identify which page it is on, because certainly the phrase “Agricultural Technical Assistant Trainees” gives one the impression that these are merely trainee officers and one would not expect them to be on the list of open vote people that appears later on in the Estimates. Certainly, if we spent \$201,000 in 1975.

In respect of all these posts from item (70) to item (121) listed on page 72 and over the page also, I was going to ask what Head these people were originally paid from because I looked in the 1974 Estimates and could not find where they had previously been listed. From what the hon. Minister previously said it appears as though all these posts – and they seem to be very specific posts – were previously paid under the very dubious heading of “Temporary Clerical Assistants.”

Be that as it may, I accept the hon. Minister’s explanation that the position is now being regularized and they are no longer going to be paid as “Temporary Clerical Assistants” but as

substantive positions on the Estimates. I am very pleased to see that. It certainly gives us a more realistic idea of what is going on in the Ministry when we see the posts listed as they are here. We know of the hon. Minister's recent vintage but if this is his innovation I would like to take this opportunity to compliment him for having so very lucidly listed what was previously paid under the heading of Temporary Clerical Assistants. I thank the hon. Minister for having helped us to that extent.

Item (133) on page 73 deals with Substitute for Subordinate Staff on leave, casuals, etc: The Approved Estimate was \$400. The 1974 Revised Estimate is \$302,940. The provision in 1975 has gone back to \$400. The obvious remark is that it is unrealistic to ask for \$400 in 1975 when we are spending \$302,940 in 1974.

One suspects that this may well be taken care of further on in some of these things that have been listed but I could not find exactly where it was reflected. I certainly would be very grateful if the hon. Minister would tell us where this expenditure is now shown as I suspect it is somewhere else in these Estimates. The difference between \$400 and approximately \$303,000 is far too great for us not to ask any question about it.

Item (134) deals with Station Allowances. The 1974 Approved Estimate was \$600. The 1974 Revised Approved Estimate was \$600. The 1974 Revised Estimate is Revised Estimate is \$20,511 and yet for 1975 the Ministry is asking merely for \$2,115. With the level of expenditure in 1974, obviously \$2,115 cannot possibly be adequate for 1975. This one needs an explanation. I do not think we will find it anywhere else in the Estimates because it is Station Allowances are Station Allowances. This could not relate to staff that were reflected as open vote employees anywhere else. I think this amount is too unrealistic, by far.

[Mr. Singh contd.]

2.30 p.m.

Under Other Charges, subhead 2, Transport and Travelling, again, we would like to have more realistic figures presented to the House because it puts the Estimates out far too much when we come for supplementary provision, as so often we do have to come to this honourable House. For example, in 1974, the approved estimate under this subhead was \$268,000. The 1974 revised estimate is \$343,000, but, of course, we all know that there was the fuel crisis, that there was an increase in travelling allowances, but if that is a realistic figure for 1974, \$343,000, why are we being asked to provide only \$300,000 in 1975?

If \$343,000 is a realistic figure, then we will find ourselves being asked in supplementary provisions next year to vote another \$43,000 under this subhead. Unless the hon. Minister can give us some guarantee that there is some way in which he can drastically bring down the expenditure under this subhead by nearly \$50,000, the sum of \$300,000 for 1975 will not be adequate.

Dealing with subhead 5, Water Transport – location of boats, I looked in the 1974 Estimates on page 70 to see what this was all about, because I could not understand what “location of boats” meant, and I find that all that is stated there is: “Water transport.” I wonder whether the hon. Minister would like to explain what is meant by “location of boats.” One can understand \$15,000 being requested for water transport. Are we going to spend some of this money searching for boats? Let us not speculate. We leave it to the hon. Minister to reply to that.

Subhead 8, Government Gardens and Grounds. The legend reads: “Increase in fuel cost.” No increase has been asked for. The approved estimate for 1974 was \$60,000 and the estimate for 1975 is \$60,000 also, so that I am at a loss to understand what exactly the legend reads against subhead 8. In the last column where it shows increases or decreases, nothing is listed there. I wonder whether it does in fact mean that the Ministry wanted, not \$60,000, but \$70,000,

because the revised estimate for 1974 is \$70,000. All that is being asked for in 1975 is \$60,000. That certainly would tie in with the legend.

Subhead 11, Central Agricultural Station, Mon Repos. I made this point last year and I am sorry I have to make it again this year. There is no breakdown given as to the amount required for each of these details listed. Up to 1973, we had a breakdown given of the amount required. Last year the hon. Minister gave it to me orally here but in view of the fact that the legend states that some of this expenditure has been transferred to subhead 27, Maintenance of Vehicles, we would certainly like to know what the breakdown is like. The amount being asked for is \$400,000 and it would help us to know what will be spent on labour as compared with the other items, and for that matter, how the cost has gone up in respect of feeding stuffs and fertilizers. If the hon. Minister could give us a breakdown of that \$400,000 we would be very grateful.

Subhead 12, Maintenance of District Offices, Demonstration Station, Offices, Nurseries. The 1974 approved estimate was \$60,000. The revised estimate for 1974 was \$80,000. The request for 1975 however is for only \$65,000. We note that this is a subhead dealing with Maintenance of District Offices. Does the hon. Minister propose to stretch this amount to cover maintenance during 1975 in view of the fact that \$80,000 was required for 1974? If the amount required for maintenance in 1974 is \$80,000, how is it possibly brought down to \$65,000 for maintenance in 1975, when costs generally have gone up all around the place? That is one that needs explanation.

Turning over the page to page 74, under Other Charges, subhead 16, Plant Pest Preventative Measures, the remark I want to make is that the approved estimate was \$15,000, the revised estimate was \$15,000, but the estimate for 1975 is not \$15,000 but \$10,000. One wonders whether there will be a cut-back in the preventative measures being used in this Ministry. We certainly would be very unhappy if there was a cut-back in this programme in view of the fact that there is so much accent being placed on feeding ourselves by 1975. It does

reflect in the increase/decrease column, a decrease of \$5,000, but there is no legend to say why this decrease has been recommended by the Ministry.

Subhead 23, Dairy Farming Expansion – Maintenance Expense:. Again, I am at a loss, because the 1974 approved estimate was \$168,000. The 1974 revised estimate for the maintenance was \$308,000, but all we are being asked for in 1975 is \$250,000. This is \$58,000 less than what was spent for maintenance in 1974, and this is the considered opinion of the Government. How, then, if we cut maintenance for 1974 by \$58,000, will we be able to maintain this dairy farming expansion programme?

Subhead 32, Fishing Industry Aid: The legend states, “To pay arrears.” I merely want to know what arrears these are in respect of fishing industry aid. To whom do we owe these arrears? What are these arrears for? For what year? The legend does not say and, certainly, we would need answers to those questions

2.40 p.m.

Subhead 37, Subvention to Cane Farming Development Corporation. In the 1974 Approved Estimates, we had the token sum of \$1 provided. We can virtually say that nothing is required in the Revised Estimates for the token sum of \$1 is again repeated. In view of this we wonder how it is that the Ministry is now asking for \$50,000 for 1975. If this was in the nature of a recurring subvention, what happened in 1974? There must be some reason for this.

Subhead 38, National Exhibition of Local Produce. The permanent exhibition site at Sophia is being used by the P.N.C. Party as its shop, for the exclusive sale of Chinese goods. How will this fit in with the Government’s exhibition? The Government uses this site; the Party is also using this site. Taxpayers’ money was used to develop this site to make it what it is today. On this point, let us also remind this honourable House of what I said recently: I know for a fact that vehicles of the Government, Ministry’s vehicles, were used to work on this site in connection with the P.N.C.’s recent Congress, the fiasco that took place there over the weekend.

What is really happening? This is taxpayers' money. Are we going to continue to allow taxpayers' money to be used for Party purposes? If that is so, then we need a further declaration to what the hon. Prime Minister has said.

As I understand it, the hon. Prime Minister said that the Party is first and foremost, the Party is paramount, the Government is subservient to the Party. If this is so, is the Government saying that it will now consider itself as having the right to use taxpayers' money for Party purposes? Is that what it amounts to? Are they telling us that they are justified in using Government vehicles, in using Government machinery, for anything in connection with the Party? Are we from now on to understand that at every twist and turn along the way we will be subsidizing the Party? If that is so, then let us know to what depths we have sunk as a result of the declarations over the week-end. Certainly, if we are going to continue holding the National Exhibition of local produce at Sophia, one needs to know how the Government's programme ties in with the Party's programme for that area.

Turning to page 75, subhead 47, Contribution to Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute. This is a new subhead as no amount was approved for 1974. The revised amount for 1974 is \$126,270 and the estimate for 1975 is \$306,270. This is a large sum of money and it may well be that we are getting returns for it but we certainly would like the hon. Minister to take the opportunity to explain to this honorable House exactly what we are getting out of this level of expenditure. We have our own research going on at the present moment. We noted on page 70, the Research and Laboratories Section, where a lot of money is envisaged to be spent in 1975. In fact, in previous years they were spending quite significant sums of money. This has been going on for some time.

We note also that in the Capital Estimates on page 82, subhead 7, there is requested \$700,000 for Diversification and Development of Agriculture and that is local funding because \$700,000 appears under other Finance for Diversification and Development of Agriculture. We also note at subhead 48 on the same page 82 under Capital Expenditure, that Caribbean

Agricultural Research and Development Institute appears again and this time we are being asked to vote \$137,000. So the total is \$306,270 plus \$137,000 and \$700,000 for our own schemes and plus the cost of all our other schemes under Research and Laboratories Section on page 70. There must be some justification for this level of expenditure outside and apart from our own programme.

My hon. Colleague would like to speak on subhead 48. I merely wanted to touch on the fact that there seems to have been a lessening of the nutrient content of the poultry feed these days. Some people have complained to me that their table birds are not being produced in the same time as previously. They seem to think that this is as a result of the feed not being up to standard and, of course, they have got to feed the birds for a longer period. The hon. Minister might look into this and see what steps could be taken, if the allegations are true, to have the situation corrected.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, subhead 48, Subsidy on Poultry Feed. The 1974 revised estimate was \$1,407,000 and now we have been asked to approve of \$3,480,000 for 1975. We are not quibbling about the amount being asked for nor an increase, obviously, because we know that the poultry feed subsidy only came on toward September this year. I would like to ask the hon. Minister a question. I am well aware of the answer he just gave me in reply to my question when I spoke on the subsidy on oil. But his Ministry is concerned with the mechanics of the subsidy. The mechanics for distribution and allocation and so on is the responsibility of the Ministry of Trade and Consumer protection. Whilst I appreciate this, the hon. Minister of Trade is not in this House today and also at some time or another, the hon. Minister of Agriculture must consult with him when they are dealing with the subsidy. So I would like to ask him to draw to the attention of the hon. Minister of Trade the very high price to which eggs have skyrocketed. Government has placed a subsidy on poultry feed and the price of poultry is under control.

Incidentally, I would like to mention in passing that since the subsidy was introduced it is very difficult to purchase poultry in the shops that sell poultry and also have a little restaurant

attached. They use the poultry to sell in the restaurant. Naturally they make more that way. However, the point I want to make is that eggs are now as high as \$2.40 a dozen.

2.50 p.m.

Poultry feed has been subsidized, the price of chicken has been controlled and now this is another opening for profit. A price of \$2.40 a dozen is an exorbitant price for the house wife to pay for eggs, considering that we do not have many items in Guyana now from which a housewife can get, at a reasonable rate, a source of protein. I should like this matter to be gone into because 20 cents an egg is really very high.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. Kennard: Mr. Chairman, commencing from page 70. There was a question with respect to the Veterinary and Livestock Division pertinent to the Bill which controls the slaughter of immature cattle and pregnant cows. I wish to report that since the Bill was brought into being some reasonable progress has been made with controlling the premature slaughter of young animals. I would concede that we are experiencing some difficulty in fully implementing the Bill because of the growth of malpractices by butchers, some of whom descent to the level of maiming young animals in order to enforce humane slaughter, and thereby to put the meat on the market. It is not uncommon to find that an animal might get its legs broken and the Veterinary Officer, for humane purposes, is forced to issue a certificate for slaughter.

We hope that by increasing the staff and by educating the people in the community we would get pressure brought to bear upon people who commit such offences and that they would be charged under the appropriate laws of Guyana.

A direct answer to that question is that we have achieved moderate progress; much more remains to be done and we can achieve more progress by added vigilance among farmers to

report malpractices and by having additional staff throughout the coastal belt to ensure that the provisions of the Bill are carried out by both farmers and butchers.

I wish to commend the hon. Leader of the Opposition for his vigilance and for observing that under the caption “Fisheries” we have but one post recorded, namely, Senior Fisheries Officer. It was intended to show all the posts pertinent to the Fisheries Division because there is a Fisheries Division in the Ministry under that caption “Fisheries”. Just as we have other major divisions listed – Veterinary and Livestock Science, Extension and Education – there is a Fisheries Division. I regret that we did show the other posts under the general statement for Personal Emoluments. That situation will be remedied in the presentation of our next Budget.

With respect to the question on Agricultural Technical Assistant Trainees and the apparent token provision for 1975, the number of persons to be trained at the time of the preparation of these Estimates could not have been adequately forecast and determined. Consequently, out of abundant caution, we have only made a token provision of \$1. We expect the number of trainees will be very large in order to support the general agricultural development thrust in 1975 and onwards. When we have identified the number of persons adequately and correctly we shall be coming before the House for the appropriate provision for the year 1975.

There was a question with respect to the numerous posts listed on page 72. One would see that in the last column on page 72 all the posts are listed as additions since no provision was made in 1974. As the hon. Leader of the Opposition has correctly surmised we are regularizing the presentation of the Estimates in order to give as much information as possible to the House and to the public. In the past, these posts, though existing in the Ministry, were shown under various block omnibus open votes. We have now taken out the various categories of personnel and have here recorded them on this page.

On page 73 a question was raised about substitution for subordinate staff. Again we have included in page 72 provision for substitute staff for people who would normally go on leave and

have made what is really only a token provision of \$400 for any extraordinary development with respect to the staffing situation in the new year.

With respect to Station allowances, at item (134) on page 73, I regret that there has been apparently a typographical error. It was the intention to request under station allowances for 1975 the same provision as in the 1974 Revised Estimate, that is to say, \$20,115. For some unexplained reason or because of the Printer's devil the zero has been knocked off after the figure "2". Therefore, rather than voting \$20,115 we are now to vote \$2,115. It would then appear that we might well have to ask for Supplementary Provision in this regard and I trust that the explanation on this occasion will serve us in good stead when a request is made to this House for Supplementary Provision on that particular item.

Transport and Travelling, subhead 2. There is a reduction from \$343,000 shown in the Revised Estimate for 1974 to \$300,000. It is our intention to rationalize the arrangements for transport and travelling within the Ministry. At the time of the preparation of these estimates it appeared for such rationalization that we might well be able to operate in 1975 at a lower figure. We trust that the measures that we will take will not meet with any particular resistance among officers in the field. All being well we expect to work within the provision of \$300,000 in 1975.

3 p.m.

On the question of Water Transport, subhead 5 and the elucidation of the phrase "location of boats", I would suggest that perhaps this was an exercise in trying to elaborate the item and not merely put down "Water Transport." This item is specifically for Water Transport in relation to the localities where the boats are placed. It is badly described here but that was intended to indicate that it was in the locations where Water Transport is necessary such as the Pomeroon River, the North West River and so forth.

On Government Garden and Grounds, subhead 8, there was a question on the increase in fuel cost and the reason why we have left the provision at \$60,000 being the same as it was in 1974, rather than using the revised estimate. Again, we are carrying out exercises in economies to improve our efficiency within the Ministry and to minimize the cost of running the Ministry. We hope that these measures to improve our internal efficiency will result in a lower requirement for funds in 1975 under this subhead than in the 1974 Revised Estimates.

Central Agricultural Station, subhead 11, a question was asked on the Revised Estimates as well as on the estimate for 1975. I take the point made by the hon. Leader of the Opposition that perhaps such a large sum ought not be stated en bloc but should carry details. If he will permit me I will give him the details under that subhead for the year 1975.

| | | |
|---|---|-----------|
| Wages for labourers (including overtime) | - | \$156,000 |
| Maintenance of canals, external (that is side-lines and middle-walks and so on) and the roadways and fences | - | 88,000 |
| Drainage charges | - | 16,000 |
| Electricity charges | - | 36,000 |
| Fuel, oil and lubricants for the Tractors and other equipment | - | 55,000 |
| Spare parts for tractors, vehicles and other equipment | - | 40,000 |
| Agricultural implements | - | 9,000 |

This totals \$400,000.

Maintenance of District Offices, subhead 12. Here again, we have not shown as much for 1975 as we had under the Revised Estimates for 1974 though the figure is \$5,000 more than shown in the Approved Estimates for 1974. Again, we are attempting to rationalize some of

these District Offices and Stations. One or two, which we found to be superfluous in some areas, might well be closed. Later in the Estimates, hon. Members will see the establishment of the Agricultural Products Corporation which will absorb some of the attempts the Ministry itself has been making in terms of the agricultural activities in some districts. Therefore, we hope that the provision required in 1975 will not be as much as we required under Revised Estimates in 1974.

Page 74, subheads 15 and 16 – Veterinary Preventative Measures and Plant Pest Preventative Measures. The hon. Leader of the Opposition did not refer to Veterinary Preventative Measures but the same remarks are applicable to that subhead too. These two votes have been votes of long tradition on the Estimates of Expenditure for the Ministry and are intended to provide for out breaks of pests and diseases. Very often the provisions made are token provisions. Should an outbreak of virulent disease or highly destructive pest occur, then we go ahead and spend and have to come before the House on an emergency basis for additional funds to meet such outbreaks. WE can reasonably foresee that in 1975 this, initially, will be the level of expenditure for foreseeable outbreaks of pests and diseases, based on certain predictable ecological and other conditions in the country. It might well be, if we were unfortunate enough to experience some major outbreak of pests and diseases, that, on an emergency basis, we shall have to come before this House for additional provision which, historically, has always been made without hesitation by the House.

Under subhead 23, Dairy Farming Expansion – Maintenance Expenses, the question has been asked why the amount to be voted for 1975 is less than the revised estimate for 1974. This is due mainly to the deployment of dairy cattle which, during this year, we have concentrated at Mon Repos. WE found that we had required large sums of money for feeding and maintaining those animals in 1974, but in 1975 we will be deploying some of these cattle that are now increasing in maturity; some are in calf. Some of these cattle will be deployed to other out-stations of the Ministry and provision for the maintenance of these deployed animals elsewhere than at Mon Repos has been made under other subheads of the Ministry.

Subhead 32, Fishing Industry Aid. The question was asked with respect to the provision of \$200,000 for 1975 as compared with the revised estimate of \$100,000 this year and approved estimate of \$100,000 this year and the explanation is “To pay arrears.” This subhead of assistance or aid to the Fishing Industry involves the refunding of duty paid on imported gear and equipment and fuel used by our indigenous fishing industry. We have found that because of the increased costs of these imports, and because also of the expansion of the industry, the refunds payable have increased. At this present time we have some backlog. We have not been able to pay the level of refunds because of this unexpected increase in 1974 of the cost of imported goods – fuels, equipment, gear and so forth. Hence the provision in 1975 for an additional sum to pay off the arrears and to meet the expected quantum of refund in 1975.

3.10 p.m.

As a matter of fact, in view of the continued escalation in prices of imports, I have notified my colleague, the Minister of Finance, that we may well have to come before the House during this year for an additional sum of money to fully pay off the arrears and to meet the current cost of refunds. This imported inflation represents a factor beyond the control of the Government.

Subhead 37, Subvention to Cane Farming Development Corporation. This Corporation undertakes the lending of money to develop our peasant cane farming industry, but during this year it was considered that we ought to have a look at the Corporation to see what changes could be made to its administration and the method in which it conducts its finances, in order to make its activities more effective in relation to the work of cane farmers. We had envisaged that the entire organization would have been overhauled. However, it does not appear that such overhauling would be convenient before 1975. Hence, we are seeking a vote of \$50,000 for the normal activities of the Corporation in 1975.

We expect that during 1975, after we have fully examined the activities of the Cane Farming Development Corporation, and fully examined the need to give additional stimulus to increase the number of cane farmers in Guyana and to make their activities more viable, we might need additional funds or we might need a new structure, a new organization, to adequately serve that industry which has so much promise. This explains why there was only a token provision last year while all these considerations were going on. We hope that the matter will come to a head in 1975.

On question of the National Exhibition Park, the exhibition part is a place of education for the people of Guyana generally; it is a place of service to the people of Guyana in general, and all the activities that have taken place there and will take place there in the future, must be construed within this light of developing the people through education and service.

There was a question on poultry feeds. I have noted the remark that there is some anxiety about the nutritional quality of some of the feeds. I am sure that the feeds manufactured by the Guyana Rice Board are not involved. As I undertook during the consideration of supplementary estimates, we will have another look at quality control within the feed factory and at our own arrangements in the Ministry of Agriculture for monitoring the quality of such feeds.

We have observed the tendency of the price of eggs to rise. We hoped that the rise in the price of eggs would, by giving the farmer a higher return, stimulate increased production to a level where supply would exceed demand and, therefore, would bring the price down by the sheer forces of the law of economics. This rise might well be a reaction to the Christmas season, since traditionally, at Christmas time, the demand is unusual and abnormal for eggs and a few other things. We shall monitor the situation and if the consumer is feeling the pinch, we will review the position with respect to the whole pricing arrangement and the entire marketing arrangements for eggs.

Consumers should not, while advocating that people should enter into agriculture and should participate in the agricultural thrust, deny our farmers the opportunity to get a fair and reasonable return because I think this will be the real inducement to others to enter the agricultural sector. If it became viable and if it became prosperous, others would wish to enter the sector to share in the prosperity, so that in the long run when production rises it is the consumer who would benefit in terms of price stability and adequate supplies of foods of all categories, including eggs.

Reference was made to items on page 82, Diversification and Development of Agriculture, Contribution to the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute, and the relevance of our contribution to that Institute to the provision on page 75. This Institute is new and represents a new regional institution which has been established to be responsible for agricultural research in the Caricom region generally. It will deal with research which is beyond the technical capability of individual member territories. There will be a very close relationship between the Institute and the Faculty of Agriculture of the University of the West Indies at St. Augustine, Trinidad, where there will be considerable back up of scientific personnel of a very high quality, and a larger number, to support research which would certainly be beyond the means of a particular government, for example, Guyana.

One immediate benefit that we will get from the Institute is the establishment of a section of the Institute in Guyana. That section will be based at Ebini to undertake research on livestock and crops for the intermediate savannahs. We have done some but the research has not been sufficiently penetrative and, perhaps, this is why we have been so long in trying to find meaningful solutions to some of the problems of the intermediate savannahs.

The extent of the intermediate savannahs exceeds the area of Trinidad and Tobago. It is a vast area in which we will undertake pertinent research for settlement and for the provision of information to entrepreneurs, co-operatives, and others, who wish to develop this vast territory. We are looking to the large resources of the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development

Institute to provide the level and the depth of research to provide the answers which we are seeking.

In addition, the Institute will be undertaking research in other locations in the Caribbean, the results of which will be applicable to Guyana, such as research on market garden crops which results of which will be applicable to Guyana, such as research on market garden crops which are being imported into the region as a whole, for example, onions, carrots. It will be undertaking such research, for example, in Montserrat, the results of which – the varieties that we find, the fertilizers mixtures, and so on – will be applicable to Guyana. We can take that information and apply it here in Guyana, so there will be a tremendous benefit, we hope, to be derived from the activities of C.A.R.D.I.

The provision in the Estimates on page 82, subhead 48, of \$137,000, applies to our initial investment – and we will be coming before the House for an additional sum.

3.20 p.m.

We hope that this will be a project financed jointly by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the Government of Guyana to produce soya bean and corn in real volume to satisfy the requirements, not only of Guyana, but of other participating territories. This is our initial investment. Much more, of course, will be needed. This is virtually a token sum having regard to the vast acreages that will be cultivated and hence that provision under the Capital Estimates, which is the capital investment.

On page 82, reference was made also to \$700,000 for the diversification and development of agriculture. This sum embraces the activities of the Ministry at the moment in promoting the development and expansion of the cassava and corn industry and, in fact, just as I entered this House this afternoon I received a loaf of bread baked from Guyana's cassava flour mixed with imported wheaten flour. I will pass this along to my hon. Friends on the other side for a sample.

I trust that these explanations have answered adequately the points raised by the two Members on the other side this afternoon.

Head 26, Ministry of Agriculture – Agriculture Agriculture – Agriculture - \$10,128,835 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Members we are to finish at 6.30 p.m. We have got two major Heads still to come: Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Home Affairs but we have only finished two Heads under Agriculture. It is now 3.20 p.m. Pages 76 to 78.

HEAD 27 – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE LANDS AND SURVEYS

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,908,662 for Head 27, Ministry of Agriculture – Lands and Surveys, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, I do appreciate your concern as regards progress but with your permission – because I feel somewhat emotional about this – I feel compelled to say how very pleased I am at the very full, frank, able and informative way in which the hon. Minister, dealing with his first Budget before this House, has replied to my queries. I see this, perhaps, as the silver lining on the dark clouds that have been hovering over Guyana within recent times. If the present Ministers were to emulate his example then, indeed, there may be some hope for the future of Guyana. I thank him from the bottom of my heart for what he did. Let me stress that the Minister indulged in absolutely no invective at all and that is very important.

Page 76, subhead 1, item (15), Assistant Commissioner, Land Administration. This post as stated in the legend was a new post created by Supplementary Estimates in 1974 but only the token provision of \$1 is being sought for 1975. If this post was created several months ago there

must be some reason why it is not envisaged to fill the vacancy in 1975 or, maybe, as soon as they can identify somebody they will come to the honourable House for supplementary provisions again.

Subhead 1, item (11), Project Manager. Here again this seems to be a new post. There are three of them to be identified and the sum of \$28,548 is sought in 1975. I wonder whether the hon. Minister would tell us what will be the scope and functions of these Project Managers. What projects will there be? In what areas will the present Ministry's staff be utilized to fill these new posts?

Item (23), Secretary, National Land Selection Committee. This post has been going for some time but I think that this honourable House should be told quite lucidly, as the hon. Minister has been going, what are the present functions of this Committee and who comprise the Committee. How often are they appointed or re-appointed? Can we get some information on that?

Over the page, I was going to ask about these posts from item (48) to item (80), but the hon. Minister has given the explanation that they are regularizing the position and, for our information, listing and really setting out all the various posts so that we can see them a glance and see the variations year after year.

There is one question on item (81) but I suspect the explanation has been given already. Under this item, Substitutes for Subordinate staff on leave, casuals etc., we voted \$100 in 1974. The revised estimate is \$71,608 but only a token provision of \$100 is being asked for in 1975. The hon. Minister would probably confirm that these are posts which have been set out either on page 77 or on page 72 of these Estimates. I would be very happy next year to see a significant amount being set down in the Revised Estimate for this item. The token provision is \$100 and we would not expect to see anything in the vicinity of \$71,608 as the revised figure for 1974. We will be looking for it.

Page 78, subhead 6, Labour and Rations for Labour. The 1974 Revised Estimate is \$575,000 but we are requesting only \$450,000 for 1975. This means that we are asking for \$125,000 less than we are spending in 1974 and that is a lot of money. There may well be a cutting down of activity somewhere along the line because if you do not have the money you cannot have rations for labour. Maybe, the hon. Minister is streamlining again and cutting down on expenditure. We would like to know.

Subhead 11, Land Surveyors' Examination. I want to take this opportunity to ask the hon. Minister whether he knows what progress has been made in respect of training Surveyors. We have heard so often in the past that this country is short of Surveyors. Many of them left and went to the Bahamas. But it was recognized that the country was short of Surveyors. We were told that there were crash programmes that many things were being done to train the Surveyors.

Perhaps, the hon. Minister would like to tell us what is the percentage of passes in this examination because we bear in mind that the Government has said that until we get enough Surveyors we will not be able to give Amerindians their land and the Amerindian Lands Commission Report has been out for a long time. The Government has accepted it; it has committed itself to the principle and to the objective of giving Amerindians title to their lands. The only excuse was shortage of surveyors to do surveys. We are very anxious that we should have the surveys. Therefore, this is a very important aspect because on the availability of surveyors, apparently, would rest the prospect of the Amerindians having title to their lands. They are very worried about this.

3.30 p.m.

I will deal now with subheads 15 to 23 as a block. These are all to do with Government Land Development Schemes. One would notice that the level of expenditure is about the same as in previous years. Very large sums of money are being spent on these Government Land

Development Schemes. The question always arises: What do you get as a return for this expenditure?

In order to find some answers to that question we looked at page 8 of the Estimates where the details of Revenue are given. On page 8 on the right hand side, VIII, Land Development Schemes, Rents etc., we note that every one of these Land Development Schemes failed to fulfil its expectation in respect of revenue for 1974. I will give just a \$1½ million was estimated, the revised shows only \$400,000. For the Cane Grove/La Bonne Mere Land Development Scheme the sum of \$150,000 was estimated, the revised shows \$48,000. For the Anna Regina Land Development Scheme the sum of \$250,000 was estimated, the revised estimate shows only \$100,000. For the Hague and La Jalousie Land Development Scheme the sum of \$15,000 was estimated, the revised estimate shows only \$2,000. We skip a few and we find that the sum of \$200,000 was estimated in the 1974 Approved Estimates for the Vergenoegen Land Development Scheme and the revised estimate shows \$22,000. And we can go on in the same way with all the rest. I do not want to waste time but this is the pattern.

Obviously the Government has adopted a new policy in respect of these Land Development Schemes. We did have some indication given us by the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development. These are part of the Estimates and this is why we refer to them.

The Government seems to have adopted some new policy. Is it waiving rents to allow the farmers to catch up? Will the arrears be waived? We are very anxious that we do not get back to the stage where bulldozers have to be used to bulldoze people's properties to the ground. We have discussed in this honourable House the fact that people are allowed to run up great amounts of arrears and when they are lulled into a false sense of security a sudden demand is made for the rents, which they cannot pay. What is done then? They are taken to court, and they do not have the money to pay anything.

In the past the Government resorted to merely going in and bull-doing their houses so as to get them off the land and let somebody else occupy it. We would not like that to happen again. If this is not to happen the people must have a clear picture of what the future holds for them. Either they must be told, “We will waive your rents”, or some scheme will have to be worked out whereby they are required to pay over a longer period of time, or whereby they can be encouraged to produce crops and some arrangement made whereby the Government can recover from the produce of crops. Something like that should be done but we have not been told.

We would like the hon. Minister to take this opportunity to tell us why the level of returns of revenue from these Land Development Schemes was so drastically revised to project a lower rate of returns in spite of the fact that expenditure remain at the same level. That is all that I wish to comment on Head 28.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Agriculture

Mr. Kennard: Mr. Chairman, there was a comment on the provision for the post of Assistant Commissioner. The intention here is to redesignate an existing post which was formerly called Chief land Development Officer. He will now be designated Assistant Commissioner, Land Administration. The provision for the post of “Project Manager” should have read Project Managers, because the sum of \$28,548 would accommodate three such posts of Project Manager: one for Black Bush Polder, one for the North West/Matthews Ridge complex and another for the Land Settlement Developments along the highway from Soesdyke to Linden. This is a very vast area.

With respect to the remarks on the Lands Selection Committee, the post of Secretary and the question of how often is this Committee appointed, the Committee is not a statutory Committee. It is a Committee appointed as an impartial tribunal to process and to examine applications for lands; and the Committee really is at the pleasure of the Minister to deal with

applications for plots of land notably on land settlement schemes since it is the responsibility of the Commissioner of Lands. It is under the law to deal with land administration generally. But we have found it useful and what we have done has been acceptable to applicants to have their applications vetted by this selection tribunal appointed at the pleasure of the Minister.

3.40 p.m.

There was a passing reference on page 77 to the multiplicity of posts. Again, the Leader of the Opposition has correctly seen that we are trying, as I said earlier, to identify these posts in the Budget rather than to have them tucked away in various block votes.

On page 78, subhead 6, Labour and Rations for Labour a question was asked on the apparent reduction from the Revised Estimate for 1974. What is being done here is that we are trying to identify these costs – the cost of labour and rations in relation to specific surveys or specific projects rather than putting them under a generalized head. Where we have been able to identify specific projects, we have removed some of the cost from this block vote into the specific surveys or specific projects.

In time we hope that this vote would disappear also just as we have done for categories of labour and the cost pertinent to specific projects would be shown rather than having an omnibus vote which is not really satisfactory for efficient financial control.

The question was asked under subhead 11 about Land Surveyors and their training. The reason why this sum of \$1,700 appears to be so small is that arrangements have been made for the Technical Institute to train Sworn Land Surveyors. We hope that young Guyanese would take advantage of the training facilities at the Technical Institute to qualify as Sworn Land Surveyors because there is a shortage and this skill is in great demand. We can use all the surveyors that we can get. A large pool of surveyors will accelerate our programmes such as the

implementation of the Amerindian Lands Commission Report, to which the hon. Leader of the Opposition referred.

Over and above the training of Sworn Land Surveyors, in terms of higher professional qualification and specialized qualification in the various surveying subjects, arrangements have been made to have such training done at the University of the West Indies and the University of Guyana. We are tackling this whole programme of increasing surveying skills in Guyana by utilizing the new institutions which have been set up and which are now in a position to teach these subjects.

Finally, I will deal with the remarks on subheads 17 to 24, Land Development Schemes. The Government's policy with respect to Land Development Schemes is that the Government's presence in terms of administration and operation should not be a permanent one. That is to say that we cannot indefinitely manage Land Settlement Schemes. Ultimately, it is the aim that Land Development Schemes must be turned over to the people and to the communities, and that Local Authorities and other organized bodies should take over from the Government to operate these Schemes. We have already met with some success in this regard.

In looking through these estimates, one would see, therefore, that the provision that we have made has been virtually static. We are not asking for more because this is in keeping with the policy of retreat, of getting out of the Land Settlement Schemes and putting control in the hands of the people.

Black Bush Polder which was in virtual chaos in the 1960's and which we have now made into a responsible and highly productive project is showing excellent results. This year farmers there have reaped the largest rice crop in their history. [Applause] In fact, I think the House would be pleased to know – and this is relevant to the general remarks of the Leader of the Opposition with respect to the revenue side, page 8 – that there has been a very substantial

increase in the collection of revenue from Land Development Schemes and I will read some figures.

For the period ended November, this year, total collections for Land Development Schemes amounted to \$790,000 compared with the following, starting from the year 1971: 1971, \$475,000; 1972, which was a bad year with floods, \$358,000; 1973, \$; 1973, \$464,000. This year up to the end of November we have collected \$790,000, which is nearly twice as much as we have collected over the past three years.

With respect to Black Bush Polder alone, if we compare collections in the year 1973, we see that in 1973 we collected from Black Bush \$257,000 up to November but for this year, up to November, the comparative period, our collections were nearly \$501,000 – nearly twice as much.

Rapid progress is being made in terms of the collection of revenue from these Land Settlement Schemes based on the higher levels of production from the people and to their co-operative response to the programmes of the Government to increase agricultural production.

I think, Mr. Chairman, that these replies cover all the questions asked.

Head 27, Ministry of Agriculture – Lands and Surveys - \$2,908,662 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 79 to 81.

HEAD 28 – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE – HYDRAULICS

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,675,522 for Head 28, Ministry of Agriculture – Hydraulics, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, I have only one question to ask here. I do appreciate that this Division is coming under the Ministry of Agriculture for the very first time. That is quite apparent when we look at the provisions here but there are no details that I would like to ask. But in view of the tremendous importance of this section in the development of Guyana, I would like to know whether the hon. Minister is satisfied that he has the necessary staff. For example, are all the engineering vacancies filled. If they are not filled what are the prospects of filling them now?

Mr. Kennard: We would admit that there are some vacancies for engineers in this Department of the Ministry but at present, the whole question of the conditions of service with respect to engineers and the possibility of any additional inducement to attract scarce skills is being dealt with by the Public Service Commission in order to induce qualified persons to fill existing vacancies. In addition to this, we are seeking external technical assistance from friendly countries for the provision of such engineering skills as we do not have at the moment.

Head 28, Ministry of Agriculture – Hydraulics - \$2,675,522 – agreed and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

3.50 p.m.

The Chairman: Page 82

DIVISION XIII – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

Question proposed that the sum of \$35,256,500 for Division XIII, Ministry of Agriculture – stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: It is a large sum of money, \$35 million to be voted under this Division. Subhead 5, Guyana School of Agriculture. We are now being asked to vote \$617,000 as capital

expenditure in 1975. This, of course, is in addition to the \$½ million subsidy, shown on page 74, to meet recurrent expenditure. This is capital expenditure, which, as the legend says, is “to expand training facilities.”

We note that the same thing was said in the 1974 Estimates in respect of the amount requested at that time, \$541,000. In the Revised Estimates for 1974, it was envisaged that \$400,000 would have been spent to expand the training facilities for the Guyana School of Agriculture. Will the hon. Minister tell us what was done in 1974 and what is proposed to be done in 1975 in respect of this expansion of training facilities? We would be very glad to know.

Dealing with Land Development, subhead 12, Soesdyke/Linden, hon. Members will note that the amount being requested as capital for the development of Soesdyke/Linden is \$3,500,000. This is a very huge sum. What does the Minister propose doing with this sum? At the same time, we note that the amount appearing in the 1974 Approved Estimates was \$983,000. The 1974 Revised Estimates list \$660,900. We would like to know what was done with the \$660,900 and what is proposed to be done with this \$3,500,000. We rather suspect that with the level of achievement in respect of capital estimates this money will not be spent. It would be interesting to know what the policy is with respect to spending this money.

We come to the perennial problem of the North West Region, subhead 13. The amount being requested for 1975 as capital is \$3 million. For years now we have been pouring money down the drain in this area. We started with the whole big emotional business of saving the people who were retrenched from the African manganese company. The Cabinet took decisions and we went in; emergency funds were raised; we started bulldozing and initiated crash programmes to create alternative jobs for the people. I am certain that not even ten per cent of those people whom we originally went in to help are there in that area at the present moment. This became a prestigious P.N.C. showpiece except that it is, in fact, a failure. It has become merely an area where there are State Farms rather than an area with the ex-employees of the African Manganese Company, whom we went in to help.

Let us look at the level of expenditure. In 1972, it was \$2,465,908. In 1973 it was \$3,212,000. That is a nice round figure. Under the Revised Estimates for 1974, the sum is \$2 million. Over those three years it is a fantastic expenditure of \$7,677,908 and now in 1975 they are asking for a further \$3 million. We have spent a lot of money. What have we got to show for it so far? Let us bear in mind that there was a lot of help in establishing this area as an agricultural complex.

The manganese company left fancy houses there; it left buildings; it left a complex of roads; it left lots of things, and those things would have involved capital expenditure. The Government had the benefit of those. But quite apart from that, over these three years, \$7.6 million was spent. What have we to show in terms of revenue? Nothing, if we look at page 8. There is nothing in terms of revenue from this area. How many genuine co-operatives are in the area, or are they all state farms? The Government itself announced that they had become state farms. It is an area where the P.N.C. people are heavily subsidized at the expense of the general taxpayer. The taxpayers are the ones who have to pay for the fiasco up there.

I know the hon. Minister has just taken over the Ministry. This situation has existed there for some time now. I am not casting any aspersions on him; I am not laying any blame in his direction. What I would hope is that he would investigate the matter. It may well be he is not satisfied with any of the allegations I have made but at least I would very humbly ask him to investigate what I have said and, if there is a mess there, to clear up the mess in this area.

Moving on to subhead 17, Assistance to Agricultural Development Activities, there seems to be much duplication in the various assistances. This is assistance to agricultural development activities. The figure under the Approved Estimates for 1974 is \$800,000; under the Revised Estimates it is \$2 million. We see that it went up very significantly. The proposal for 1975 is \$1 million. Why was there the increase from the originally budgeted \$800,000 to \$2 million? What did we use this \$2 million for, and what do we propose to use the sum of \$1 million in 1975 for?

Subhead 36 deals with the purchase and installation of pumps. Every year, for some time now, huge sums of money are voted but these sums are not spent. For example, in 1973, the voted provision was \$3 million. The actual amount spent was \$1,800,000. In 1974, \$4,300,000 was voted. The 1974 Revised Estimates show that \$565,000 was spent. Of course, we have heard the excuse that we had to cut back on the development programme as a result of the crisis, but these monies were being voted consistently, not last year since 1973, and even before that.

4 p.m.

Now, we are being asked to vote \$3,700,000 for 1975 after having underspent for 1973 and 1974. We note that there are still floods; there are the effects of drought. These things still continue and we would like to know what real progress we are making in respect of the Government's plan for the purchase and installation of pumps. What is the plan for 1975? The plan in 1973 obviously was not achieved; for 1974 it could not possibly have been achieved. What is the position for 1975? Do we think we can achieve expenditure of \$3,700,000 during next year? I rather doubt it.

Moving now to subhead 40, Emergency Flood Relief. The sum of \$500,000 is being requested. When we think of purchase and installation of pumps, and we move in, as we have done, for the emergency flood relief, then the question arises: Are we still paying out any of this money for flood relief at the present time? Do we still owe people money? Have we promised people money for flood relief and have not paid them as yet? Will some of this money be used to pay people to whom we promised flood relief?

I recollect that on the last occasion when I was in the Pomeroon area the farmers were complaining bitterly that the Government had promised them money for flood relief and up to that time, which was earlier this year, they had not received any money at all. Perhaps, the hon. Minister would like to tell us whether the people who are complaining would get any of this

\$500,000 or whether it is merely put here as a provision to meet contingencies which may arise during next year.

Subhead 49, Demonstration Commercial Centres. This is an entirely new subhead and the sum of \$5,000 is being requested. The legend states “To provide for demonstration commercial flats.” I am sure that the Members of this honourable House would like some more details about this. What are these commercial flats? Where would they be? Is it something that the Ministry would be building? Could the hon. Minister tell us all about it?

The last remark I would like to make is that I note that in respect of Amerindian Development, nothing at all is being requested for 1975. It is a crying shame that nothing is being requested under this subhead for Amerindian Development when so much is being voted for National Service, Entertainment, Foreign Affairs and all the rest.

The Chairman: Hon. Members do you wish to proceed until we conclude the Head?

[Hon. Members indicated in the affirmative]

The Chairman: Hon. Minister

Mr. Kennard: Mr. Chairman, the Capital Estimates of the Ministry amount to \$35 million. Before commenting on the detailed items, I would just briefly like to repeat the policy of the Government with respect to agriculture. The Government is laying tremendous emphasis on the development of agriculture for the obvious reason of meeting the food needs of the population at a time when food is scarce in the world and many nations are starving.

We hope not only to feed Guyanese adequately and well but also to contribute to the improvement of the food situation in the world in general, notably the food situation in the developing countries, by way of exporting surplus food to those countries.

In pursuance of this policy we wish to settle vast areas of land such as the Soesdyke/Linden area, the North West area and the various areas on the coast where it is necessary, first, to provide basic drainage and irrigation before settlement. Not only are we going to settle these vast areas of virgin soils, but we are also providing for the education of the people to be settled. In terms of the remarks, therefore, of the Leader of the Opposition, we have to construe the provision here of \$35 million as indicative of the Government's commitment to developing these areas and implementing the policies that I have enunciated.

For example, in the field of Education – and this is pertinent to the first question – the Guyana School of Agriculture is to be greatly expanded in order to take in much larger numbers of students than is possible at the moment because of the very limited facilities. In 1975, we expect to establish additional dormitories particularly to permit the increased number of female students. There is a great demand now from our young people, girls, to enter into agriculture and they must be trained. The provision includes our intent to establish additional dormitory facilities, classroom facilities, laboratory facilities and staff house. In 1974, we did enlarge the school by providing a new dining-room, a new auditorium and a new division of Food Technology but there will be even more expansion in the new year to cope with the large number of Guyanese who wish to be trained.

With respect to the training as such of our young people who are committed to the country's development, I am pleased to announce that the Government is giving very active consideration to this and an announcement is expected shortly whereby the cost of attending the Guyana School of Agriculture will be waived and tenure there will be free for all Guyanese.
[Applause]

The Soesdyke/Linden Highway is a vast area. We all know the extent of this area if we have driven there and I am sure we have all driven from Soesdyke to Linden. In settling people, once cannot just turn them, as it were, into the wilderness without basic infrastructure and facilities and much of the funds this year will be employed in providing roads to create

settlement areas so that people can move into the areas comfortably and have the roads to take produce out from the farms to the markets.

In addition, we shall provide along the e and I am sure we have all driven from Soesdyke to Linden. In settling people, one cannot just turn them, as it were, into the wilderness without basic infrastructure and facilities and much of the funds this year will be employed in providing roads to create settlement areas so that people can move into the areas comfortably and have the roads to take produce out from the farms to the markets.

In addition, we shall provide along the Linden/Soesdyke Highway, in these settlement areas, a supply of potable water to the more concentrated settlements. There will be provision also to give the people planting material and to produce planting material for settlers in the area. Social facilities such as the establishment of a school and the provision of adequate transport to some of the more concentrated settlement areas will be dealt with in 1975 so that, by establishing the basic infrastructure and creating the amenities, people will be encouraged to settle in these vast areas.

I wish to remind the House that in the North West District, at Matthews Ridge, we are dealing with an area of fertile soils, a remote area in the heart of our country, a virgin area and if one considers the size of the Matthews Ridge area as being larger than Jamaica, then the provision of \$3½ million for settlement and development is really a drop in the ocean.

4.10 p.m.

We ought to have asked for a much larger sum if we are to settle an area of the size of Jamaica which, as you know, has its own Government and infrastructure and has a budget that is larger than that of our own country. The small allocation that we have of a mere \$3½ million will be employed in providing the basic infrastructure because one cannot invite people in an

area and loose them like wild animals in the jungle. We have to provide basic, if not sophisticated, amenities facilities and infrastructure for them.

Much of the money will go into the provision of an access road in this area which is dense tropical jungle. There will be the development, therefore, of a quarry in the area for surfacing the roads. A good deal of the sum of money asked for will go towards the maintenance of the facilities that we have taken over from the Manganese Company. We cannot allow such valuable assets to be run down and neglected by not providing adequate funds for replacements. There is an electric plant, there is a railway, there is a hospital, rest houses, the original housing area, houses for the settlers and so on. We have at least to maintain those facilities and to replace things that have become out of use so as not to waste the valuable assets acquired from that Company by our Government. Therefore, the provision is small indeed.

But it is easy for people who have not visited the area – and I am not referring to the hon. Leader of the Opposition – to criticize Matthews Ridge from a far distance. We are inviting them to visit Matthews Ridge to see the tremendous development that has taken place in recent years. They will see the dense jungle cleared and crops thriving and some of the best beef cattle in Guyana grazing in lush pastures in that area. One must value the assets that we have created by land clearing and infrastructural development and the value of cattle on the land now exceeding 1,000 heads. We are promoting the development of sheep and goat for the production of mutton for the domestic market and for export, the production of African oil palm. We have a large area under African oil palm. Some of the best citrus in Guyana can now be found in Matthews Ridge. We are encouraging the production of grain and legume and food crops to feed the people settled in that area and also for export to us here on the coast. One has but to visit Matthews Ridge to be impressed with the money spent. The money provided has been and will be, money that will be usefully and beneficially employed to enhance the value of Matthews Ridge and, therefore, to augment the assets of Guyana.

On the question of pumps, subhead 36. The figures in the various columns might appear incomprehensible at first sight but in 1973 when the sum of \$4,300,000 was provided on the estimates, this amount was to enable the Ministry to establish a Letter of Credit to be drawn upon as pumps were ordered to improve the drainage and irrigation on the coastal belt and to make life better for our thousands of rice and provision farmers on our highly settled coastal belt. This enabled that initial Letter of Credit to be established.

But the delivery of the equipment was slow because of production and supply problems confronting the manufacturers. One will find in the subsequent year, 1974, just a provision of \$565,000 representing the value of the pumps actually received from that initial Letter of Credit established with the Bank.

We are now asking for \$3.7 million, again representing the number of pumps which we expect to receive during 1975. The total cost of this scheme was \$12 million but the pumps are only now arriving after having been ordered a couple of years ago.

These pumps will make a very significant difference to the historically chronic drainage and irrigation problem. Already we have received ten pumps and these will be located in areas such as Cane Grove, East Coast Demerara, and Western Berbice, at Onverwagt to begin with, to improve the urgent problems of drainage and irrigation in those areas in order to make the land safe for farming. As the additional pumps arrive they will be placed in other critical areas. The explanation for this variation in the money lies in the payment of pumps as delivered by the manufacturers.

On the question of flood relief, subhead 40, hon. Members will see that a sum of \$500,000 only has been voted this year compared with the larger amount last year on the revised estimate, \$800,000. In the first place, we are determined to prevent the occurrence of floods on the coastal belt and on the riverain areas and the provision of pumps is but one technique.

The second technique is to improve existing internal drainage and irrigation canals in villages and in organized areas, notably the Pomeroon River area. A large amount of the \$500,000 to be voted for next year will be employed in making the Pomeroon area safe from flooding. We have reduced the provision in 1975 because I am happy to say that arrangements have been made for the Guyana Rice Board to invest part of its trading surplus, we hope as much as \$3 million, to augment this sum. That \$3 million will be invested to further improve the drainage and irrigation of our villages on the Corentyne, West Demerara, Western Berbice and the Essequibo Coast which are notably rice areas.

The last question was on the provision under subhead 49 “for demonstration commercial flats”, as the legend states. With his usual perspicacity and keenness the hon. Leader of the Opposition has detected that perhaps the word “flats” is out of place. In fact, it ought to have been “plots”. This is a typographical error for which I sincerely apologise.

4.20 p.m.

This is an attempt of the Ministry to answer the criticisms that in the past it has concentrated on small experiments rather than moving purposefully on a large scale into the field to enter and to demonstrate commercial agricultural production.

We feel that the days are past for small plots and demonstrations and in the new year we will start by moving into the districts and having large sized commercial plots or farms where we can produce in sizeable quantities many of the commodities that we advocate both for the consumer and for the home market and to cost those demonstration plots so as to be able to give co-operative and investing farmers the information as to the economic and commercial viability of production.

This is the purpose of this subhead for \$65,000. It is to enable the Ministry to engage, as I said, in this meaningful production of chosen crops – things such as onions on the Coast and

carrots and some condiments which we are importing for the manufacture of curry powder, for example – to get into the field and to make a further meaningful contribution to the supply of agricultural commodities and the achievement of the Government's thrust to feed the nation, fully, by 1976. [Applause]

Ministry of Agriculture – Division XIII - \$35,256,500 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 83.

**DIVISION XIV – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE –
IBRD/IDA LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

Question proposed the sum of \$1,929,500 for Division XIV, Ministry of Agriculture – IBRD/IDA Livestock Development Project stand part of the Estimates.

Division XIV, Ministry of Agriculture – IBRD/IDA Livestock Development Project - \$1,929,500 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 85.

**DIVISION XVI – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE –
IBRD/IDA PROJECTS – SECOND SEA DEFENCE PROJECT**

Question proposed that the sum of \$7,710,000 for Division XVI, Ministry of Agriculture – IBRD/IDA Projects – Second Sea Defence Project, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Subhead 2, Equipment. The legend states:

“To provide for the purchase of floating craft, tugs and pontoons. I.B.R.D. Loan.”

The amount being requested is \$3,460,00,460,000. We note that the Revised Estimate for 1974 was \$1 million. At first I thought this might have been for the new ferry boat but it absolutely is not because it comes under Sea Defence. This is an area that we are all concerned about – Equipment for Sea Defence purposes – since it is such we are all concerned about – Equipment for Sea Defence purposes – since it is such a large sum of money I wonder whether the hon. Minister could give us an idea how many of these floating craft, etc. were purchased. Also, could he tell us whether we did, in fact, purchase \$1 million worth of equipment in 1974 and whether we really intend to spend \$3,460,000 in 1975 to acquire these vessels.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Agriculture

Mr. Kennard: Mr. Chairman, one of the threats to Guyana is the threat of the sea – inundation of our agricultural areas by the sea, necessitating the maintenance of very costly, very formidable sea defences. This provision of \$7.7 million will cover the cost the 1975 to provide the necessary sea walls or sea defences, the strong structures to prevent the sea from flooding our very valuable, coastal, alluvial land.

Now, specially, with respect to the provision for Equipment, subhead 2 and the request for \$3.4 million for 1975, it is proposed to purchase two tugs and eight pontoons in 1975. We found that this year, the supply of stone and boulders has been limited and really threatened by the unavailability of tugs to move the supplies from the interior to the Coast and along the Coast wherever we are constructing sea defences. Hence, in order to meet that need, we have taken action to make this request for the necessary funds for the eight pontoons, large costly vessels and two high-powered tugs for the new year.

We hope to build the pontoons in Guyana so that Guyanese would benefit not only by the protection to be afforded in the sea defences but in the construction. Jobs will be created by building in Guyana, these pontoons as well as the two tugs which, traditionally, we had imported

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from overseas. We shall build the two tugs in Guyana, there again, giving much needed work to our ship-building industry and employment to our Guyanese Engineers and welders.

Division XVI – Ministry of Agriculture – IBRD/IDA Projects – Second Sea Defence Project - \$7,710,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 85 A.

**DIVISION XVII – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE –
IBRD/IDA PROJECTS – TAPAKUMA IRRIGATION PROJECT**

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,240,000 for Division XVII, Ministry of Agriculture – IBRD/IDA Projects – Tapakuma Irrigation Project, stand part of the Estimates.

Division XVII – Ministry of Agriculture – IBRD/IDA Projects – Tapakuma Irrigations Project - \$1,240,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Speaker: On resumption, we will deal with Ministry of Labour then Ministry of Home Affairs. The sitting of the House is suspended until ten minutes to five.

Sitting suspended at 4.30 p.m.

4.50 p.m.

On resumption –

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. Pages 185 and 186.

HEAD 72 – MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Question proposed that the sum of \$817,729 for Head 72, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Singh: Page 185, subhead 1, item (17), Labour Research Officer. We note that the amount in the Approved Estimates for 1974 was \$6,384 but the Revised Estimates show only \$2,128 which gives us the impression that this post is vacant. Can the hon. Minister say whether it is vacant or whether somebody has just come into the post? It may well be that somebody has just come into the post.

This post is under the heading, “Employment and Productivity Division”, and if one goes down to item (18), one would see that the post of Economist is listed; items (18), (19), and (20), are all positions in the Employment and Productivity Division; item (18), Economist, item (19), Job Analyst, item (20), Statistical Officer. For items (18) and (19), there is nothing at all in the Revised Estimates, so these two posts must have been vacant in 1974. In respect of item (20), the sum of \$6,048 is shown as the revised amount in 1974, whereas the amount of \$10,716 is being requested for 1975.

It does seem that this Division is suffering from a lack of adequate staffing. I wonder whether the hon. Minister would tell us how soon this Division will be brought up to operational standard so that it can perform the functions which the Ministry intends it to perform.

Item (25), Field Investigators. We created these three posts of Field Investigator several months ago yet we note nothing is reflected in the 1974 Revised Estimates in respect of these

posts. We wonder why these posts have not been filled so far. Or is it a mistake in the Estimates that nothing is listed in the 1974 Revised Estimates? Certainly, at the time, we got the impression from the hon. Minister that those posts were very urgently needed and we wonder why it is they appear not to have been filled.

Turning to page 186, there is just one item I wish to speak on, namely, subhead 15, Supervision of Weighing of Canes on Sugar Estates. I looked at my copy of the 1974 Estimates and nothing was there in the Approved Estimates. In the Revised Estimates, the sum of \$100,000 appears, so that the Ministry expects to spend \$100,000 for 1974 in respect of this subhead. Yet for the year 1975, the government is asking for the token provision of only \$1. I wonder whether the Hon. Minister would take the opportunity to explain this system to us and the reason he is only asking for only \$1. for next year.

Mrs. DaSilva: I have a comment on page 185, subhead 1, items (22) and (23) which deal with the Assistant Chief Factories Officer and the Senior Factories Officer respectively. I should like to take them together in dealing with the personnel in this Factories Division.

There are six officers in this Division and I think the Minister did say that there is a large number of factories which they have to inspect and check on, to see that the proprietors abide by the rules and regulations relating to factories. The chief of these, I remember, is inspecting bakeries to look into their hours of work, to see that they are not working at nights without the proper permission.

Then there is the question of overtime, and, of course, permission has to be obtained for overtime work. This has always been a bone of contention between the recognized bakers and, what are called, the “Jerry” bakers, bakers who are not registered and pose a great problem for the officers of the Factories Division. As well as that, there are other factories that have to be constantly checked upon.

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From the Revised Estimate for 1974, we see that only \$3,688 is to be spent on the Assistant Chief Factories Officer when the Approved Estimates was \$11,064 and only \$2,320 is to be spent on the Senior Factories Officer when the Approved Estimates was \$6,960. Is it a question that they did not have enough personnel and, if so, are the posts filled now?

The Minister of Labour (Mr. Carrington): On the questions asked by the hon. Members of the Opposition on subhead 1, item (17), Labour Research Officers, this is a post that has been outstanding for many years. We decided, after careful examination, to advertise but the post is now filled by one of the Officers in the Ministry of Labour. The other post referred to by the hon. Member has been just created and that one will be advertised and filled.

On the question of the Field Investigators, there are three, if my memory is correct, and those Field Investigators work with the Statistical Department. The posts are not filled at the present moment. We will advertise and as soon as applications are examined they will be filled. On the question of the Sugar Cane Supervisors, you will note that just \$1 is stated here and the amount of money we spent was over \$100,000. It is not really an expenditure by the Government. We pay the money in advance and then recoup from the sugar industry. That is the reason for having \$1.

On the question of the Factory Inspectors, I agree that they may appear to be inadequate because there are just three in that division now. But in the past these particular duties were carried out by Labour Officers. We found it necessary to separate the divisions and so we have staff in there carrying out the duty exclusively as Factory Inspectors. In this very division we have the Agriculture Assessors who are working in a dual capacity as both Agricultural Assessors and Factory Inspectors wherever necessary, so they will supplement wherever necessary the factory Inspectorate.

Head 72, Ministry of Labour and Social Security - \$817,729 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 186 A.

**HEAD 73 – MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY
EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE SERVICE**

Question proposed that the sum of \$105,466 for Head 73, Ministry of Labour and Social Security – Employment Exchange Service, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Subhead 2, Transport and Travelling. The sum of \$10,000 was approved for 1974. The Revised Estimate for 1974 is less; it is \$8,000 so that the Ministry did a very commendable job in keeping down their transport and travelling and is, in fact, spending \$2,000 less under their Transport and Travelling vote in 1974. But for 1975, we see an entirely different picture. The Ministry is asking for \$18,894 and the legend states “Increased travelling allowances.” If in 1974 only \$8,000 was spent, bearing in mind that this year 1974 is the year of the fuel crisis and everything else, how is it that there is an increase of more than \$10,000 for 1975? The legend states “Increased travelling allowances.” Could Transport and Travelling have increased over 100 per cent?

Let us look at the next page, page 187. On that page there is a subhead under the Ministry of Labour and Social Security – Social Assistance – dealing with Transport and Travelling. The 1974 revised figure was \$57,000 and in 1975 they are merely asking for \$65,000, an increase of \$8,000 on a \$57,000 expenditure which is about 15 per cent. The Employment Exchange is asking for an increase of over 100 per cent. There must be something wrong here.

Mrs. DaSilva: I should like to deal with subhead 3, Miscellaneous. This afternoon in Parliament it seems to be that we are paying more compliments to the Ministers that I can remember having done before. I think that this is a good thing because if praise is due somewhere it ought to be given. In the same way, when praise is not due Ministers should be told about it and they should be able to take praise or criticism in the same way. When this happens, it augurs very well and gives us some hope for the future.

I rise on this question of Miscellaneous to add my quota of compliments. This time I would like to compliment the Minister of Labour. It is not that he has not had compliments before; he deserves them. I should like to add my compliments to him on this question of Miscellaneous. We have spoken often about block votes, about money being tucked away under the heading of Miscellaneous and we do not know what it is being spent on. I am pleased to note that in 1975 under practically every Head in the Ministry of Labour we have had a true picture of what Miscellaneous really is. If you will allow me to go back to Head 72, sir, the charwomen's wages were taken out from the Miscellaneous vote and put separately. This left the Ministry with \$5,500 in 1975 instead of \$11,880 which they used this year. Under Head 73, subhead 3, Miscellaneous, the Revised Estimates for 1974 show \$4,400. In 1975 the sum of \$1,000 is requested and the legend states "Part provision transferred to subheads 1, 5 and 6." Subheads 1, 5, and 6 deal with the Employment Exchange Manager, Uniforms and Maintenance of Office Equipment. Each is a specific item and they are not just lumped together as Miscellaneous.

The same thing has been done further down. Sir, may I just refer to the subhead for Miscellaneous under Head 74. There have been transfers to the relevant subheads and what is actually Miscellaneous is shown as Miscellaneous; office equipment, uniforms, salaries are separate and in their right places. I should like to compliment the Minister on this and to hold him up as an example. I would ask other Ministers to do the same as has been done in this Ministry so that we will really have a true picture of Guyana as Minister Hope has been advising.

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Mr. Carrington: Mr. Chairman, I note that the hon. Member has looked carefully at the question of increased travelling. It is a fact that travelling will increase in 1975. We have just created a special section in the Social Security Section which will require travelling.

The question here is that we will be using a number of jeeps; we expect to get two more in 1975. We have two now and instead of every section having its own vehicle, the vehicles for the Labour Division will be used for the Social Security Division as well as for the Scale Supervisors Section. **[Interruption]**

I thought the hon. Member was really referring to cost of travelling vehicle-wise but the cost of travelling allowances has also increased.

The Chairman: Please proceed hon. Minister. I think the point is well made that the cost of allowances has increased and that there is increased travelling as well.

Mr. Carrington: Referring to the question of the Miscellaneous vote, I should like the hon. Member to know that it is not only the Minister who takes care of these matters. Once you have interested civil servants and they are doing their jobs properly you will note these changes which are in the interest of the Ministry and which reflect the Government's financing.

Head 73, Ministry of Labour and Social Security – Employment Exchange Service - \$105,466 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 187.

HEAD 74 – MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY
SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Question proposed that the sum of \$4,768,534 for Head 74, Ministry of Labour and Social Security – Social Assistance, stand part of the Estimates.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, on page 187, subhead 1, item (4) and subheads 5, 6 and 8. I will deal with item (4), Social Assistance Officers, and then go on to subheads 5 and 6, Old Age Pensions and Public Assistance, respectively. I can deal with them together because the old age pensions, the public assistance people and the social assistance officers come into this, especially the social assistance officers as they have to investigate the cases.

We have twenty-eight such officers as shown at subhead 1, item (4). The Revised Estimates for last year show that \$108,239 was used and the approved estimate reads \$124,248. This year we are being asked to vote \$122,736. This probably means that they do not have the full complement; somebody has left and the vacancy has not been filled. It seems that they will have the full complement of twenty-eight next year. I should like to know if this is so, because these people form an important part of this arm of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. These are the people who go out into the field and investigate whether the people who receive social assistance are suitable cases. It is very necessary work.

We still get complaints from people, especially in the rural areas, of the hardships suffered by them, of the weeks and months they have to wait before they get their applications processed. Twenty-eight people I appreciate is not a large number to investigate in all areas. But we are also told that when some of these people – I admit the problems again – go into an area and have to walk down a muddy street and across a muddy sideline dam, they just turn back and come back to office. The applicants are not given a hearing, they lose their turn and have to wait a long time.

Could the hon. Minister see if something could be done about this? Although the legend against subhead 6 says that there has been an increase in the number of recipients, the actual amount is really small.

I should again like to add my plea for an increase to bring the old age pensioners in the rural areas in line with the old age pensioners in the urban areas. They should receive a similar grant because as it has been pointed out over and over again, the cost of living is just as high for them. Sometimes there is greater hardship. I know this has been receiving consideration and the hon. Prime Minister has given an assurance it will be done. I hope that hon. Minister will tell us how soon this will become a reality.

With regard to subhead 5, Old Age Pensions, as you know, sir, there is a means test to see what their income is and to find out whether they qualify for assistance. But when a social welfare officer is making enquires and filling in the necessary forms a husband and wife, both old enough to get old age pension might say, "Yes we do own our own home." They have a home, a roof over their heads, maybe a little land on which to plant a few bora trees or a few tomato trees, or boulangers but that is all. They have nothing else, they have no means of support. This is where it is hard. Because they own their little home, they do not qualify for old age pension.

I should like to ask the hon. Minister to go into the matter. To own a home is one thing but to be able to have something to keep the home going, to have something to eat, is quite another. They cannot eat the walls and the roofs and maybe the couple of chairs and tables. So this aspect of old age pension applications needs to be gone into. Could the hon. Minister say if any consideration will be given?

Subhead 8, Social Rehabilitation. The approved Estimate in 1974 was \$60,000 and the Revised Estimate shows that only \$54,000 was used. This year we have been asked to provide \$60,500. The legend states: "Normal increments for the Investigators." Could the hon. Minister say if this money only goes to the Investigators or if some of it is actually used for rehabilitation purposes? If this is so, is there any means of breaking it down and saying how much the Investigators receive and how much actually goes for rehabilitation? What form does

there habilitation take? When it comes to the Investigators, am I right in assuming that the Social Assistance Officers are the Investigators or are they as separate set of people.

5.15 p.m.

Mr. Carrington: Mr. Chairman, on page 187, subhead 1, item (4) a question was asked on the vacancies for Social Assistance Officers. There are about 8 vacancies for Social Assistance Officers. We are not happy about this situation but these people are highly trained in this particular field. Many of them have their certificates in Social Work and they are transferred to other Ministries. In setting out the advertisements to fill these vacancies, we have to be very careful to make sure that we get the right type of people in this particular division. The hon. Member recognizes the need for qualified people in this area. That is the reason for the vacancies here but we hope to fill them as early as possible in 1975.

On the question of Social Assistance and equalization of pay in the rural and urban areas, we have been looking at this for some time and there are recommendations in this respect and most likely early in 1975 this will be implemented. We are examining both the Social Assistance as well as the Old Age Pensions.

With respect to the means test, it is a fact that some people are disqualified because of not being able to meet the means test but there are many instances where we have examined the cases carefully and we have considered them for assistance. If the hon. Member knows of any person who falls within this particular category we would be only too willing to examine and to consider them for assistance.

On the question of the investigators, subhead 8, the sum stated here is not only used for payment of salaries for the investigators a large amount of this money is spent in rehabilitation work. As hon. Members will remember, when we were discussing the Estimates last year I said that this would be a new Division in the Ministry. Very shortly we are hoping to incorporate it

into the Social Assistance Section of the Ministry. As a matter of fact, what we hope to do is possibly to change the name of Social Assistance Officers and consider them to be Social Assistance and Rehabilitation Officers because we said in the past that we feel what we should not just give people assistance but we should try to rehabilitate the wherever it is impossible and necessary.

Mr. Chairman, I should like to say before I close this Head on the Social Assistance and Social Security and Pensions Section, that the hon. Member has always been giving very constructive suggestions in this particular area. It is clear that she takes an interest in the disabled, in the old people and surely, whenever she makes these suggestions, they are always constructive. I thank her very much.

Head 74, Ministry of Labour and Social Security – Social Assistance - \$4,768,534 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 188.

DIVISION XXX – MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Question proposed that the sum of \$16,500 for Division XXX, Ministry of Labour and Social Security stand part of the Estimates.

Division XXX – Ministry of Labour and Social Security - \$16,500 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 23 and 24.

HEAD 4 – PARLIAMENT OFFICE

Question proposed that the sum of \$197,471 for Head 4 – Parliament Office stand part of the Estimates.

Head 4, Parliament Office - \$197,471 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 37

HEAD 11 – MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS

Question proposed that the sum of \$20,872 for Head 11, Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs stand part of the Estimates.

Head 11, Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs - \$20,872 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 57 and 58

HEAD 19 – MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,027,320 for Head 19, Ministry of Home Affairs stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: The usual problem arises in that the position of the Chairman of the Elections Commission is statutory. Therefore, you would not permit me to speak about that so that I am anticipating you. That is a very great pity.

The Chairman: You are long enough in the House to know that I cannot permit it unless you change the rules.

Mr. M.F. Singh: With the wind of change, it may be that we will probably do away with the rules very shortly at least. So it seems from the pronouncements we have been hearing over the last weekend.

Turning to page 58, subhead 5 – Telephones. I have spoken *ad nauseum* about this at other time but I have not spoken so far in this Committee of Supply on it. I want to plead for us to have some realistic estimates in respect of our telephone bills. When the Government does not pay the Telecommunication Corporation the Corporation cannot pay its bills. I happen to know that the Telecommunication Corporation is indebted to Cable and Wireless to a very significant amount – running into several million dollars – because it cannot find the money to pay Cable and Wireless. That is because the Government has not been paying its bills to the Guyana Telecommunication Corporation.

The Approved Estimate for 1974 was \$350,000. Was that not unrealistic when we look and see that the Revised Estimate was \$700,000? How can we ask for \$350,000 at the beginning of the year in respect of telephone bills when, in fact, the figure should have been \$700,000 as is evidenced by the amount that is asked for in the Revised Estimates? How can we be so unrealistic? And, I am only hoping that the position is not being confounded by what appears as the amount required for the – [Interruption]

The Chairman: Hon. Members, the House is in session. Please proceed, hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Thank you sir, I only hope that the position is not being confounded by what is requested for 1975, that is, \$650,000. To my mind, if we needed \$700,000 in 1974 then, unless there is some drastic scheme whereby the department would be making less telephone

17.12.74

National Assembly

5.15 – 5.25 p.m.

calls – something that the Minister or the Ministry or the Department has put into operation - \$650,000 will obviously not be enough as it is \$50,000 less than the amount we envisage to be spent this year.

5.25 p.m.

If it is that they will come back to us some time next year and ask for supplementary provision, this is being very unfair to those Corporations, particularly the Telecommunication Corporation, which must have money to pay its bills and to operate on a basis which allows it to compete favourably. **[Interruption]** It is a public service but it is intended to operate as a business. How can it operate as a business. How can it operate as a business if Government is neglecting to pay its bills?

Subhead 10, Expenses – Elections Commission. I think it is high time this Head should be removed from the Estimates. What do we have this subhead for? As an adornment to try to let the outside world know that we are keeping an institution which was set up in the Constitution as a democratic institution, something to ensure free and fair elections? We have not had free and fair elections, so why do we keep up the farce? Let us be done with it and let there be the stark reality that we are operating outside of the provisions of the Constitution, because we are.

The Constitution sets out very specifically how the Elections Commission should operate. We have not been keeping within the provisions of the Constitution in respect of the Elections Commission. We all know what the Constitution provides for, that the Elections Commission should supervise the free and fair elections of this country. And nothing is further from the truth. Let us abolish this subhead. Let us take it out of the Estimates and let it be recognized that there is no such thing as an Elections Commission to supervise free and fair elections.

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National Assembly

5.25 – 5.35 p.m.

Mrs. DaSilva: Under this same subhead 10, I want to ask one specific question. My leader has spoken very clearly and forcefully again about our elections and the ridiculous state of affairs that exists in having an Elections Commission. What do they do and for what reason do they eat? Nobody knows. It is to produce elections like we have had in the past? We are not going into that again. But there is a specific question I should like to ask the hon. Minister.

The sum in the Approved Estimates for 1974 for this farcical Elections Commission is \$7,500. The amount in the Revised Estimates for 1974 is \$7,500. Now we are being asked to vote \$9,232, and the legend states: "Previous provision inadequate." I wonder if the hon. Minister could tell us what they did with this \$7,500 and why it was inadequate? They did not have enough money to allow them to do the things which they ought to have done, and could not do, and now this year we are being asked to increase it by \$2,000. Could the hon. Minister tell us for what reason, because, as I ask – and we have asked this over and over – what is the point of the nation wasting money on the Elections Commission?

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of State for Home Affairs.

The Minister of State for Home Affairs (Mr. Mingo): Under subhead 5, Telephones, the hon. Leader of the Opposition enquired why it is that for 1975 only \$650,000 is being provided, while during this year we spent \$700,000. In other words, why did we cut it by \$50,000.

First of all, during this year there were some unpaid accounts that have to be settled. We have paid them. Then we have already introduced more stringent control in the use of telephones in the Ministry in the hope that we can contain expenditure within the limits of the provision for 1975. We hope that by these stringent measures which have been introduced, we will be able to keep the expenditure under control.

Under subhead 10, Expenses – Elections Commission, both members of the Opposition seem to feel that this provision should not be made, but I should like to inform them that the

Constitution so far does make provision for it, and in keeping with that, we have to have staff, we have to pay salaries of staff, we have the janitor, we have equipment to be repaired. And there is other expenditure which must be met. Since the Constitution provides for it, then we must have staff to keep it going and this money is required to pay staff.

Head 19, Ministry of Home Affairs - \$1,027,320 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 59 to 61.

HEAD 20 – MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS – POLICE

Question proposed that the sum of \$16,160,320, for Head 20, Ministry of Home Affairs – Police, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: I should very much like, first of all, to make, with your permission, a few general remarks. My remarks are about policy generally. This is what we are permitted to do.

This is a very important Ministry in the scheme of things; it is very important to preserve the peace and tranquility of Guyana; it is very important that this Ministry should enjoy the confidence of the people, and that the people should enjoy the confidence of the police. And this is where we have been very worried within recent times.

Within recent times, the people of Guyana have seen a general deterioration in the former impartiality and integrity of the Police Force generally. Unfortunately, within recent times, the Police Force seems to have been identifying itself more and more with the ruling party. This is very unfortunate indeed because there are officers in the Police Force, ordinary people in the Force, people of the highest integrity, people for whom I have the greatest respect, and, it is my

considered opinion that if they are left alone, they will maintain the high standard of integrity and the high standard of impartiality for which the Guyana Police Force has been known for so many years.

Unfortunately, they are subjected to the influence of the politicians and one wonders what the position will be, now that we have had an announcement that the ruling party is supreme and the Government is subservient to the party.

5.35 p.m.

What about these Police Officers, these men of integrity? What are they to do? What will be their future if they want to maintain a non-partisan attitude, if they want to maintain a position of independence, if they want to maintain a position of integrity, what are they supposed to do? Will the Government give them the opportunity of resigning with full pension rights and everything else so that they can come out honourably, or will these men of integrity be forced to sell their souls to play along with the ruling party in order to keep their jobs? In order to feed the mouths that are dependent upon them? In order to be able to survive in this country? It is a very worrying state of affairs. What will be their position?

There are people who do not want to get involved in politics. There are people who do not want to identify themselves with the ruling party. All they want is an opportunity to their job with integrity, to do their job honestly, to do their job uprightly. What happens when they are called upon to involve themselves in the political activities of the ruling party?

I have told this House already that I went down this road, after being alerted by telephone by a public-spirited person, and stood up and saw very clearly a policeman selling copies of the New Nation. I went to him and said: "Why are you doing this?" What was he doing? He was stopping the hire cars as they came along. Hire car drivers are, therefore, terrorized into thinking that it is an offence if they do not stop when a man fully dressed in uniform as a traffic cop, with

his traffic motor cycle, stops a car. When a taxi driver stops, the traffic policemen goes up to fully regaled in his uniform with his traffic bike on the side, and asks him to buy a newspaper. What can the drivers do? They feel that if they do not buy the newspaper they will be penalized and victimized. So, they buy the newspaper. I went up to that policeman and said: “Do you realize what you are doing? Why are you doing that? Are there not many areas in which you can be doing traffic duties?” He said, “Yes, I agree with you but my instructions from the office were to come here and sell the newspapers. I did not want to do it but those were my instructions.”

When a Police Officer tells you that, you ought to feel a certain amount of sympathy for him because what it means is that if he did not carry out those instructions he could find himself in serious trouble. This is the dilemma of many Officers in the Police Force at the present moment.

On another occasion I actually took the name, the address, the number and the bicycle number of the traffic cop and I have witnesses to prove that this is, in fact, happening. I will make my information available to the hon. Minister.

We have to be concerned in these circumstances, we must necessarily be concerned. The P.N.C. seems intent on using the Police Department for political purposes. Where it will end we do not know. The plea I want to make for these gentlemen is that if they do not agree with the instructions of the ruling party, they should be allowed to retire with full pension rights. Let us not force them to sell their souls, particularly in the context of the country and the pronouncements at the present time.

There are, of course, people who will jump on the band wagon; there are, of course, people who will identify themselves purely in order to be able to solicit promotion. And this created a problem because anyone who does not do that and is subordinate to that particular person will find himself not being promoted in the Force. We have several complaints about this

sort of thing, where a particular person is under the control of a Party activist who happens to be a Police Officer and as a result of that he is overlooked when promotion time comes along.

One knows of cases where Police Officers have been able to acquire wealth. When one compares it with their remuneration, one wonders. This information is easily obtainable from the Estate Duty Declarations that are made when people die. We are not going to call names. We know that people have been able to amass money and they could not possibly have done that by virtue of the earnings that they receive in their employment. That is why I agree that there should be a Code of Conduct also in relation to Police Officers. This was hinted by the hon. Prime Minister but nothing has materialized as yet. I would certainly advocate that there should be a Code of Conduct, there should be a declaration of assets because I am satisfied that in the hierarchy of the Police Force there are very many honourable men of integrity who would become declaration of their assets. I am sorry that the Prime Minister did not make it for all Members of Parliament. I would quite willingly declare my assets at any time. Whenever the hon. Members publish theirs I shall be willing to publish mine also. I make that without any reservations, sir. I am sure that like me there are Police Officers who would welcome the opportunity to declare their assets so that people will know what men of integrity they really are.

Another matter that I would like to make general remarks about is the system of recruitment in the Police Force. I have touched on promotion and it is very unsatisfactory. I would invite the hon. Minister to really study the system of promotion and see what can be done to streamline it.

As regards the system of recruitment, we have heard Judges of the High Court make pronouncements about recruits in the Police Force and about Police Officers. We know that no system is perfect. There would be persons slipping in but there seems to have been too many slipping in within recent times. One wonders whether this general position is not, perhaps, influenced by the fact that within recent times the Police seem to have been relegated to last

place in the country as seen when the service forces parade. On the last occasion we did note that the Police were the last. The National Service is right on top now. Everything is for National Service, it is given the priority. The G.D.F. comes next and the Police seem to be last. The Police must be first and not last. That is the position they should hold. They are the operational people who keep the peace in the country at all times. The G.D.F. people are in reserve, so to speak. As far as I am concerned National Service should not have been started at all. Certainly they should not have priority over and above the Police Force.

5.45 p.m.

[Mr. Singh continues]

I would like to deal with some other aspects under the particular heads of the Estimates but dealing with the Estimates proper there is one question that I wish to ask in order to find my way in this book. Subhead 1, item (19), Head Cooks; item (25), Cooks and item (27), Kitchen Maids. We commend the Minister for actually listing these 26 and 27 as separate items. He had made head cooks and kitchen maids separate items in the Estimates so that they are clearly identified. There are 2 Head Cooks, 2 Cooks and 18 Kitchen Maids but the provision must have been elsewhere previously. I wonder whether the Minister can identify exactly where the provision was made so that we can look for a corresponding reduction. We say thanks to him for having identified them as separate entities.

On the next page subhead 3, Transport and Travelling. We note that the revised expenditure for 1974 was the same as the approved expenditure which is \$860,000 but the sum being requested for 1975 is \$1,086,382. The legend states: "Increase in rates of travelling allowances." We had the fuel crisis this year; we had an increase in travelling allowances this year. In spite of all that the expenditure is still confined to the sum asked for, \$860,000 in this year of crisis they would be spending, in 1975, \$1,086,382. It seems far too large a sum and there seems to be room for economizing in that vote.

Subhead 9, Maintenance of Compound. The sum of \$10,500 was approved for 1974, the sum of \$10,500 remained as the revised estimate for 1974 but in 1975 we are asking for \$20,000 so that is an increase of \$9,500. The legend states: "Increased costs." In these days of increased costs I personally do not think that the sum of \$20,000 is too exorbitant. It is not unrealistic. What I should like to recommend to the hon. Minister is that he sees that some of this is in fact passed on to the rural areas. I have seen some District Police compounds where the cry is that monies have not been made available to them to do very necessary works. They can do self help only to a certain extent. They can weck their compounds; they can plant little farms and things like that but when the building needs a coat of paint well then self help will not help to provide paint. Money is needed to purchase paint.

I shall not call the names of the police stations but I have complaints from officers in charge of district police stations so it is no point saying that this is untrue. If these officers are not telling the truth that is another matter. I have seen conditions and I have seen these places and some consideration should be given to them.

Too often people in Georgetown forget who live in the country areas. I say that as a former Minister of Works and Hydraulics. When I was Minister I found that when I visited districts outside of Georgetown this was always the problem. Officers sit down in Georgetown and do not give enough attention to the queries, to the letters, to the requests that come before them. It is happening all the time. It happened during the time when I was Minister. We must be realistic and try to correct the situation instead of shutting our eyes and saying, "No, this is not true." That is not the answer.

On the same page 60, I am going to deal with subhead 20, Prevention and Detection of Crime. The 1975 approved estimate asked for \$5,000; the revised Estimate is \$45,000; the estimate for 1975 is \$50,000, that is nearly \$5,000 more.

I think it is quite obvious to all of us what I shall deal with here. Since we last spoke in this honourable House instead of there having been a lessening of the incidence of choke and rob it has perhaps been on the increase. Perhaps one of the major industries of the P.N.C. regime has been the increase in the industry of choke and rob. This has caused Guyana to have a very bad name overseas. I have been to countries and had it told to me that people had warned potential visitors to this country that they would be subject to choke and rob attacks. So that as a Guyanese, as a national, I think that a lot more must be done to try to curb the incidence of choke and rob. Too often one hears that by-standers who witness these incidents do very little or nothing about it. I think that this is wrong on the part of the citizens but we should look perhaps at certain other things.

I have also had complaints made to me that citizens have gone to complain about incidents, to complain about things that have happened to them and they have found themselves being interrogated by the Police Department. Instead of the police taken conciliatory and helpful attitude towards such persons, they interrogate them. This perhaps causes that attitude where people stand by and do nothing when there are choke and rob attacks. I think it needs a joint effort by the Police and the community at large to try and battle with this problem. Surely the community has its obligations. I think it was Sir Lionel Luckhoo who recently gave a dissertation on this. The community must be aware of and awake to its responsibilities equally so the Police Department must also try and pull its socks up in this respect.

5.55 p.m.

I seem to recollect a plea being made for the beat cops. Where are all the beat cops? Where are the cops doing patrol duty? Where have they gone? I would like to hear from the hon. Minister, some plan, some scheme, something that has been devised in order to try and combat and, in some way, curb this very high incidence of choke and rob that seems to be taking over our society.

Page 61, subhead 23, Passports. The approved estimate for 1974 was \$25,000. The revised estimate in this respect was \$55,740. The estimate \$30,000. We know that within recent times there has been a shortage of passports. We understand that orders were place and there were difficulties as regards delivery. Perhaps the hon. Minister would like to tell us whether the Passport Office has an adequate stock of passports in hand at the present time.

Let us realize that with the present situation in the country more and more of our people are very anxious to clear out and, up to now, the Constitution guarantee them the fundamental right to leave the country. It is therefore wrong for the provisions of the Constitution to be circumvented by their not being able to get a passport. A Guyanese being denied a passport to travel oversea is, in fact, being denied a fundamental right which is embodies in the fundamental rights provision of the Constitution at the present time. Let us not circumvent the provisions of the Constitution like that. Providing the man has a clean sheet, he is entitled to get a passport expeditiously and there should be no delay. Some time ago there were long delays. I am not sure what the very recent position is but I do know that at one stage the officers at the Passport Office were saying that they could not give a person a date when he could go back and get his passport. They said they would inform the person and, normally, that time ran into some months. We certainly hope that this is not the position at the present moment and that individuals would be allowed to exercise their fundamental right to leave the country with a passport as they are entitled to.

Mrs. DaSilva: I wish to speak on page 59, Head 20. I should like to deal with items (15), (16), (17) and (28) under subhead 1. These items are concerned with the personnel of the Police Force – the number of people that make it up. According to the Establishment figures, we have, or we ought to have 3,021 persons in the Police Force, that is, men and women. When that figure is broken down, I think there are 150 women and the other 2,871 are men. When I look across at the actual money spent, it seems that in each instance the vote has been short-spent so that I am wondering if, actually, we do not have these 3,021 members of the Police Force to enforce law and order and help in the detention and prevention of crime.

In the case of item (15), Sergeants, the Approved Estimate for 1974 was \$992,904; the Revised Estimate is \$856,678. The sum of \$1,355,640 was in the Approved Estimates for item (16), Corporals, but the Revised Estimate is \$1,158, 748. When we look at item (17), Constables – these are the people we were talking about, the policemen on beat duty – there is a similar situation. Of course, Sergeants and Corporals do beat duty too but Constables make up the biggest number. We should have spent \$6,343,652 for Constables but in the Revised Estimates we see that \$5,789,503 was spent. This would suggest that we do not have our full complement of Police personnel to help in one of the most important aspects, the detection and prevention of crime, of which my Leader spoke.

Maybe when the hon. Minister replies he is going to tell me that we do not have the full complement of Police but we hope to fill the vacancies soon. I know our country is a big country and I know that we have many Police Stations. I do not know how many Stations there are and I do not know if the hon. Minister would care to tell us. I would imagine that the largest number of Police would be centred around the Georgetown area and the others would be at the various outposts – Linden, New Amsterdam and so on. However, 3,021 in the Police Force is a large number and as the Police Stations in these outpost areas do not require to be so heavily staffed, there should be more men available for Georgetown.

Let us suppose that there are 1,000 policemen stationed in Georgetown and the other 2,000 go out into the other areas. We do not see anything looking like 1,000 policemen around the city. [Hon. Member: “They get time off.”] I appreciate that they have to have time off. Everyone appreciates that, but the point remains that even if one takes 1,000 policemen- a third of the full complement – and they have to have days off and hours off, yet one does not see them around the streets of Georgetown. We see policemen, yes, but nothing like the amount we would expect to meet. This is why, as my leader said before and as I said during the Budget Debate, if the policemen were on beat duty instead of having three or four of them driving around in police cars, we would have them on the spot when they are needed. This is a point that has been made over and over again. We appreciate the necessity for police cars but we do not see the necessity

for three or four policemen driving around in police cars when we cannot have one man on the spot. It has been proven over and over again that it is better to have them on the spot than to wait for a police car to arrive.

Unfortunately, the Police do not receive co-operation from the citizens of Guyana for the simple reason that although a citizen might be very loyal and might want to help, he declines on the ground of self-preservation. He realizes that the choke and rob person has a knife in his hand and he has to think first: "Will I get stabbed?" I'd better stay back." This situation is very bad and very fortunate and consequently the police cannot get assistance.

I wonder, on the other hand, if the hon. Minister will tell us, as we have been told in other areas during consideration of the Estimates, that people have been sent across to National Service to train the young people. I wonder if any Police Officers have been sent across to train the young people in the National Service causing the reduction in the complement. Maybe the hon. Minister could tell us.

I notice on item (28) of subhead 1, which deals with Rural Constables, that the 1974 Approved Estimate was \$25,000. In Revised Estimates we see shows that \$32,500 was spent this year and we are asking for \$25,000 for 1975. We are not told how many Rural Constables there are, but I would imagine that they would further add to the strength of the Police Force. Since we have voted \$25,000 for them there must be quite a considerable amount of them to help out in the work and duties of the Police. This adds a little more impetus to my question "Where are the Policemen?" and that of my Leader, "Where are the Policemen on the beat?"

6.05 p.m.

Turning over to page 60, to deal with subhead 11, Prisoners' Rations. I have just one comment on it. The sum of \$28,000 is shown in the Approved Estimates for this year, in the Revised Estimates it is shown that \$38,000 was spent. We are asking for \$34,000 now. The

legend states: "Increase in cost of foodstuff." I think I am right in saying that this particular subhead applies to the food that is given to the prisoners at Brickdam. I am not talking about Mazaruni. I try not to make the same mistake twice. I should like to ask whether these rations are given to the prisoners at Brickdam.

We are talking about prisoners' rations and there is such a thing as a prison farm. We are urged, all of us, to make every effort to grow more food for Guyana. Very creditable indeed. As there are increased costs, like fuel costs, over which we have no control, surely more food could be grown on the prisoners' farm in order to help keep down the amount of money which is to be voted to supply the prisoners' rations.

I am told that this applies to the rations at Brickdam, and I sincerely hope that the prisoners will get supplies from their own prison farm before they go to buy outside. I am trying to keep it all tied up together so that the Minister does not have an opportunity to draw a red herring across the trail by telling me, "Oh this is Brickdam and that is Mazaruni." I do not think he will, because he is not that sort of person.

On page 61, I have just a short comment on subhead 23, Passports. It has been quite a long time since I myself have dealt with passports because I do not need mine renewed and I have not had to buy a form, but I understand that the cost of a form of application for a passport is fifty cents. I know paper has risen in cost but fifty cents seems a lot of money, and I am particularly mindful of one particular person who was filling in a form for a passport and had to buy three forms because mistakes were made with the names. I consider fifty cents per form too high. I hope that the Government is earning good revenue from this. My leader says this is blackmarketing in passport forms.

We come to subhead 35, Maintenance of Traffic Lights and Road Signs. The figure under Approved Estimates is \$38,000, and \$38,000 was spent. We are asked now to provide \$50,000. The legend states, "Increased costs." I do not have to look across the page. We know

that is the usual thing. But this is a suggestion I should like to make to the hon. Minister and to all the P.N.C. Members of Parliament because they are the ones who have said that the P.N.C. is superior to the State and to the country, and so on. In the interest of the P.N.C. and in the interest of Guyana, I would suggest a way of saving money. What I have to say does not apply so much to traffic lights because the parts have to be purchased and that is a different operation. I appreciate the cost there, I am talking about the road signs which were so defaced during our last election campaign. It is a wonder more people do not have accidents. People put “Vote P.N.C.” on the traffic signs and when one looks to see whether the traffic should turn right or left there is no indication.

When President Nyerere was coming to Guyana, I noticed on the East Coast road that the P.N.C. activists – I know that it was not the United Force. And it obviously was not the P.P.P. So it had to be the P.N.C. activists. Painting on walls is an election habit in Guyana - went along the East Coast road – and I can vouch for this from as far as Georgetown right up to Nootenzuil – with a red paint brush and very carefully over painted all the disparaging remarks about the P.N.C. that written on the wall. [Interruption] That was done to show President Nyerere that the people were not dissatisfied with the P.N.C. Government. They took the effort to do that. And, of course, President Tolbert came just behind, so he benefited from it.

Could the same public-spirited people who did that go around with soap and water and a brush and clean up the traffic signs, taking off the “Vote P.N.C.” and the palm tree so we will see where we are going, and, if necessary, freshen the signs up? That would be a very worthwhile gesture in the interest of Guyana, I put it to the Minister for his consideration.

Mr. Mingo: With respect to subhead 1, items (15), (16), (17), and (18), the question of the size of the Establishment was raised by the hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva. She queries whether there are vacancies. The answer to this is that there are some vacancies but every effort is being made now to have them filled. This year, we have already recruited 250 persons; filled. This year, we have already recruited 250 persons; we have another 103 in training, and we hope next year to recruit another 200. We are also making efforts to fill other vacancies in respect of

promotion but we have to take care to identify the right people. This sort of thing takes time. There are some vacancies amount the ranks too.

She suggested that there is a great need for a concentration of policemen in Georgetown but I wish to state that our policy is to distribute our policemen all over the country. I think she ought to know that at this time in Guyana, there is a great need for extra security precautions to be taken. Guyana is not a normal country at this time. We therefore have to deploy policemen not only to do beat duty, but to do other types of duty which the situation in our country demands.

It might be of interest for her to know that when representatives of the Police Association called on me a few months ago, they complained about the fact that so many policemen have to do work far beyond their normal call of duty. There is a tremendous strain on the policemen. Our policemen today are properly deployed, but there has been a considerable increase in the amount of work that policemen are called upon to do.

It is not that we are not paying attention to the situation in the city. For instance, not very long ago, there was re-distribution of beats and patrols in Georgetown. The situation, that persons were complaining about a month or two ago, no longer exists. On every beat in Georgetown there are policemen on duty, so this situation that the hon. Member is complaining about does not exist at the present moment and we are doing our utmost to ensure that there is proper deployment of policemen to ensure proper law enforcement as well as to see that citizens are well protected.

6.15 p.m.

On the question of the Head Cooks, the Cooks and the Kitchen Maids, items (19), (26) and (27) of subhead 1, I wish to let the hon. Leader of the Opposition know that these are new posts. The Personnel – Head Cooks, Cooks, Kitchen Maids, etc. – are really attached to the

messes at the Training School and at Brickdam. The salaries and wages of these Officers were met from the Police Welfare Fund and that was entirely a police arrangement. They had a Welfare Fund and used to pay the people from there.

The Fund itself is under very severe strain at the moment, and these people were in a position where they received no superannuation benefits whatsoever. So the decision was taken to bring these employees in line with employees holding similar positions at other Government institutions, for instance, at Guyana House and at the Hospital. So we find that this now appears in the Estimates for next year because we have brought the kitchen hands on the Government pay roll.

With respect to subhead 3, Transport and Travelling, this increase from \$860,000 to \$1,086,382 has been brought about because of the increased rates. We anticipate also an increase in the Establishment. When the Establishment is increased at the bottom you must have consequential increases throughout. In other words, you have to appoint more officers and subordinate Officers it will mean, therefore, more Officers would be entitled to travel and so the amount provided would have to be increased to provide for this. There is also increased Police activity. If you want all those beat Police, if you want more patrols, it means, therefore, we must have increased Police activity. Hence we must make more provision for travel and transportation.

With respect to Subhead 9, Maintenance of Compound, I am surprised to hear the hon. Member of the Opposition claim that the rural compounds are not usually in order. At a meeting which was called by the Minister of National Mobilisation and Co-operatives a few Saturdays ago to consider the question of the sanitation in certain areas, the Minister of Health made a remark that of all the Government departments, the Police were to be commended for the way in which they kept their compounds. At least certain Police compounds are always kept in order. That is why I said I was really surprised at the remarks. Whether it is rural or urban areas, nobody can say that the Police do not keep their compounds in order.

The Hon. Member, Mrs. DaSilva, spoke about the Prisoners rations and this time I notice that she is a little more accurate than the last time. I would tell the hon. Member that the number of prisoners in custody fluctuates. It does not remain constant, so the result is that when you are planning you cannot always keep it at one figure. We anticipate that, perhaps, next year there will be less prisoners in custody. Of a fact, it is not a constant situation and, therefore, we cannot have a static provision.

May I refer to subhead 20, Prevention and Detection of Crime. The hon. Leader of the Opposition took the opportunity to talk about the choke and rob situation. We are concerned, everybody is concerned about, the incidence of larceny from the person in Guyana. The hon. Member also mentioned the question of the co-operation of the public. It is true that at the present moment the Police are making every effort, at least, to lessen the incidence of this type of offence on the streets in Georgetown, in particular. As the hon. Member said, the question of the co-operation of the public does not help them very much to be able to remedy the situation. Realising that we ought to have more beats, more patrols, we have already done a re-distribution of beats and, as I said earlier, you will find more policemen on duty on the streets of Georgetown.

We have also done one or two things otherwise. We have set us otherwise. We have set up a Crime Intelligence Branch and we are hoping that we can do research in this branch. Perhaps, we will be able to use the findings of the research to have a better deployment of our men. Already we have also established, in the hope of getting co-operation from the public, a new department which we call the "Publicity and Public Relations Section." This section is intended really to develop a better relationship between the Police and the public. We hope that by doing this we will be able to bring about an improvement in the relationship in the hope that we can also bring about an improvement in the incidence of crime, especially larceny from the person, in the streets of Guyana.

On the question of Passports, subhead 23, I am not certain whether the hon. Leader of the Opposition was here when we discussed Supplementary Provisions a few months ago, but I am certain that the hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva was present. Last year, we asked for a Supplementary Provision because we had been advised by the Crown Agents that there was going to be a tremendous increase in the price of paper because it was anticipated that there would be a paper shortage in the world. That is the reason why the provision for this year has been much greater than what we are asking for next year.

I should say, too – and I think the hon. Leader of the Opposition himself said that – that some time ago there was a sort of build up in the issuing of Passports. I think as Leader of the Opposition he ought to do much better than this and I am advising my friend to keep more abreast of what is happening in this country. As Leader of the Opposition he owes it to the nation. We are quite up to date with the issuing of Passports. Anybody will tell you that there is no long delay and we hope to continue with this. It is not fair to say that some deliberate attempt is being made to deprive people of their Passports.

6.25 p.m.

Under subhead 35, the hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva said that the cost of a form of application for a passport is 50 cents. I wish to correct her. My information from the officer sitting behind me is that the price is 20 cents.

Head 20, Ministry of Home Affairs – Police – \$16,160,320 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 62 and 63

HEAD 21 – MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

PRISONS

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,182,478 for Head 21, Ministry of Home Affairs – Prisons, stand part of the Estimates.

Mrs. DaSilva: Page 63. Subhead 15, Bakery and subhead 101, Issues of Bread. I want to comment on the increased cost of bread. We approved of \$100,000 in 1974 for subhead 15, Bakery; the revised estimate shows \$100,000 and for 1975 we are asked to supply \$111,000. Further down the page, against subhead 101, we note that the deduction to be made for issue of bread is \$150,000, an increase of \$2,045 on the revised estimate for this year.

What I want to deal with is the legend against 101, which talks about “Reduction in spoilage due to improved wrapping.” I should like some clarification as to whether this is really correct. As far as I am aware the bread for the prisons is baked at the Central Georgetown Prison and is sent out in boxes with lids to institutions which it supplies, the Best Hospital, the Palms, and so on. Where does this wrapping paper come in? In the hon. Minister says that they have now started to wrap bread I should like to ask him whether in the interest of saving money, as wrapping paper is scarce, and costly, why could not the containers for bread be covered in order to keep the bread clean and free from dust and save money on wrapping paper. There would be no need to spend additional money on wrapping.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister

Mr. Mingo: Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member wants to know why we present bread in such a hygienic and sanitary manner. We have a slicing machine and bread is properly sliced and wrapped. This has been on the advice of the dietician at the Public Hospital Georgetown. We understand that since this is being done people have been using more of the bread than they did formerly. It does appear that this is a very sensible measure because it has paid handsome dividends; and people are demanding more of the bread.

Head 21, Ministry of Home Affairs – Prisons - \$2,182,478 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 64

HEAD 22 – MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,613,615 for Head 22, Ministry of Home Affairs – Fire Protection Services, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: There is only one question. I have looked at the figures and I have no quarrel with the figures but what I should like to ask is whether the hon. Minister has given a thought to decentralisation of the fire protection services. There have been cases within recent times where the Georgetown Fire Brigade has had to travel many miles up the East Coast and elsewhere so as to take the equipment to the spot where the trouble was.

We would like to know that there are equipment and machinery deployed round and about the country so that the time taken to arrive at the scene of a fire is cut down. Certainly it would take a longer time for a vehicle to leave Georgetown and go up to Mahaica only, say, to fight a fire than if it went from an out-station somewhere between Georgetown and Rosignol. The time has come when I think the Ministry must give attention to decentralization. I am wondering whether the hon. Minister can tell us what are his plans on that.

Mr. Mingo: Mr. Chairman, there are plans for decentralization of the Fire Services. A station is being constructed now at Wismar. There were discussions early this year with GALA; the local authorities have shown interest in participating in efforts to establish fire stations in some out-stations other than Georgetown. We have identified districts in which we will establish these stations. Perhaps they will not be equipped with the most sophisticated type of equipment

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6.25 – 6.35 p.m.

but at least we thought of establishing pumps, land rover type of equipment that can move quickly and we do have plans to establish this type of out station in the future. Our financial resources will limit us to doing it on a pilot scale in certain areas first. We cannot tackle the whole situation together. We have started at Wismar.

In terms of decentralization we are also going in other parts of the City. This will perhaps be done next year. Efforts are being made to effect decentralization of fire fighting equipment throughout Guyana.

Head 22, Ministry of Home Affairs – Fire Protection Services - \$1,613,615 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

6.35 p.m.

The Chairman: Pages 65 and 66

**HEAD 23, MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS –
REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS**

Question proposed that the sum of \$823,624 for Head 23, Ministry of Home Affairs – Registration and Elections, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: I think I am compelled to speak on subhead 5, National Elections on page 66. What a ridiculous state of affairs! The Approved Estimate for 1974 for National Elections was \$10,000. According to the Revised Estimate for this year, we are to spend \$9,000 on National Elections and then we are being asked to provide \$4,000 for National Elections next year. Albeit, there is a legend which states “Token provision.” Sir, I move that this subhead be deleted from the Estimates.

Mr. Mingo: Mr. Chairman, this sum of \$4,000 is really required to pay some unpaid accounts. Also, we must maintain our elections equipment. We must make sure that the ballot boxes are in order and that sort of thing. Therefore, we do have to spend some money on this.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, I am sorry that I did not rise fast enough. Would you allow me to ask for some information on subhead 4, National Registration?

What I want to draw to the hon. Minister's attention is the position with National Registration and people who apply for jobs for the first time who have to get National Insurance Cards. They have to take their National Registration Cards in order to get their National Insurance Cards. This particularly concerns young people.

We know of the fiasco when National Registration took place but I am not going to go into that. That fact remains, however, that there are people who are not registered, some genuinely, some not genuinely, and when they apply for jobs and are asked to produce their National Registration Cards they do not have them. When they go to N.I.S. they do not get their forms.

I do wish to say that I know that there has been a very understanding arrangement with the Labour Department, N.I.S. and National Registration and the officers have allowed these people to be given National Registration Cards. Apparently, they are told to go and register when National Registration is reopened. But, I want to ask the hon. Minister if he can give us any idea when National Registration will be opened again.

Mr. Mingo: Mr. Chairman, in the first place, I wonder if the hon. Member is quite accurate. I have known of cases of persons who have gone to the Registration Centre and have been registered in those special circumstances. Once they satisfy the Commissioner that their case is need, they are usually considered. I know of this personally because people have come to me and I have sent them to the Commissioner.

Nonetheless, the hon. Member wants to know when we will have registration. We are anticipating that perhaps during next year we will do a general revision.

Head 23, Ministry of Home Affairs – Registration and Elections - \$823,624 – agreed to and order to stand part of the estimates.

The Chairman: Page 67.

**HEAD 24, MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS –
REGISTRATION, IMMIGRATION, BIRTHS ETC.**

Question proposed that the sum of \$158,231 for Head 24, Ministry of Home Affairs – Registration, Immigration, Births etc., stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: This is a very important Division. Without a birth certificate I am not sure that there is anything one can do. A person sometimes needs evidence before he dies. One certainly needs evidence before he is registered for National Registration and, probably, for National Service. A birth certificate is absolutely necessary.

By and large, I am happy to say that this Department is operating very efficiently. I have had cause to deal with this Department and I feel very pleased with the very efficient way in which it is operating.

There are certain aspects that perhaps can be given some very urgent and thoughtful consideration. There is a system whereby one goes to the Department and pays his fees for a birth certificate. The Department always has many people applying for birth certificates, particularly at this time when so many people want to flee the country. As I said before, there are always many applications on hand.

Now, there is a normal fee that one pays for the birth certificate and, of course, one gets it within a reasonable period thereafter. But there may well be occasions when some emergency crops up and a person quite genuinely requires a birth certificate within a very short space of time. I think that there should be some system introduced whereby if a person wants a birth certificate in a hurry then he must be prepared to pay for it and a reasonable fee for the expeditious search can then be accepted by the Department for that person to get a birth certificate within a shorter period of time. This would then be a revenue earning Department.

If a person wants a birth certificate in a hurry he must pay for it - \$5 or \$10 – I am not sure what the hon. Minister would consider reasonable, but he should fix a reasonable fee and if a person wants it in a hurry then he must be prepared to pay that fee.

I am sure this system could earn revenue for the Department and it would help some people who genuinely may want a birth certificate in a hurry. Maybe this sort of system could be introduced so that a person would not have to go without a certificate or have perhaps, to seek ministerial favours by asking the hon. Minister to see what he can do.

Recently, I had cause to look at a marriage Licence and I saw it was signed by the Permanent Secretary of the Department. I cannot remember the officer's name but I would have thought that in a Department like this where there is a specialized officer at the head – the Registrar General – that it would have been the Registrar General who would be signing these marriage licences and that they would not be sent outside of the Department to be signed by anybody else. Certainly, we think the Registrar General should be given the power to sign if he does not have it already. Maybe this situation is changed and he does have the power now but one would have thought that this power would be within the Department and not outside of it.

Those are the observations that I should like to make: one, that there should be a priority fee introduced and, two, that the signing of documents should be within and not outside the section.

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6.35 – 6.45 p.m.

Mr. Mingo: Mr. Chairman, on the first point raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, let me say that at the moment there is provision for an extra fee of twenty-five cents. We accept that this is low and we are very glad that we will receive the support of the hon. Leader of the Opposition when we make request for raising fees.

6.45 p.m.

On the question of the delegation of the authority to sign marriage licences. By Order No. 81 of 1972 the authority to sign these licences was given both to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry and to the Registrar General, so both of them can sign.

Head 24, Ministry of Home Affairs – Registration, Immigration, Births etc. - \$158,231 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: page 68.

DIVISION XII – MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,718,900 for Division XII, Ministry of Home Affairs, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: The hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva would like to ask one question on Prison Improvement. I do not have anything on that.

Under the heading Police, subhead 2, Stations, on the last occasion, I expressed some concern over the fact that we have a very large and growing community in the South Ruimveldt area. I said that the time had come when we should have not a mere outpost there but a central spot chosen for the site of properly equipped police station.

The hon. Minister, if I remember rightly, said that this was under consideration, and I wonder how far that has gone. The legend on this subhead 2, states: “To provide for the renovation and construction of stations,” and the sum of \$600,000 is being requested. Perhaps the hon. Minister will give us an idea where these police stations will be constructed.

Going down to Fire Service, subhead 8, Fire and Ambulance Station, the sum of \$88,000 is being asked for in 1975, and the legend states, “To provide for construction of workshop at Ruimveldt.” I should like to say that I am aware that the Ministry of Works has a very big and, from what I knew it to be, a very up-to-date workshop at Ruimveldt. If it is that this construction of a workshop at Ruimveldt is merely to repair vehicles belonging to the fire and ambulance services, then certainly, I would ask the hon. Minister to give consideration to the job being done at the rebuild workshop at Ruimveldt rather than setting up something else, duplicating the available facilities.

We had a long dissertation from the hon. Minister Mr. Desmond Hoyte about what fragmentation there was in the past and the Government moving towards getting together all these various agencies that used to compete with one another in the past, having them established as one central service, and having servicing done from one central pool. I think that was the essence of what he was saying, particularly in relation to the out-districts. The same thing can apply to Georgetown also.

If it is that this is for a private workshop – when I say “private” I mean fire station in some out-district, separate and apart from the central station – then it would not apply, but I should like to recommend that the fire and ambulance services used the services of the rebuild workshop to repair their vehicles, and not duplicate the facilities that are already available.

Subhead 10, Equipment. The sum of \$440,000 is being requested for 1975 and the legend states: “To provide for the purchase of miscellaneous equipment.” I should like to know that we are getting some new fire-fighting equipment which would help us to be able more

expeditiously to decentralize the fire services. Perhaps the hon. Minister may tell us what is the equipment that we are getting.

Mrs. DaSilva: Under subhead 1, Prison Improvement, we have been asked to vote \$292,000 for capital expenditure. The legend is not very enlightening, because it states: “To provide for prison improvement.” We would like to know a little bit more about this business of prison improvement.

I assume first of all that this \$292,900 will be spent not on one particular prison alone but over various prisons. Will any of this be spent on Lot 12 Camp Street, Georgetown? We heard some time ago, and we do not seem to hear any more about it, that there were plans to remove the prison from 12 Camp Street and resite it at D’Endragt. I think that was the area named. I do not know if this is still the idea.

I am wondering why the Government is going to spend money on prison improvement when it is shortly going to move the prison from 12 Camp Street. What would be the point of spending money, if it is a large amount on it? If it is just to keep little things going fair enough, until the Government is ready, but it is certainly necessary to start, as soon as possible, to remove the prison from 12 Camp Street. It is totaling inadequate; it is quite unsuited; it is an area in the centre of the town and is not the best place to have a prison sited. The thought of having it taken out of town is a good one. Could the Minister give us some idea of the prison improvement being undertaken?

Mr. Mingo: On subhead 1, the hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva is enquiring about what we have in mind when we speak about prison improvement, and she also wants to know whether we are going to do any improvements in Georgetown. I think I said on the last occasion that there is no immediate plan to remove the prison from Georgetown. There are plans for a new prison but we are not going to do it immediately.

We hope to improve the Georgetown Prison by constructing a new kitchen, installing carpentry and joinery equipment, a dough-mixing machine, electrical kitchen equipment, a new printing press. We will provide an engine for the fibre mill, we plan to put in a new public address and internal broadcasting system, we wish to buy one five-ton truck and one power chain saw. These are improvements for Georgetown.

There are improvements for Mazaruni. We are going to provide two new dormitories for prisoners; we are going to provide a kitchen for officers; and are going to improve our lighting facilities there. We propose to put in eight intercommunication sets, build two officers' quarters, and complete our trade shop at Sibley Hall. We are going to buy a small boat with engine, and a power saw for the Mazaruni prisons too.

For the New Amsterdam prison, there will be two dormitories for prisoners, a dispensary and infirmary; sanitary facilities for the female block will be provided and alighting plant will be bought.

At Timehri Remand Centre, we hope to put in one Officers' quarters and buy a power chain saw.

6.55 p.m.

There are the items of improvement which we hope to have effected.

On the question raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition on stations, I would wish to state that we do plan to have erected during 1975 a new station in the Lodge/LaPenitence area which would cover the area he mentioned. The land has been acquired and plans have been completed and we hope very early in the New Year to begin construction on this Police Station. We also hope to build a new Police Station at Wales and a new one at Eteribang. We hope to build at least three new Police Stations in 1975. We hope to extend Kitty, we plan to extend

Vigilance; we hope to extend the property room at Brickdam; we hope to provide store-room and sanitary facilities at Sparendam and we propose to extend Vreed-en-Hoop. The Brickdam Barrack Room, the Bartica Police Station, and Suddie Police Station are to be rehabilitated and we hope to complete the Brickdam lock-up which was started during this year.

On the question of the Fire and Ambulance Station which was raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, we hope to construct this workshop in West Ruimveldt. The re-built workshop mentioned by the hon. Leader of the Opposition is already under very heavy strain and cannot move adequately in this situation. We have therefore planned to erect a Fire Station in that area and a lot has already been purchased. We hope to start construction of this workshop very early in 1975.

On the question of equipment raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the hon. Member wanted to know what type of equipment we had in mind. The equipment we have in mind will be tools and special types for the new workshop in West Ruimveldt, a Fire Tender, pumps, two sirens, buildings, a hose, a Public Address System, Transmission Set, Breathing Apparatus Set, ladders, rope, battery chargers, land rover appliances, a truck, adopters, hydrant keys and bars, pneumatic saw with spare blades, mechanic chrome generators and a foam tender. The objective behind the purchases during 1975 is to improve the type of fire service that we can give the nation. I think this answers all the questions.

Division XII, Ministry of Home Affairs - \$2,718,900 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Assembly resumed.

ADJOURNMENT

The Speaker: Hon. Members, tomorrow we will do the following Heads: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Justice, Ministry of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Information and Culture.

Mr. M.F. Singh: The hon. Leader of the House would bear me out, but there was never any talk at any time that on Wednesday we would do Ministry of Finance. We have a tremendous amount of work tomorrow, sir. There is a lot of work under Foreign Affairs and Justice, under the Ministry of Information and Culture and the Ministry of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation. We certainly never had that planned, sir.

The Speaker: Well, the Leader of the House informed me that Finance was to be done. However, if you do not want to do it, it is all right. But I thought we were sitting until late.

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House (Mr. Ramsaroop): It is true that there has been no agreement with respect to the Ministry of Finance. It is hoped that we will sit beyond 6.30 p.m. and if there is time Finance will be included in the discussions. I will not strain the perspicacity of the Members of the Opposition, which they have demonstrated in full measure so far, with the Ministry of Finance. I ask your leave to move the adjournment of this House to tomorrow, Thursday, 18th December, 1974.

Adjourned accordingly at 7 p.m.
