

Official Report

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

56TH Sitting

Tuesday, 20TH December, 2016

Assembly convened at 10.24 a.m.

Prayers

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following Reports were laid:

- (i) Value-Added Tax (Amendment) Regulations 2016 – No. 7 of 2016
- (ii) Travel Tax Regulations 2016 – No. 8 of 2016.
- (iii) Customs (Amendment of Schedules) Order 2016 - No. 9 of 2016.
- (iv) Value-Added Tax (Amendment of Schedules) Order 2016 – 10 of 2016
- (v) Excise Tax (Amendment of Schedules) Regulations 2016 – No. 17 of 2016.
- (vi) Value-Added Tax (Amendment of Schedules) Order 2016 – No. 18 of 2016.

[Minister of Finance]

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND FIRST READING

The following Bills were introduced and read for the first time:

MOTOR VEHICLES AND ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) BILL 2016 – Bill No. 25/2016

A BILL intituled:

“AN ACT to amend the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act.”

CUSTOMS (AMENDMENT) BILL 2016 – Bill No. 26/2016

A BILL intituled:

“AN ACT to amend the Customs Act”.

VALUE-ADDED TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL 2016 – Bill No. 27/2016

A BILL intituled:

“AN ACT to amend the Value Added Tax Act.”

CAPITAL GAINS TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL 2016 – Bill No. 28/2016

A BILL intituled:

“AN ACT to amend the Capital Gains Tax Act.”

CORPORATION TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL 2016 – Bill No. 29/2016

A BILL intituled:

“AN ACT to amend the Corporation Tax Act.”

INCOME TAX (IN AID OF INDUSTRY) (AMENDMENT) BILL 2016 – Bill No. 30/2016

A BILL intituled:

“AN ACT to amend the Income Tax (In Aid of Industry) Act.”

INCOME TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL 2016 – Bill No. 31/2016

A Bill intituled:

“AN ACT to amend the Income Tax Act.”

INTOXICATING LIQUOR LICENSING (AMENDMENT) BILL 2016 – Bill No. 32/2016

A BILL intituled:

“AN ACT to amend the Intoxicating Liquor Licensing Act.”

MISCELLANEOUS LICENCES (AMENDMENT) BILL 2016 – Bill No. 33/2016

A BILL intituled:

“AN ACT to amend the Miscellaneous Licences Act.”

TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL 2016 – Bill No. 34/2016

A BILL intituled:

“AN ACT to amend the Tax Act.”

TRAVEL VOUCHER TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL 2016 – Bill No. 35/2016

A BILL intituled:

“AN ACT to amend the Travel Voucher Tax Act.”

[Minister of Finance]

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS, INCLUDING POLICY STATEMENTS

SECRETARY GENERAL TO FIND A WAY FORWARD FOR THE RESOLUTION OF THE CONTROVERSY WITH VENEZUELA

Vice President and Minister of Foreign Affairs [Mr. Greenidge]: Hon. Members would not be surprised that one of our major preoccupations over the last 12 months has being with our relations with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. It has been a year in which we have been actively engaged in the efforts of the Secretary General of the United Nations in his very personnel endeavours to find a way forward in our controversy with Venezuela. That way forward was, in fact, the title that the Secretary General gave to the proposal he made for the

resolution for the controversy. Guyana cooperated fully with the Secretary General and made every effort to bring his proposal to fruition.

Unfortunately, Venezuela did not do likewise and, in the end, frustrated the Secretary General's best efforts. The initial way forward proposal envisages a conclusion at the end of this year, which is, of course, also the end of the Secretary General's tenure. The Secretary General would soon demitted office. I am very happy to be able to report to this honourable House that we were on Friday afternoon, 16th December, 2016, informed by him that he has reached a decision on the way forward on the article 4(2) of the 1966 Geneva Agreement. His decision, as jointly conveyed to Venezuela, is for the Good Office Process to occupy the forthcoming 12-month period. If by the end of 2017, the Secretary General concluded, that significant progress has not been made to its arriving to a full agreement for the solution of the controversy, he will choose the International Court of Justice as the needs of settlement, until the Governments of Guyana and Venezuela jointly request that he refrained from doing so.

The new Secretary General will name a personal representative who would lead the parties in this final year of Good Offices. We have assured the Secretary General of our acceptance of his decision and of our committed to every effort to making it a success. We had, of course, lost faith in the Good Office Process, essentially, because of Venezuela's non-cooperation with it, but we are willing to give it one last try, facilitated by the Secretary General's nominee. Obviously, it is a process that could only produce mutually satisfactory results if Venezuela cooperated fully to that end, as we say in Guyana, *one hand can't clap*, Guyana would cooperate in resolving the controversy that arose as a result of Venezuela contention that the 1899 Arbitral Award is null and void. The controversy as so defined in the Secretary General's communication received on Friday, 16th December, 2016 and the 1966 Geneva Agreement itself, we hope Venezuela would do likewise. If they do not, we have readied ourselves for the International Court of Justice.

In conveying his decision, the Secretary General has promised Good Offices with a strengthened mandate of mediation. Members will, I am sure, agree that this is a most significant moment in our relation with Venezuela and that it promises one way or another, the resolution of the controversy with our neighbour. As I said before in this House, the ordinary people of Venezuela are our brothers and sisters and we look forward to working with them as a good neighbour in the long years ahead. I know that this announcement would bring satisfaction to all parties in this

House, for it has been the objective of all governments of Guyana, since the early days of the mix commission, to resolve this matter with finality through a judicial process, particularly given our disappointments with progress through dialogue.

10.39 p.m.

It is, therefore, a moment of national satisfaction that in this our 50th Anniversary year of independence we should have reached this milestone in our national journey.

Let us now hope that with the Secretary General's decision the way ahead will follow the path he has identified and be freed of the impediment of aggression, economic and otherwise, that has hindered progress in the past.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MOTION

MOTION FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 2017

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

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

AND WHEREAS the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana for the financial year 2017 have been prepared and laid before the Assembly on 2016-11-28.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly approves the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 2017, of

a total sum of two hundred and thirty billion, three hundred and forty nine million and seventy nine thousand dollars (**\$230,349,079,000**), excluding nineteen billion and seven hundred and seventy four million, and eighty seven thousand dollars (**\$19,774,087,000**) which is chargeable by law, as detailed therein and summarised in the undermentioned schedule, and agree that it is expedient to amend the law and to further provision in respect of finance. [*Minister of Finance*]

Mr. Speaker: We will now return to the consideration of the Estimates for the budget. I must offer an explanation to you, in addition to our late start getting to this point, and that is, a number of papers had to be presented and ready for this morning's sitting, hence the delay which occurred in our start this morning. The Assembly will now resolve itself into Committee of Supply to continue consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply

In Committee of Supply

Agency: 80 Region 10: Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice

Current Expenditure

Programme: 801 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$212,268,000

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6272, Electricity Charges: I noted it was \$980,000 in 2016 and there is \$980,000 again in 2017. Can the honourable Minister tell us if the 14% value added tax (VAT) is in it?

Minister within the Ministry of Communities [Ms. Patterson]: Yes. We have made provision for all electricity charges.

Mr. Neendkumar: I see the same amount in 2016, the same amount appeared. Are they saying that there will be no tax for it? If it is \$980,000, how will the Hon. Minister be adding the 14% VAT?

Mr. Chairman: Are you asking the Minister to explain something?

Mr. Neendkumar: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: What is that please?

Mr. Neendkumar: Mr. Chairman, I am saying that in 2016 it was \$980,000 and in 2017 it is \$980,000. I am asking whether the 14% VAT will be added, and how it is the same?

Ms. Patterson: I am going to convince the Hon. Member that provision is made for all electricity charges added to our conservation measures that we are going to implement.

Mr. Neendkumar: Mr. Chairman, is it that the Hon. Minister is telling us that, Linden, people of Region 10 are a special people and they will not be paying taxes, or will not be paying the VAT?

Ms. Patterson: The people at Linden are very special people and we are going to pay VAT.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6273, Water Charges: I note that it was \$3,176,000 and it remained \$3,176,000. I am asking the Hon. Minister again whether the people in Linden will not be paying the 14% VAT on water.

Ms. Patterson: This is a Government agency. I want to put the Hon. Member at rest. Whatever we have to do in Region 10, we are going to do it, Sir. Added to that, you know in Region 10 there are a lot of creeks and we are going to utilise those also.

Mr. Croal: Line item 6312, Subvention to Local Authorities: Could the Hon. Minister give us a breakdown of this expenditure and to whom?

Ms. Patterson: Hon. Member this is money that is not to be expended by the region. It goes directly to the Neighbourhood Democratic Council (NDC).

Mr. Croal: Could the Hon. Minister confirm therefore this allocation? I note the Hon. Minister said the NDC, so will all be going to the Kwakwani's NDC? Is that so? Is any for the municipality?

Ms. Patterson: This is a subvention that goes directly to Kwakwani's NDC.

Mr. Croal: As a follow-up on the same line item, would it be given automatically or is there a breakdown as to how the subvention will be accounted for?

Ms. Patterson: When it has conducted its activities they are paid directly through the Integrated Financial Management System (IFMAS).

Mr. Croal: I agree with the Hon. Minister, in terms of how the payment is done, what I am getting to is the nature of the expense for the subvention. That is what I more am targeting.

Ms. Patterson: When the works are executed it comes to the Regional Democratic Council (RDC) and the payments are made.

Mr. Persaud: Line item 6211, Expenses Specific to the Agency: We noted that there is \$5.8 million increase under this line item. Given what happened within Regions 1 to 9, so far, there was marginal increase under this line item. Could the Hon. Minister say to us why there is this increase and if we can be provided with a breakdown as to how this sum would be expended?

Ms. Patterson: Line item 6211, Expenses Specific to the Agency comes under the Regional Chairman and there will be increased consultations throughout the region. Yes Hon. Member the list can be provided to you.

Mr. Persaud: Let me thank Minister for her response. Line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricants, there is an increase from \$3 million to \$5.5 million. Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to provide us with the list of vehicles and equipment that will benefit from this allocation? Particularly with vehicles, it is to provide us with the persons to whom these vehicles are attached, the office holders.

Ms. Patterson: There are three vehicles under administration. One is being used by the Accounts Department; one is being used by the Regional Chairman and one is being used by the Regional Executive Officer.

Mr. Croal: Line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings: There has been 100% increase allocation. Could the Hon. Minister indicate what this \$4 million is intended for?

Ms. Patterson: Please repeat the line item?

Mr. Croal: Sure. It is 6242, Maintenance of Buildings.

Ms. Patterson: Buildings to be repaired are the Ituni Guest House for \$2 million, staff quarters building number 29 in Banuballi, Retrieve for \$1 million and the Stores building, number 36 at Crabwood Street for \$1 million.

Mr. Croal: Could the Hon. Minister provide information as to the designation of the officer accommodated at the number 29 building?

Ms. Patterson: It is one of our medical doctors.

Mr. Croal: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees: There has been a reduction. Could the Hon. Minister indicate who are currently on contract under the ten allocations and the designation and emolument of the top two?

Ms. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, I beg to ask that this information will be delivered shortly.

Mr. Croal: Line item 6133, Benefits and Allowances: Could the Hon. Minister explain this astronomical increase on this allocation? It has moved from \$4.7 million to \$10.6 million.

Ms. Patterson: Line item 6133, Benefits and Allowances, reflects on the increase in benefits and allowances due to the Chief Accountant now being in receipt of commuter's allowance, \$19,551 plus staff who have been transitioned from contract and are now being catered for under line items 6114 and 6115.

10.54 a.m.

Mr. Croal: I will ask for some more information under this line item because it is more than double. Could the House be provided with some more details as to the breakdown of the benefits and allowances? This could be laid over.

Since we are providing some information on line item 6116 to the House, could you give all? I did ask for the top two but could you give all of the contracted employees?

Ms. Patterson: Yes, it can be laid over.

Mr. Croal: Line item 6291 – National and Other Events: Could you provide the House with the breakdown of the \$7 million allocation?

Ms. Patterson: Mashramani – both regional and national costume parade, flag raising in Linden, Ituni and Kwakwani; flag raising ceremonies in Linden, Ituni and Kwakwani for Independence; Labour Day – provision of jerseys and snacks for staff on parade; Eid-UI-Adha – airing of television programmes; Son Chapman Memorial – we will be having a church service, preparation of snacks, fliers and wreaths; Linden Martyrs Memorial – church service, candle light vigil and preparation of snacks; Emancipation – pageant and culture fest; Indigenous Heritage – pageant; National Tree Planting – planting of trees around Region 10; National Social Cohesion Day – hosting of collaborative events within the Region; National Unity Day – where assistance is given to various communities for their village days; Diwali – where assistance is given to the Community Development Councils (CDCs) for hosting of events.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6291 – National and Other Events: In 2016, there was a budgeted amount of \$5 million. In the revised figure, the expenditure was \$9.2 million. Could the Hon. Minister explain the increase? Secondly, how was this financed since there was no supplementary provision?

Ms. Patterson: I am a bit confused because I am seeing that revised is \$6.2 million and not \$9.2 million.

Bishop Edghill: My apologies but the same question applies - \$6.2 million.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, the question remains the same. The number of the figure has been corrected.

Ms. Patterson: It was a virement from another account to facilitate additional activities for the Jubilee.

Bishop Edghill: A follow-up. Under the same line item, in our 50th year, we budgeted \$5 million. There was a height of activities and we spent \$6.2 million. We have completed the Jubilee and we are spending \$7 million. Could the Hon. Minister indicate, by laying over a document, the allocations for each of the items that she has highlighted?

Ms. Patterson: That can be done.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6293 – Refreshments and Meals: In 2016, there was an allocation of \$1.22 million and there was an expenditure of \$500,000 more than what was budgeted. Could the Hon. Minister indicate how this was financed and what led to the increase?

Ms. Patterson: We had some additional consultations in the region. The addition came from virement from other accounts.

Programme 801 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$212,268,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme 801 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$58,500,000

Mr Croal: Project Code 2406200 – Land and Water Transport: Could the Hon. Minister provide the allocation for the vehicle and the allocation for the boat and engine and to whom would the vehicle be assigned?

Ms. Patterson: The vehicle would be a Land Cruiser for \$6 million to be used by the Regional Executive Officer. There was never a vehicle that was fully assigned to the REO. We have a 175 horse power (hp) engine for \$1.5 million and one 10x15 boat for \$1 million.

Mr. Croal: Tell me if I am wrong, but I do recollect that, under Current Expenditure, we were told that the assignment of the vehicles was one for the Regional Chairman, one for the REO and I think one for the Accounts Department.

Ms. Patterson: I did say for fuel for the vehicle that was used by the REO and not owned or fully assigned to the REO.

Mr. Croal: Thank you for that clarification. For further clarification, the vehicle that the Regional Executive Officer uses currently, where is it assigned?

Ms. Patterson: It is assigned to the Accounts Department.

Mr. Croal: The Hon. Minister is therefore saying that there are two vehicles assigned to the Accounts Department. Is that so?

Ms. Patterson: There are two vehicles. One is assigned fully to the Accounts and Procurement Department.

Mr. Croal: Let me be clear. There is one vehicle assigned to the Regional Chairman, one to the Accounts Department proper and one vehicle used by the REO. As a clarification, you said that that is also budgeted under the Accounts Department but used by the REO.

Under Capital Expenditure, you are now saying that the vehicle which is being bought will be dedicatedly assigned to the REO. Again, in conclusion, you are saying that there are two vehicles assigned to the Accounts Department and one to the Regional Chairman. Is that so?

Ms. Patterson: The vehicle that the Accounts Department currently uses is a refurbished vehicle and is not in the best of condition. When the REO gets his new vehicle, that vehicle will be returned to the Accounts Department so it will then have two or the vehicle will be reassigned to any other person.

Mr. Croal: Buildings - Administration: Could you tell us the nature of the work to be entailed here?

Mr. Chairman: What is the project code?

Mr. Croal: Sorry, Mr. Chairman. It is project code 1205100 – Buildings – Administration. In the interest of time, could you layover this information to the House?

Ms. Patterson: It is a new Regional Democratic Council (RDC) building. You are aware that, in Region 10, in the RDC building, the departments are all over and we believe that it is best to house the RDC at one location. This would be a new RDC building and it would be 156 square feet. It would be located in Wisroc on the western bank. The new building would benefit more than 75 persons. It would have a restroom, a canteen, a lunch room and a large boardroom. This is just for the initial stage.

Mr. Neendkumar: Project code 2406200 – Land and Water Transport: I see purchase of a boat and engine. Could the Hon. Minister tell us where would this boat and engine be at? Would it be at the Berbice River or the Demerara River?

Ms. Patterson: It would be at the Demerara River.

Mr. Neendkumar: What would be the situation in respect to the Berbice River where the boat and engine that they have there is giving problems?

Ms. Patterson: The boat that is in the Berbice River is functional.

Programme 801 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$58,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme 802 – Public Works - \$198,302,000

Current Expenditure

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6272 – Electricity Charges: I notice that, in 2016, \$600,000 was budgeted for and that \$600,000 was spent. Again, for 2017, \$600,000 is budgeted for. Could the Minister tell us if the 14% Value-Added Tax (VAT) is not applicable to Region 10? And what are the charges per kilowatt hour?

11.09 a.m.

Ms. Patterson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The response is the same. It is the same RDC. And yes, the expenses for electricity and water will be taken care of.

Mr. Neendkumar: I asked what the charges per kilowatt hour are.

Ms. Patterson: That information will be provided before the day is out.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6273 – Water Charges: I noticed that they spent \$1,066,000 in 2016 and it has dropped to \$1 million. So, what is the position with this and can the Hon. Minister give us an explanation as to why it dropped and explain to us whether the people in Region 10 will not be paying the 14% tax?

Ms. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, when I gave the response on electricity, I gave for both electricity and water. I said that we are going to take care of all the charges and we are going to pay VAT.

Mr. Neendkumar: I also asked why the drop from \$1.066 million in 2016.

Ms. Patterson: The Christiansburg Magistrates' Court that we were paying water bill for is no longer budgeted for.

Mr. Croal: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Line items 6251 – 6255 as well as 6242: Can the Hon. Minister lay over to the House the allocations for these expenditure and the locations, *et cetera*?

Ms. Patterson: I can give the information. For line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings - the buildings to be repaired are the RDC's main office –\$2 million; the RDC's annex, Wismar Street – \$1 million; the agriculture office in Christiansburg – \$1 million, RDC's office, Sub-Region 2, Kwakwani – \$2.2 million; sub-office in Ituni – \$2 million; Amerindian Hostile in Wismar – \$500,000; staff quarters in Crabwood Street at two different locations - \$800,000 and \$500,000; staff quarters in Retrieve – about five of them – the one at Building No. 20 – \$800,000 and one at Building No. 22 – \$800,000, Building No. 23 – \$700,000, and Building No. 16 – \$500,000; Banyan Bali Street, Retrieve, Building No. 29 – \$300,000; staff quarters, Apartment A, Determa Street, Building No. 30 – \$250,000; and Apartment B – same building - \$300,000. There are three buildings at Fairs Rust: No.38 - \$1 million, No.39 - \$900,000 and No.40 - \$800,000; Building No.31, Banyan Bali Street, Retrieve - \$300,000; Building No.33 at South Amelias Ward – \$150,000; Industrial Area Building No.26 – \$600,000; two buildings at Kwakwani, No.49 and No.50 - \$800,000 each; and the final one is Building No.14 at Christiansburg – \$700,000.

The roads to be repaired under line item 6251...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Croal...

Ms. Patterson: I am not finished as yet; you asked the question in two parts.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Croal, are you rising?

Mr. Croal: Yes, just for a clarification. I thank the Hon. Minister for the information but...

Mr. Chairman: Well, let the Minister finish and then you can seek your answer.

Mr. Croal: But, Hon. Chairman, I am aware that the Minister is providing the information but it is lengthy and so, in the interest of time, we are asking her to lay it over to the House. It is voluminous.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, the request is that the list be laid over.

Ms. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, I have already completed the list of buildings and the list of roads is not long. My reason for going through it is that the question is asked and we have the nation listening and they must also be beneficiaries of the responses. When it is laid over, they do not know.

Line item 6251 – Maintenance of Roads: Front Street, South Amelias Ward, 900 feet by 16 feet (900 ft. x 16 ft.) - \$7 million; Highway Boulevard, Amelias Ward, 900 feet by 16 feet (900 ft. x 16 ft.) - \$8 million; first cross street, Industrial Area, 850 feet by 14 feet (850 ft. x 14ft.) - \$8.5 million; Riverside Drive, Watooka phase two - 700 feet by 14 feet (700 ft. x 14 ft.) - \$7 million; first street, Four Corner, One Mile, 800 feet by 14 feet (800 ft. x 14 ft.) - \$7 million; Greenheart Street, Mackenzie, 660 feet by 18 feet (660 ft. x 18 ft.) - \$8.5 million; Main Street, Amelias Ward, 950 feet by 14 feet (950 ft. x 14 ft.) - \$9 million. I think the people of Linden would be happy to hear this.

Mr. G. Persaud: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. First I would like to seek clarity from you. If a request is made for the layover of a document, then would that request be interpreted the way the Hon. Minister interpreted it? What we are asking for, because of time, if I need information on any one of the line items and I ask that that information be laid over to the House, would that be interpreted that the list needs to be read to me now?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I do recall that lists have been read and then requests have been made for the list to be laid over and that has been done. I do not see a difference on this occasion.

Mr. G. Persaud: Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. What I am saying is if the request is only for the list to be laid over... We will have requests like that or else we would not finish.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, what I have told you is what I have observed in this House.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6281 – Security Services: I have noted that there is an increase of \$1 million to that line item. May I ask the Hon. Minister, very specifically, what is the name of the security company that is providing this service? When was this company contracted and for how long? And what is the charge per hour for armed as well as unarmed guards?

Ms. Patterson: Because of the burning down of the Christiansburg Magistrates' Court, it was decreased in 2016. There is a new court and there is anticipation that the court will be handed

over to the Region shortly and so the projected increase is here. And the other part of the question, the name of the security service is Universal Home Safe and it is \$300 per hour. There is no armed guard.

Mr. G. Persaud: Just one missing link: when was this contract inked and when is it due to be expired? That part of the question was not answered.

Ms. Patterson: I will have to give that response a little later but I can say that, when this Administration took office, that security company was already in place.

Mr. Chand: Comrade Chairman, line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: There has been an increase in the allocation by approximately 10%. Will the Minister please explain why the increase and it is the same complement of employees?

Ms. Patterson: We have increased salaries for two Engineers and one Handyman.

Mr. Chand: Line item 6115 – Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled: There is an increase of staffing by one and, for the two employees, approximately \$700,000. In other words, there is not an increase in pay for the two employees. Here there is a 10% increase and here (under line item 6115) there is not an increase. What is the explanation?

Ms. Patterson: The one employee that is increased is a driver. Of course, his salary is way below that of the Engineer, and we also catered for the 10% increased salaries.

Mr. Dharamlall: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good morning to you and everyone else. Under Maintenance of Infrastructure, line items 6251 – 6255, could the Hon. Minister please state the quantum of resources given to the town of Linden, the NDC of Kwakwani and the other areas? What is the spread of the resources in the township, the NDC and the other areas – the totals?

Ms. Patterson: I would wonder why the Hon. Member would do such a thing and take it *en bloc*; we have line items, Sir.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I prefer it *en bloc*.

Ms. Patterson: I would prefer it by line item.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, are we asking on line items or not? That is the process which we employ here.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I am asking under programme budgeting as...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, however you put it, the fact is that we are working with line items. Let us try not to make it more difficult for anyone here. If we are seeking information to help us to understand the items which have been put here, then let us try to do that.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, in the interest of time, I am asking under the programme maintenance of...

11.24 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I am glad that everyone is concerned about time. Let us do it the way it is in the book.

Mr. Dharamlall: Line items 6251 through 6255 – Maintenance of Infrastructure: *En bloc*, could the Hon. Minister please state what quantum of resources would go to the township of Linden, how much would go to the NDC of Kwakwani and the balance for the other areas?

Ms. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, seeing that the Hon. Member is bent in his ways, I am going to go through line item by line item for his benefit.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, on a Point of Order, please...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, if you have a Point of Order, please state it.

Mr. Dharamlall: Standing Order 40(a): I am asking a specific question. My job as a Parliamentarian here...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, no speeches. On a Point of Order, you state on what Standing Order you rise, you state the issue and you resume your seat.

Mr. Dharamlall: On Standing Order 40(a), I asked a specific question and I would be grateful for a specific answer.

Mr. Chairman: I thank the Hon. Member. Perhaps you need to repeat the specific question.

Mr. Dharamlall: The specific question is: what quantum of resources would go to the township of Linden, how much would go to the NDC of Kwakwani and how much would go to the other areas, especially our Amerindian areas?

Mr. Chairman: The Hon. Member has asked questions, Hon. Minister. Please provide the answers.

Ms. Patterson: Under line item 6251, I had just given a list. I do not know if you want me to go again.

Mr. Dharamlall: That is fine. You do not need to.

Ms. Patterson: We have roads to be repaired at South Amelias Ward, Linden - \$7 million; Highway Boulevard, Amelias Ward, Linden - \$8 million; Industrial Area, Linden - \$8.5 million; Riverside Drive, Watooka, Linden - \$7 million; Four Corner, One Mile, Linden - \$7 million; Greenheart Street, Mackenzie, Linden - 8.5 million; and Main Street, Amelias Ward, Linden - \$9 million.

Line item 6252: Bridges to be repaired are lower Independence Avenue, Linden - \$3.5 million; Sunflower Street, Wismar, Linden - \$4.5 million; and Nottinghamshire Bridge, Upper Demerara - \$7 million.

Line item 6253: Drains to be maintained are Manni Street, Linden, drain and culvert - \$6 million; Potaro Road, Linden, drain and culvert - \$6 million; Republic Avenue, Linden, drain and culvert - \$7 million; Bulletwood Street, Linden, drain and culvert - \$7 million; Determa Street, Linden, drain and culvert - \$7 million; Hymara, David Rose Avenue, Linden - \$7 million. The central area is usually flooded so these drains and culverts would take care of that.

Line item 6255 – Other Infrastructure: External works to the Regional Chairman’s Quarters, Linden; repairs to boathouse in Kwakwani; and sanitation and backfilling, agriculture building in Linden.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I am very aghast that nothing is going to be done in the Amerindian areas. Could the Hon. Minister please provide to the House, *via* lay over, the extent

of the collaboration of the RDC and Linden Town Council in arriving at these areas for the works to done in Linden?

Ms. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, I would like the Hon. Member to state which line item because I am not aware that the RDC, in its programme budgeting, has an obligation to collaborate with the municipality. Which line item are we talking about?

Mr. Dharamlall: Is the Minister asking me a question?

Hon. Members: Yes.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I would like to proceed. I do not think the Minister understands what I am asking.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, are you asking a question or are you not contributing any further to what you just asked?

Mr. Dharamlall: I prefer to take my seat, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Very well. Thank you.

Programme: 802 – Public Works - \$198,302,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 802 – Public Works – \$169,970,000

Bishop Edghill: Sir, project code 2404800 – Land and Water Transport: The legend states “purchase of a roller” in 2017. Before we go there, in 2016, the sum of \$26,400,000 was budgeted and \$36,850,000 was expended. Could the Hon. Minister indicate what was the item procured and how the additional moneys were financed?

Ms. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, there was a supplementary of \$10 million sought for a grader.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, the same project code: Could I ask the Hon. Minister for the date of delivery of this grader?

Ms. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, I do not want to give an inaccurate date so that information would be provided to the House.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, the same project code: More specifically, is the grader in the possession of the RDC?

Ms. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, the response is yes.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, \$10.5 million is allocated for the roller. Is the roller new and is this sum sufficient or are we going to have a supplementary again?

Ms. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, it is a used roller.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, project code 1902200 – Agricultural Development: Could the Hon. Minister please state what is the current status of agricultural development in Region 10?

Ms. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, I want to say that it is progressing in accordance with Government's policy for agriculture.

Mr. Dharamlall: As a follow-up, Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister please state whether Linden is close to self-sufficiency in agriculture or very far away from that?

Ms. Patterson: I think I said to the Hon. Member "progressing", which means that we are getting closer as the days go by.

Programme: 802 – Public Works – \$169,970,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 803 – Education Delivery - \$1,761,439,000

Mr. Croal: Line item 6291 – National and Other Events: There was a \$3 million increased usage in 2016. Could the Hon. Minister indicate what that increase was for? Now that we have gone back to \$6.5 million from \$9 million, could you indicate the current allocation for 2017 and what is the intended expense for this allocation?

Ms. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, under education, there was a biannual science fair which was held in 2016. The fair would not be held in 2017.

Mr. Croal: Mr. Chairman, I thank the Minister for that response. Hon. Minister, biannual would imply that we know, in advance, when it would be held. There was a budgetary allocation of \$6 million in 2016.

Ms. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, I am trying to determine what the question is. I think the Hon. Member made a statement.

Mr. Croal: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister indicate why the biannual activity was not budgeted for?

Ms. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that Region 10 was selected to be the host in 2016 after the fact.

Mr. Croal: Thank you very much, Hon. Minister. My last question: Could the Hon. Minister confirm that all \$3 million went towards the science fair.

Ms. Adams-Patterson: Mr. Chairman, I was advised, yes.

Mr. Neendkumar: Mr. Chairman, line item 6272 – Electricity Charges: I noticed the sum moved from \$5.9 million to \$7.9 million. Could the Minister tell us why there is an increase?

11. 39 a.m.

Ms. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, there is a new primary school at Bamia that is now receiving electricity from November. There is also an extension at the Mackenzie High School that would now have to receive electricity.

Mr. Neendkumar: Follow-up: I would like to ask the Minister, since she said that the nation is listening, the rate per kilowatt hour for electricity in Region 10.

Ms. Patterson: I have already committed to providing that information to the House before the end of the day.

Mr. Chand: Line item 6311, Rates and Taxes: This is the first time that there is a budgetary sum...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that there is no provision for the line item.

Mr. Chand: There is Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: I probably have the wrong document or you have the wrong document. Please proceed.

Mr. Chand: This is the first time that there is an allocation for this line item. Could the Minister explain the reason why there was never an allocation for this line item and could she layover to the House the places and buildings that will be covered under this sum?

Ms. Patterson: Yes, the information can be laid over and it will be done. Rates and taxes for 2015 and 2016 were paid under “Administration” in the previous years and not under “Education Delivery”. It is now being budgeted for, in 2017, to be paid under the correct head.

Bishop Edghill: Under the same line item, for clarification, the Hon. Minister indicated that rates and taxes were paid by the regional administration, *en bloc* for all buildings owned by the region. Sir, in 2015, that allocation was \$200,000; in 2016, the allocation was \$200,000; and now in 2017, under “Education Delivery”, the allocation is \$27 million. An explanation is being sought from the Minister?

Ms. Patterson: Hon. Member, there are now additional buildings that were not paid for in 2015 under “Administration” and are now being paid for under “Education Delivery”.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, under the same line item, we are seeking clarification. The Minister indicated to this House that the regional administration paid rates and taxes for all of the buildings. We have not come to “Health” as yet, but under that line item there is zero. If there is a change of policy that the individual programme ...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, please.

Bishop Edghill: Yes, Sir, I am getting to the question. If there is a change of policy that the individual programme is paying for rates and taxes of the buildings that they use, could the Hon. Minister layover to this House, the buildings and the amount of moneys apportioned to each building that will equal to \$27 million of rates and taxes for buildings in Linden, under “Education Delivery”.

Ms. Patterson: The information would be laid over, but for clarity, this figure does not cover Linden only, it covers Region 10. The entire region’s position will be laid over.

Ms. Veerasammy: Line item 6281, Security Services: I notice that there is a dramatic increase between the 2015 and 2017 proposals of \$170 million. Could the Minister kindly tell the House which security services are being used for Region 10 and the locations?

Ms. Patterson: The increase is due to 24 hour services being provided and the name of the security service is Home Safe Security and Domestic Services. The locations are: Pine Street Nursery School, Republic Avenue Nursery School, Wismar Hill Nursery School, One Mile Nursery School, Watooka Day Nursery School, Mount Caramel Nursery School, Silvertown Nursery School, Canvas City Nursery School, Coomacka Mines Nursery School, Wisroc Nursery School, Oronoque Drive Nursery School, Kwakwani Park Nursery School, Ituni Nursery School, Kwakwani Water Front Nursery School, West Watooka Nursery School, Amelia’s Ward Nursery School, New Christianburg Nursery School, South Amelia’s Ward Nursery School and Half Mile Nursery School. All of the schools mentioned are for 24 hours security to the tune of \$57,921,120.

There are the primary school locations: Mackenzie Primary School, Watooka Day Primary School, Christianburg Primary School, Kwakwani Primary School, One Mile Primary School, Wismar Hill Primary School, Amelia’s Ward Primary School, New Saint Aidan’s Primary School, Rockstone Primary School, Regma Primary School, Anarika Primary School, Howell Wilson Primary School in Ituni, Mabura Mission Annex, Bamia Primary School, Coomacka Mines Primary School and 47 Miles Mabura Primary School, totalling \$60,969,600.

The secondary school locations are: Kwakwani Secondary School, Linden Foundation Secondary School, Student Hostel at the Linden Foundation Secondary School, Wismar Christianburg Secondary School, Wisburg Secondary School, Mackenzie High School, New

Silvercity Secondary School, New Wisburg Secondary School, Lichas Hall that houses part of the Mackenzie High School and the Kwakwani Student Hostel, totalling \$45,727,200.

For the administrative locations are: Boat House at Kwakwani and the Education Department totalling \$6,096,960. The total would be \$170,714,880.

Ms. Veerasammy: Mr. Chairman, I must thank the Minister for being so open and delivering the information. I hope that it would be appropriate of me to ask this other question because from the other presentations on education, I am a bit flabbergasted because...

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

Ms. Veerasammy: Yes, Sir, I am asking...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, it is not a good practice, do not adopt it.

Ms. Veerasammy: Sir, it is a follow-up on the same line item 6281.

Mr. Chairman: Then ask your second question please.

Ms. Veerasammy: I would like to know why is it that Linden is being provided with 24 hours security services when some other regions do not receive any security services.

Ms. Patterson: I would not be able to answer that question. We in Region 10 mind our business and we believe that 24 hours security service is what is needed and we provide for it.

Ms. Selman: Follow-up to line item 6281, could the Hon. Minister state whether the primary as well as the secondary schools enjoy 24 hours security services?

Ms. Patterson: The entire list of schools that I went through receives 24 hours security services.

Programme: 803 – Education Delivery - \$1,761,439,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 803 –Education Delivery - \$97,333,000

Mr. Dharamlall: Project code 1205200, Buildings – Education: Could the Hon. Minister state what the current status is of the reconstruction fund collected for the One Mile Primary School, which was destroyed in 2013?

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

Mr. Dharamlall: Project code 1205200, Buildings – Education. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, it is not helpful if we cannot focus on what we are doing here. We have to try to focus on what we are doing. If the question does not have an answer or an answer of the kind that should be provided then, certainly, let us move on.

Ms. Patterson: I was awaiting your instruction, Mr. Chairman. This line item has, “Construction of a primary school at Bamia/Amelia’s Ward”. It has the “Construction of Grade C Nursery School at Bamia, Amelia’s Ward”. There is nothing in this provision for the One Mile Primary School.

11.54 a.m.

Bishop Edghill: Sir, under the same line item, this programme under performed by about \$20 million in 2016. Could the Hon. Minister tell this House what was not done as it relates to the allocation that was provided in 2016?

Ms. Patterson: There is a rollover from the Christiansburg/Wismar Secondary School and also a rollover from the Linden Foundation School into 2017.

Bishop Edghill: I would like the Minister to inform the House when were the contracts’ completion dates for the two projects that were just mentioned as rollovers?

Ms. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, that information will be provided.

Bishop Edghill: A follow-up on the line item. Were these multi-year projects?

Ms. Patterson: The answer is yes.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, if the Minister is indicating that this was a multi-year project, could she explain why \$20 million less than was budgeted for 2016 was spent? This is because,

if it was multi-year, what was budgeted for 2016 was the apportionment as it relates to the works to be completed in 2016. The rollover will have an apportionment in 2017. Why the underperformance?

Ms. Patterson: The contract was signed late November and it is a three-month project, so it will be rolled over to 2017.

Bishop Edghill: Sir, under the same line item, could the Minister indicate to this House the breakdown of the \$76,733,000 and the buildings it will be spent on in 2017 and I would like her to do so now?

Mr. G. Persaud: The nation is listening.

Ms. Patterson: The nation is listening and I am going to give it. There is the construction of a primary school at Bamia, Amelia's Ward - \$20,812,000; construction of a Grade C nursery school at Bamia, Amelia's Ward - \$22 million; completion of Christiansburg/Wismar Secondary School- \$18.5 million; and Linden Foundation Secondary School - \$15,421,000, that will give \$76,733,000.

Bishop Edghill: The \$18.5 million for the completion of the Christiansburg Secondary School, I am enquiring whether this sum is the rollover amount for this project?

Ms. Patterson: The provision is made because we can only make provisions up to the end of December. The Christiansburg/Wismar Secondary School is an old school and works were being done continually. But the nature of the work to be done is so huge that we had to put it under capital and this will not even complete the all repairs that have to be done. But this is what is budgeted for 2017. No major repairs were done on this school in about 10 or 23 years, as I am being advised.

Bishop Edghill: Sir, under the same line item, we are talking about capital works not the maintenance of buildings. The Hon. Minister just indicated to the House about maintenance works, but we are talking about capital works. I would like the Hon. Minister to indicate to this House what is the total contract sum for capital works to be done at the Christiansburg Secondary School?

Ms. Patterson: I am advised that this is the entire contract sum.

Bishop Edghill: Sir, a follow-up on the same line item. Is the \$18.5 million which was indicated the full contract sum or are there moneys that were spent in 2016, moneys that were signed in a contract in November 2016? What is the full contract sum? What was paid in 2016, plus what is to be paid in 2017?

Ms. Patterson: I am advised that this is the full contract sum, but a mobilisation fee would be paid before the end of 2016.

Mr. Chairman: I thank the Hon. Minister. Hon. Members, I must tell you that we began this morning at 10.40 a.m. and this was slated for one hour. I will allow one other question on this matter. Please proceed.

Bishop Edghill: Sir, for the purpose of clarity. Could the Hon. Minister indicate to this House the full breakdown of the \$48,183,000 that was expended in 2016 and to which buildings this was apportioned?

Ms. Patterson: Seeing that the Hon. Member is asking about 2016 that will be provided.

Programme: 803 – Education Delivery – \$97,333,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 804 – Health Services - \$559,117,000

Mr. Croal: Line item 6281 – Security Services: There is an increase in allocation. Could the Hon. Minister provide to the House the reason for the increased locations and secondly, lay over to the House the details of where security is being provided under this line item?

Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister lay over the expenses under this line item?

Ms. Patterson: Line item 6281 – Security Services: Home Safe Security Services and these are unarmed guards, three guards daily for 24-hour, \$300 per hour; Amelia's Ward Health Centre; West Watooka Health Centre; Wisroc Health Centre; Three Friends Mines Health Centre;

Kumaka – Upper Demerara, Demerara River Health Post; De-Veldt Health Centre; Wiruni Health Centre; RockStone Health Centre; Sand Hills Health Centre; Ebini Health Centre and these are in the Berbice River; old England Health Centre; Muritaro Health Centre; Kimbia Health Centre; 47 Miles Health Centre; 58 Miles Health Centre; Christiansburg Health Centre; Kumaka Health Centre in the Berbice River, the first Kumaka that I called is in Upper Demerara; Ituni Health Centre; One Mile Health Centre; Vivienne Parris Health Centre; Malali Health Centre; Calcuni Health Centre; Hururu Health Centre; Kwakwani Hospital; and Rivers View Health Centre in the Essequibo River.

Bishop Edghill: Sir, line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Hon. Minister indicate to the House what percentage of this allocation in 2016 was utilised in the region and what percentage went to the central Ministry of Public Health for the procurement of drugs? Secondly, the same amount is budgeted for in 2017, could the Hon. Minister indicate whether this is adequate to cover all of the needs of the Region 10 health facilities? Could the Hon. Minister indicate whether the drugs that were requested were the equivalent of what was received and she could do so by providing us copies with the document?

Ms. Patterson: I have lost track of the questions. Could the Member repeat please?

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, I did ask a lengthy question as you said one question and I did not want to...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member you did, by my reckoning about three or four questions. Now, let us not spend time on that. Please proceed with giving the questions.

Bishop Edghill: Sir under line item 6221, first of all could the Hon. Minister indicate what portion of the moneys allocated in 2016 was utilised by the Regional Health Services and what apportionment went to the Ministry of Public Health for central procurement of drugs?

Mr. Chairman: Is there a Hon. Member who is helping in this matter? I believe that the Hon. Member is capable of doing it himself.

Bishop Edghill: Secondly, the same amount that was budgeted for in 2016 is budgeted for in 2017. So the second question is: Is this amount adequate to cover all of the needs that are required by the Regional Health Services for Region 10?

Thirdly, were all the drugs requested and moneys warranted to the central health for purchases received by the region, if that is so we would like to have copies of the document.

12.09 p.m.

Ms. Patterson: Thank you Mr. Chairman. The first question, \$11,535,000 was retained by the region and \$130 million was warranted to the Ministry of Public Health. The second part of the question, the answer is yes and the third part of the question the answer is no, all the drugs were not received.

Programme: 804 – Health Services - \$559,117,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Am I right that a Hon. Member is using his phone, in his seat, in this House? The Member is free to leave and complete his message outside of the House.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 804 – Health Services - \$81,147,000

Programme: 804 – Health Services - \$81,147,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the time is now 12.10 p.m. I would propose the following: That we begin consideration of one or two points in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and then we adjourn for lunch. If Members are in agreement with that, then we will proceed immediately to begin consideration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I thank you for your assistance. Minister, you have the two minutes to have your officers in place.

Hon. Minister, are you ready to proceed?

Vice-President and Minister of Foreign Affairs [Mr. Greenidge]: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Very well, thank you.

Agency: 04 Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Current Expenditure

Programme: 041 – Development of Foreign Policy - \$1,948,228,000

Mr. Chairman: Do you wish to ask a question, Ms. Teixeira?

Opposition Chief Whip [Ms. Teixeira]: Sorry about that. I was not sure you would put the question. Hon. Minister, when we look at Programme 041, under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Development of Foreign Policy, there are a number of issues and I will come to those. I want to ask a question in relation to line item 6322 – Subsidies and Contributions to International Organisations: In 2016, the sums were increased and I have found Supplementary Financial Paper No. 3 covers that increase, but it has now been increased to \$1.17 billion. When one goes to page 592 of the budget and look at this rather phenomenal increase of over half of a billion dollars more in Contributions to International Organisations, he/she sees some things that I must ask you about, Sir, and if you would allow me, there are several matters that I have to ask about.

Pages 592 and 593 have the list of all the international contributions listed under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. So, we have an increase in the contribution to the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) from \$9.9 million to \$45 million. Then we have the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Competition Commission - \$73.9 million, which I had asked questions on, when we were dealing with the 2016 Budget, where the Minister had answered and the *Hansard* would reflect those question and answers from last year, it has been decreased to \$12.850 million. Then we have the CARICOM Implementing Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS), which the Minister had said, in 2016, that Guyana needed to pay a backlog to it of \$156 million and now it has gone down to \$130 million. So, could one say Sir, in relation to that category, what is the annual fee to IMPACS, if Guyana has paid off 2009-2016? Why has the IMPACS increased from the 2015 allocation?

One of the largest increases under this heading is the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which was \$31.4 million and in 2016 the revised sum is the same, but it has gone up in 2017 to \$427 million. Could one explain Sir, why has the subvention to an organisation gone up by almost \$400 million in one year? I am sorry to go through all of them because I know there is limited time. The Organisation of American States (OAS) - this is a question that I had asked the Minister outside of the House, but I will repeat it here. On page 593, for International Subventions for the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, the OAS is listed under the Ministry of

Public Infrastructure for \$1.2 million, and under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Subvention to International Organisations there is \$3.8 million, which is a slight reduction from last year. It is rather unusual to have the OAS payments going through two Ministries, instead of one, which is usually the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Under the United Nations Industrial Organisation, the Ministry has increased the allocation from \$151,000 to \$637,000, but one of the largest increases, other than the one for the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation is the United Nations Local Office cost. For the questions on the 2016 Budget, this had gone up, I had questioned it and the Minister had answered. It has gone up three times more from the \$16.7 million revised sum in 2016 to \$65.847 million.

I want to take some time in dealing with the international subventions under this heading because there are about 30 organisations and there is a massive increase of half of a billion dollars going to this heading alone. So, I would appreciate this. I know that I have asked a lot of questions, but I hope that we could go through them one by one. In the interest of time I threw them all at the Minister, but I am sure that the Chairman will give us more time.

Mr. Greenidge: Mr. Chairman, the large cluster of questions put by my Colleague on the other side, does not really give me the opportunity to deal with them one by one, but it does give me the opportunity to explain where she has correctly identified significant increases compared to 2016, and, perhaps, an unevenness in these increases, they reflect the negotiations between the Government, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the external agencies for the clearance of arrears in 2017. We have a number of arrears of significant sizes, in a variety of agencies, including, for example, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and we have negotiated, in those cases, for the arrears to be reduced in some agreeable manner, consistent with the funds available.

Where the amount seems to be less than was the case last year, in all of those cases, in 2016, we had reduced the arrears. So, that is the broad answer to the question put and I do not know whether that is satisfactorily or would the Member still require that we go through them individually, because if that is so, if you take them one by one, I would be grateful.

Ms. Teixeira: Sure. I would like to go through them in more details, Sir. As a country, Guyana has not been a member of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation for a long period, it is

relatively recent. The Hon. Minister is saying that the \$427 million is to cover backlog, but for how many years, when Guyana has paid \$31.4 million in 2016 and has paid annually for the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. I am just using that one example out of the group that I have asked questions and I will continue in that vein, if it is easier.

Mr. Greenidge: Mr. Chairman, as regards the question of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, whilst I do trust our Colleague's memory in these matters, generally, in this particular case, I think that she may be mistaken. I do not have the exact date of Guyana joining the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, but I believe that Guyana has been a member for over 10 years. Since 1997, I am being advised by a Colleague at the far end. Guyana has accumulated a significant amount of arrears and had paid \$31.2 million in 2015. In order to ensure Guyana's eligibility for disbursements from the Central Islamic Development Bank, it was obliged to negotiate the reduction in arrears and that is really what has happened here. That still has not been completely eliminated; there are still some arrears left.

Ms. Teixeira: Could the Minister say how many years this \$427 million covers in backlog debts because I am aware that Guyana was always contributing annually to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation? So, I am interested to know what the backlog was. It is listed here as the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, Cde. Minister.

Mr. Greenidge: Mdm. Teixeira, I will send you that information. I do not have the number of years. It is probably about four years, but I will give you the precise figure.

12.24 p.m.

Ms. Teixeira: In relation to the United Nations Local Office, there was an increase from 2015 to 2016 in our contribution, as a Government and as a country, now it has gone up almost four-fold. Could you give an explanation why the United Nations (UN) office has increased our contribution from \$16.7 million to \$65.8 million in one year?

Mr. Greenidge: The explanation lies at two levels. We had an assess contribution which increased from 2014 to 2016 and the amount, which was assessed, was US\$219,471 at an exchange rate that we used of Guy\$210 to US\$1. That is what accounts for the amount that is shown here.

Ms. Teixeira: When I looked at the *Hansard*, after the debates of 2016, you said that we were being reassessed and the amount had increased so that you had to put in \$16 million as the increase over 2015. Are you saying that that amount of money put in 2016 was not a proper reflection of the assessment down in 2016, and therefore this is a rectification under the allocation for 2017?

Mr. Greenidge: We still had arrears in 2016.

Ms. Teixeira: Are you saying that the assessment of the UN was back dated because of its assessment of countries' contributions which is based on a quota system that is there? In 2015, let us say that we were paying \$20 million, it went up with the quota system. As the country goes, it becomes a low income country, low medium income, medium income and high income, the quota changes. Are you saying that the quota for 2016 was different than it is now or is it different than it is now or did not contribute or did we not put the reflection of that quota that you should have in 2016?

Mr. Greenidge: The amount actually paid in 2016 reflected the assessment for 2016 and we are proposing to pay, in 2017, the arrears which were not covered in 2016. The year 2016 did cover all the arrears.

Ms. Teixeira: Could you say what arrears we have in the head office here?

Mr. Greenidge: It is US\$219,471.

Ms. Teixeira: Is that for one year?

Mr. Greenidge: That is the accumulated arrears.

Ms. Teixeira: Hon. Member, the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime Security (IMPAC) we had \$41 million in 2016 and you came with a supplemental financial paper to increase our contribution to the IMPAC which was, as you said, arrears. You put in the supplementary, \$114.3 million towards paying off 2009 to 2016 arrears to IMPAC. Now the figure has dropped to \$130 million budgeted in 2017. Is that going to be the annual rate for Guyana to IMPAC or is this still including further backlog of debts? It is because the supplementary financial paper, which was passed, made it very clear that for the period 2009

2016 it was totalling 116.3 million. If it is not paid by December 1st, the figure will increase owing to the fact that this is pegged for existing payables of the agencies. Am I to assume that the supplementary abroad will then cover us 2009 to 2016?

Mr. Greenidge: Yes. The amount requested for 2017 is the assessment only for 2017.

Ms. Teixeira: Annually, from now on, we will be paying \$130 million to IMPAC on an annually basis as our contributions.

Mr. Greenidge: Yes Madam.

Ms. Teixeira: To go back to Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), we had 2016 revised \$9.9 million and it has gone up to \$40.5 million. This is outside Guyana's contribution to Bahamas and Haiti as a result of the hurricane. Could you say if this now a new increase for CDEMA that we will pay annually or is it a special programme or was it an arrears?

Mr. Greenidge: The arrears of EC \$407,587 has been accumulated over the years since 2012. The EC dollar is roughly point \$4 million and the access contribution for the year 2017 is EC\$133 plus.

Ms. Teixeira: The question is if the Organization of American States (OAS) that there is an allocation under your Ministry for OAS and an allocation under the Ministry of Public Information. It is rather unusual. I am just asking: Is this a new trend that the Ministries would put their own allocation for international bodies or is this something special that is going on?

Mr. Greenidge: To be very honest, I am not aware or we had not noticed that an assessment and a provision was made for two agencies. Normally, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs makes the payment. We can check to what is happening to see if it is something secret here.

Ms. Teixeira: I would ask that the Hon. Minister look at pages 592 and 593. There are moneys allocated to the OAS under the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I notice that the allocation for OAS has declined. This is an organisation that has been very helpful to Guyana in many ways. Could we say why the allocation for the OAS under your heading has declined from \$4.4 million to \$3.8 million, especially when I know the OAS is in dire strait with money? Why are declining our support to the organisation?

Mr. Greenidge: The simple answer to the question is that we have simply provided, here, in the request, as it is shown, the amount, which was requested by us by the OAS, which is the assessment that was submitted and processed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which is an amount of \$21,124 moved to \$18,436...

Mr. Chairman: It would be helpful if the microphone is near.

Mr. Greenidge: I am sorry. I was saying we computed from the treasury the amounts that were assessed and estimated by the OAS and the movement from \$21,124 to US\$18,436 reflects simply its assessment.

Ms. Teixeira: CARICOM Competition Commission, last year in Budget 2016 we had quite a discussion here under this item to do with the allocation under the CARICOM Competition Commission and \$73.9 million was expended, I assume so, and it is now dropped to \$12.8 million. Could you explain what has changed in our relationship in the CARICOM Competition Commission? The last time there was were quite a long discussion and it was reflecting in the *Hansard* on this issue.

Mr. Greenidge: In 2016 we paid the arrears for the period 2008 to 2013 and that is why in the current budget request you will see the amount substantially less, than had been the case in the previous years. There are a number of agencies where this had occurred where arrears had been accumulated because no payments were made or the payments made were part only of the assess contribution, which is the case here.

Ms. Teixeira: There was also a discussion on this item which Ministry was leading on the CARICOM Competition Commission for Guyana's interest. Was it the Ministry of Business or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs? You had clarified that the Ministry of Business and the CARICOM Competition Commission we have here and so the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was a conduit. Has that been put in place because at that time it was not properly put in place? Could you say if that is now that the Ministry of Business is now the focal point for the CARICOM Competition Commission, any matters or is it still your remit?

Mr. Greenidge: The mechanism, which was outlined last year, and as repeated by the distinguished Member on the other side, remains in place. The day to day working supervision,

interface with the competition commission is undertaken by the Ministry of Business. I cannot tell you exactly how many activities that have involved but they have operational responsibilities.

Ms. Teixeira: Under this head, as we concluded, line item 6322, Subsidies and Contribution to International Organisation, when you look at the website for these various agencies there are many countries that owe a lot of money. With these allocations, which you are putting in 2016 and 2017, Guyana may be one of the top ranking countries for having paid our debts because a lot of other countries such as the United States of America owes billions of dollars. Could you say what the advantages are that we have in making sure we pay off all these debts? Does this give us an advantage or not because generally it has not in the past, hurt us for owing money? Are you expecting for that having being so generous for \$1.7 billion, \$500 million more, that Guyana would be in a better advantageous position to get more support from these organisations?

Mr. Greenidge: I am interested but not surprised to hear my distinguished colleague explained that the non-payment has not done us any damage in the past, but she would know, as I do, as Members of the institutions, that when critical decisions need to be made elections, and the likes, occur and you are sighted as a member that is not financially current, it has implications. It is not going to hurt you every year but there are times when it matters. In our particular case, the primary struggle, which we have, is a struggle to keep current in these institutions so that our voice can be heard especially if it is on the political front where we need allays. Also you would know from the statement by the Minister of Finance in a number of these institutions we have been seeking additional funding and special loans and the likes. The utility of keeping current, I think, is one that I would commend to my colleague which happens to be important in the context of CARICOM. It is equally important in the case of the multilateral agencies with whom we collaborate and from whom we often need assistance.

Ms. Teixeira: The Hon. Member and I would continue to debate this issue. As long as the Americans and the big countries owe lots of money to these I have no conscious and problem with the small country such as Guyana owing.

12.39 p.m.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6284, Other: There was \$200 million. It was \$76.4 million in 2015 and in 2016 \$200 million was allocated, you spent a \$165 million and you put back \$200 million. In the budget debate, in 2016, you said that this was for local consultants and lawyers. Could you explain why the money was underspent and could you explain what the \$200 million would be used for in 2017?

Mr. Greenidge: This is a most important budget item. The consultancies, which are identified, are to provide the Ministry with a very wide range of skills needed for it to fashion some of the programmes to guide policy making and, more importantly, to ensure that the technical advice, a good deal of which may be foreign, would be available to the Ministry as it looks at legal and political issues. Now, the problem with that is that we could not always anticipate how the submission of invoices for reimbursement would occur. The economist or the people in accounts would say that the submissions were lumpy, in other words, they were not continuous over time. You may work in the first half of the year and all that work, perhaps, is built in June and you are not able to deal with it until maybe July or August. A number of them, because they are those type of consultancies, we could not deal with smoothly and the fact that they amounts were not spent as budgeted was simply a reflection of the unevenness of the flow of services, but over time the total quantities, in fact, have been utilised.

Ms. Teixeira: In the light of the statement you read today, from the Secretary General, are you then going to allocate - consultants, advisers and lawyers to prepare in anticipation, were it to happen, that we were going to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) - money in 2017 for that possibility?

Mr. Greenidge: Some of the services on which we spent funds in 2016 would not be required, but certainly, in 2017, services above and below those that were retained, 2016, would be needed. More specifically, in anticipation of the referral of this matter of the controversy to the court, we would begin to secure legal advice internally and externally. Therefore the amounts, which are here, are more certain to be utilised because we are not sure of the outcome. At this point in time, it is not possible to do with certainty whether this would be sufficient or whether there would be a need for additional funds. I think, if I might be asked to have a guess, it is almost certain that would need more than what is here. For the time being, we do not want to create any difficulties in the budget. This is the amount. I think it is a reasonable amount, in the

event that greater demand is to be made on us. It would be made towards the end of the year, probably, dramatically different. We would see as to how we could get additional funds to meet those requirements.

Ms. Teixeira: Hon. Minister, could you say if there is any provision under this head, line item 6284, Other, or is it anywhere else this is being done, preparing Guyana's reports in relations to its convention or its international treaties? It is the report that has to be done periodically for human rights and various human rights conventions which were signed, including the OAS Convention in relations to anti-corruptions, and so on. Could you say if there is allocation here for technical support to be able to prepare these reports for the Government or if it is being done somewhere else by someone else or by somebody else?

Mr. Greenidge: The categories of expenses that have been identified by our distinguished colleague with normally be meant under line item 6223, Office Materials and Support and line item 6224, Print and Non-Print Material, and alike.

Ms. Teixeira: The reports of Guyana are being done the Ministry of Foreign Affairs now. It used to be done by the Department of Governance. Now it is back to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Mr. Greenidge: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is not responsible for preparing the report as such as my colleague well knows. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinates the exercise. It draws the deadlines, the request for information to the attention of the sister agencies. We collaborate and where documents need to be printed we would make the provision for the printing. Where the reports have to be submitted, we, on a number of occasions, will, of course, accompany colleagues to make the presentations or do it on the state behalf.

Ms. Teixeira: What I was doing, I must confessed, was fishing, because I have not heard anybody say anything about these reports, which I have very strong views on, so I am fishing and you will answer.

Line item 6294, Other, the allocation went up to \$84 million, \$73 million spent and a \$100 million budgeted in 2017. When we have looked at this item during the budget debate in 2016, there was some discussion about the Diaspora Unit and consultant to rationalise functions of the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Citizenship. Could you tell what is the status of that and what would the \$100 million be used for now?

Mr. Greenidge: As regards the question of 2016, the Diaspora Unit and the work of the teams responsible for diaspora matters, those are ongoing. There is a paper, which has been before the Cabinet sometime now, which attempts to invite responses to the proposal for work on the diaspora strategy and implementation. Hopefully, early in the new year, the Cabinet would conclude that exercise, which, as you rightly said, is not exclusively a matter to do with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

As regards 2017, this vote is going to cover the cost of hosting the CARICOM Head of Government Intercessional Meeting, as you know, that is to be held on the 16th and 17th February, 2017. In the past, that was paid by the Ministry of Finance. It was provided for under the Ministry of Finance head. We also have catered, under this item, for the various receptions that are normally required to be held for, for example, visiting delegations and alike.

Ms. Teixeira: Hon. Minister, could I get to the more mundane? Under line item 6261, Local Travel and Subsistence, which increases by \$2 million and line item 6265, Other Transport, Travel and Postage, increases or decreases from \$34 million to \$30 million. In the last budget when we ask about why was this high allocation for local travel when usually the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is not locally travelling, you explained that it was to bring back people's household defects. Who had been recalled, so what is this increase covering now, as I think, all had been recalled?

Mr. Greenidge: Our colleague is quite right, the increase caters for staff posting, and in this particular year, it would include the posting of, for example, accountants who would go from the head office to mission. There are accountants who are going from Georgetown to India, Georgetown to Delhi, Georgetown to Trinidad and Tobago. There are confidential secretaries. They are going to the head offices, as I mentioned, Delhi, Trinidad and Tobago, Switzerland, Brussels where they have to be replaced. We have got reposting from mission to head office where some officers have been brought back to the head office. Then, there is crossed-postings, in order to keep trace and control of the expenses that are being carried out in the various missions, as you know, we had some difficulties in the past. We would have administration visits

and accountants visiting from the head office to these missions to ensure accountability and transparency. There is also expenses relating to local travel, that is literally local, within our borders and they would include whatever, if we travel out of town.

Ms. Teixeira: Two more questions. Hon. Minister, under line item 6116, Contracted Employees, there is an increase of four contracted employees and you also had an increase of 14 employees. Under line 6114, Clerical and Office Support, and when you look at the budget items there are provisions for that increase. Could you say, for the contracted employees, who were the new persons brought on and if these figures covers the Ambassadors or not or head of mission or whether that comes under the new programme?

Mr. Greenidge: The figures raised by the distinguished colleague do not cover the ambassadors. As regards the increase, there was the position of an Adviser, a Principal Foreign Service Officer, Director of International Cooperation and another Foreign Service Officer. Then, there have been salaries increase gained in 2016 and payment of gratuity and vocational allowances for which staff are due. There are a number of things incorporated in there.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6241, Rental of Buildings: The figure has gone up. Could you say if there is an increase in the rental of the buildings you are renting or if these are additional buildings and which buildings?

Mr. Greenidge: The rental of buildings, which is shown here, would cover, notwithstanding, the title, person reposted from missions back to the head office as well as the rental of the residents of the Caricom Secretary General and the current annual rentals for persons who have been riposted.

Programme: 041 – Development of Foreign Policy – \$1,948,228,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

12.54 p.m.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 041 – Development of Foreign Policy – \$120,000,000

Ms. Teixeira: Could the Hon. Member advise us within...? The profile talks about the construction of buildings to house the Protocol and Council Affairs Departments in the Foreign Service Institute at a \$100 million. It looks as if, from the description, the total project would cost \$282.5 million, with \$100 million dedicated this year to the budget. Could the Minister say where this building will be, where he anticipates putting it? Is it an extension of Takuba Lodge or is it an extension of reconstruction of the Foreign Service Institute? This is so we will have a better idea of this expenditure of \$100 million being proposed.

Mr. Greenidge: The building will be on the site of the old Ramphal House. As you are aware, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been struggling with that building for quite some time and the various attempts at renovation seem not to have been effective in the sense that having spent moneys on the renovation it continues to leak quite chronically damaging material and so forth. The location is on the old site. As regards the provision here, the provision is for continuing construction. You are right. There is \$100 million provided. The \$100 million will not cover the full cost. There was expenditure in 2016 amounting to \$50 million as by the end of the year and the additional amount of \$100 million is to be spent in the course of 2017. That is why there is a difference in amount, and that is the plan.

Ms. Teixeira: You spent \$50 million on the same building but this is talking about the reconstruction. Is it that the buildings has been torn down and reconstructed or are we just doing a patchwork? It is a lot of money to do patchwork. It is \$150 million between last year and this year, or the new year. If it is so bad, would it not be more economical to tear it down and use the \$100 million and next year's allocation, I assume, of \$282 million being the total cost of the project?

Mr. Greenidge: I have a suspicion that our colleague on the other side has perhaps more insights into discipline of architecture and construction than we realise. Yes. It is not worth spending the money on further amendments to the building and the \$50 million, which has been paid, is for the purpose of ensuring the building is part of the funding for the first phase. First of all, you have to pay for mobilisation; there was work on the drawings and these sorts of things. The removing of the old building is part of the arrangement. There is no money being spent on the current building as such.

Ms. Teixeira: Consequentially Minister, assuming that the construction begins in 2017, the actual construction, have you catered for rental or relocation of the staff that is in that building so that the services that are offered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs continue?

Mr. Greenidge: The answer to the question is yes. We have made provision. Of course, my colleagues here are assuring me that all adequate and proper provision has been made. The colleagues, who are affected, might not believe that it is adequate, but we do our best within the conditions available to us. As regards to protocol, remigrants and the receptionist, those areas, which are currently utilised by those sections, will be utilised in future as a part of the transition arrangement whilst the new building is put down. One hopes that it will work, but I think the plan is to ensure that we try and minimise rental outside of what is available. Services will continue, and that is the plan.

Programme: 041 – Development of Foreign Policy – \$120,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Sitting suspended at 12.59 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 2.07 p.m.

In Committee of Supply

Current Expenditure

Programme: 042 - Foreign Policy Promotion - \$2,971,735,000

Ms. Teixeira: Hon. Minister, under Programme 042, Foreign Policy Promotion, line item 6111, Administrative, I have noticed that there is an increase for the total emoluments by over \$300 million, but let us get to the specifics. Line item 6116, Contracted Employees, was budgeted for \$123.8 million in 2016; it went up to \$157.2 million in revised 2016. However, I have not seen a supplementary finance paper for that. Could you advise the Assembly how you were able to increase by \$34 million? In addition, in 2017, the same has increased to \$368.4 million, almost \$200 million more for line item 6116, Contracted Employees. Could you explain that increase as well? I will have follow-up questions to that.

Mr. Greenidge: The increases under line item 6116, Contracted Employees, reflect largely the fact that almost all the new postings, in terms of Principal Foreign Service Officers and Ambassadors fall under this heading. There is the employment of new Ambassadors, and in London Ottawa, Havana, Caracas, New York, Brussels, Nickerie, and so forth. There are new Principal Foreign Service Officers. At the same time, there are allowances which are captured here, in terms of medical, gratuity, vacation, National Insurance Scheme (NIS), and so forth. Also there will be salary increases in 2016. What I am saying is that the increase, which you would have seen, is the result of the appointment and placement of the Ambassadors, and in most instances the number twos, hence the different missions that I have listed there. Is that sufficient for you?

Ms. Teixeira: As you know that is never sufficient for me, but I would like to have from your Ministry the listing of all the posts that have been filled with Ambassadors, High Commissioners and or Chargé d'affaires or Deputies. Does this heading cover Consular General as well? Could we have that list with their emoluments, their salaries, benefits or entitlements, and so on? These persons, by the way, are on contract. Are they on contract for one year, two years, three years or five years? What is the contractual length if you would not mind advising us?

Mr. Greenidge: The contracts vary from one year to three years, depending upon the negotiations between the officers and ourselves. We do have the officers. I can give the designations right now if the colleague wishes. As regards to all the salaries and emoluments, do you really want us to give you the salary packages for every single officer?

Ms. Teixeira: It would be useful, Sir. I mean if all the Ambassadors get paid the same thing, but as you said, they are negotiated individually. It means that there will be difference, maybe, between postings and persons who are hired. We would like to know the Ambassador but obviously once you say Ambassador we know who it is.

Mr. Greenidge: We can. We will provide those. The basic observation is that, of course, the allowances and salaries vary according to post because positions, for example, the new position in Geneva is lot more of a costly posting than say Barbados or Ottawa, so we can provide that.

Ms. Teixeira: Still on line item 6116, Contracted Employees, Minister, one of the Ambassador's appointment became a rather public affair in which there was a decision to investigate. It is the

Ambassador to Kuwait. There has been no announcement by your office, so is this Ambassador still being paid under investigation or not?

Mr. Greenidge: Strictly speaking, the Ambassador designate to Kuwait is still the Ambassador designate. He has not yet been formally paid in that post the exercise of looking into the allegations has been completed.

Ms. Teixeira: It has been completed.

Mr. Greenidge: Yes.

Ms. Teixeira: Has this Ambassador been accredited or not yet?

Mr. Greenidge: He has not yet been accredited.

Ms. Teixeira: Therefore the salary, which we see here, at line item 6116, is not being paid to him in 2016 and 2017. What is his status, in other words? How is he being paid? Is he just living in Kuwait at the generosity of himself?

2.17 p.m.

Mr. Greenidge: When an Ambassador is appointed, even before he is accredited, he would normally be given an advance because he has to establish himself before all those processes are completed. It is no different for the Ambassador in question.

The process of sorting out the accreditation and having his documents presented to the Kuwaiti authorities is in train. That will be completed in due course.

Ms. Teixeira: It seems to be taking an inordinate length of time, as this was a rather public affair. However, there are a number of Missions that you have not yet put Ambassadors or High Commissioners. Could you outline which are the ones and could you say if there will be a replacement for the High Commissioner of India? There is a view that he may have relieved himself or may have been relieved of his post.

Mr. Greenidge: I hope that, from time to time, he would do the former. As regards the positions not filled, the only one that has not been filled is the one for the Consul General and Public Relations (PR) in Toronto. All the others, namely Washington, New York, Ottawa, Beijing,

Brussels, Caracas, London, Havana, Delhi, Kuwait, Boa Vista, Barbados, Geneva, South Africa and Trinidad and Tobago, have all been filled by Ambassadors or Consuls General. Toronto is the only one outstanding. As regards to India, the High Commissioner to India is Dr. Pollard. He is in place and has not been relieved of his post, as I indicated.

Ms. Teixeira: When we look at line item 6116 – Contracted Employees - there were a number of staff that were terminated in New York for the Consul General. Have these members of staff been replaced and hired under line item 6116 or are they hired under Senior Technical which now has \$59 million which it never had before? There was no allocation for Senior Technical under line item 6112.

Mr. Greenidge: The Consulate in New York had its operations reviewed and, in that review, we found that they had, for example, I think, four members of staff who had been appointed in 2014 on short-term contracts under conditions that did not seem to be consistent with the work that had to be undertaken. In an assessment of that work, I think, specifically four Drivers... I will give you the exact number in a minute. Amounting to five persons were let go. Those positions were not filled. I think only one of the positions was filled.

The question as to where they appeared, let me say, as I remember, all but one was a Driver. I will come back to you with the specific numbers in a minute.

Ms. Teixeira: They were not all Drivers. We will leave you to check that out. The six persons who were terminated were not all Drivers.

Line item 6112 – Senior Technical: For the first time, you have \$59 million being put for Budget 2017. Who are the persons in this category who are being employed? According to the schedule at the bottom, are there five new people?

Mr. Greenidge: The question, if I have it correct, is: what are the designations of the persons who are assigned under line item 6112?

Ms. Teixeira: Yes.

Mr. Greenidge: There are a Consular, a Deputy Consul General, a Deputy Head of Mission, a Deputy Consul General and a Trade Officer. I can give you the names, if you wish. Did I miss anything? Did you ask for anything else?

Ms Teixeira: No. That covers the \$59 million, for the first time.

Mr. Greenidge: Okay, thanks. As regards previous questions, if I may, there were five persons whose contracts were not renewed at the beginning of 2016 who operated out of the office in New York. One of those persons opted not to renew his contract. The contracts for the other four were not renewed. I was going to some details as to when they had their contracts and so forth. I have before me a note dealing with the justification for them. The others were Drivers assigned to two vehicles and some of the reasons for not continuing their services had to do with that.

Ms. Teixeira: Could we go to line item 6241 - Rental of Buildings? The figures have increased. I see again, in 2016, you have another increase of \$10 million, as we had in the heading of Contracted Employees where there appears to be no supplementary financial paper to cover the increase in 2016. That is one observation that I would like you to look at.

The second issue is that the actual rental of buildings has increased by over \$225 million – from \$696 million to \$921 million.

Could you please advise us if there is a policy of the Government and what is the ceiling for rental of buildings, apartments or housing for staff that are posted overseas? Are there guidelines to do with rental of offices? This is an enormous increase of \$225 million. The cost of running this would continue over the years. Could you advise us on that?

Mr. Greenidge: The figure for 2016 would appear to be low as compared to 2017 because many of these Ambassadors did not take up their positions until after June, 2016. The figures of 2016 reflect half-year expenditure. You need to take into account that the figures reflect the fact that you have two new Missions – Geneva and Port of Spain. That would also account for the increase in rental cost. There are Missions that are new and Ambassadors who were not in place before, such as Brussels.

As regards the policy on rental, we do have a policy. We do try as far as possible to keep the payments for the buildings within reasonable limits. Ambassadors have contracts and the

contracts may have written into them either inflation elements for cost of living increases or so on. By and large, the increases that you see here are the results of additional residences rather than of increased rents.

Ms. Teixeira: I am concerned about control in the sense that one's right to be an Ambassador means he or she can go to you and say that he or she wants you to rent an apartment for him or her for US\$15,000 per month. We are a poor country so I am asking about policy. Does the Government have a policy to say the limit is x thousand US dollars per month for a particular place? Otherwise, you could get into a situation where you have to fulfil obligations that you cannot maintain as a country?

Mr. Greenidge: The policy of the Ministry is not one which allows the Ambassador or Ambassador-Designate to arrive and then rent a building. There is control from Head Office and, in addition to that oversight from Head Office, the Head Office may require, for example, in Brussels, that an officer is assigned specifically who is experienced in this area, to survey the scene, as it were, identify a set of appropriate buildings thereafter, consultations with Head Office as to specifications and then they would review the rents and agree on what is most appropriate for the Ambassador.

One has to take into account that rental across the world varies very much. It is not the case that a limit is set and that it applies everywhere. You would expect a rent in Beijing to be pretty different from that in Geneva or different from Brussels and Boa Vista.

Ms. Teixeira: When you add up the cost at different Heads with maintaining these Embassies, High Commissions and Consuls, would you be prepared, as a Minister, by the time you come to another Budget, to present an assessment of what benefits we have accrued from this rather major investment in Geneva or Brussels? Geneva is very expensive. Brussels has always been there. What would be the cost benefits, including Trinidad, where we also opened a new Mission, in Kuwait, *et cetera*? It would be interesting for this House to have a cost analysis and a political beneficial analysis because these are very expensive. You have gone up over \$1 billion in your budget.

Mr. Greenidge: I thank the Hon. Member for raising this issue which is an important one. I am happy to even react to it now although the request is for the next time we meet.

First of all, let me start with Brussels which I think we are all familiar with. Our most important source of concessional financing and a very important trading partner is, of course, the European Union (EU). The Embassy in Brussels gives us the opportunity to interface not only with the European Union, but also with the African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Member States with whom we jointly negotiate the Lomé Successors and Cotonou Agreement from which comes not only the National Indicative Programme, which is a grant, but also the Regional Indicative Programme, which is also a grant, to the region in which we share as well as the other Programmes, including items such as the joint projects – Guyana/Suriname Ferry - which are all funded under that framework. Therefore, I do not think that there is any doubt that the benefits far outweigh the costs in that case.

In the case of Geneva, I would just like to remind Colleagues that Geneva, whilst it is an expensive post, the Swiss Government, after having had discussions with us last year, I think I saw them in March, and subsequent discussions with the Ambassador designate, agreed to fund or to bear a significant part of the cost of funding the office, some of the space which is shared with the rest of the region and also assistance with the residence.

2.32 p.m.

So, we are not paying the full economic cost for either the office or the residence in Geneva. But let me also remind you that the office in Geneva covers Guyana's Swiss relations. Normally, that office operates out of Burma. So, they do bilaterals – Swiss/Guyana bilaterals. Of the institutions that are covered is the World Trade Organization (WTO). We are in a regime, an era, where all the trade rules, all the rules governing trade, even within a regional framework, are governed by the WTO. There is nothing that is done on the trade front which is not captured, restricted by or facilitated by the WTO. And if we are speaking of economic diplomacy, trade expansion, regional integration, South-South corporation, WTO is spoken to.

The negotiations of trade agreements, including the trade agreements in the framework of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), are governed by rules that are set and, if one does not have representatives in the WTO, particularly in Geneva, one will find that one has to live by rules set

by other people. Guyana is the only one of the major territories that, up to now, did not have a representative in the WTO.

Our previous Minister of Trade was, at one stage, the ministerial spokesman on trade matters and we had to undertake that work without the benefit of having somebody in Geneva who was working from within the walls of the WTO and that is a handicap.

So, it is our assessment that this is a most important investment. If you like, the benefit/cost ratio is positive. If you want, it is more than one, if you put it that way, as opposed to the cost benefit, and this is a tardy but very important investment that is being made.

Trinidad and Tobago: Of course, we are committed to regional integration. We did not have an embassy in Trinidad and Tobago. There is a whole set of Caribbean states part of the regional integration movement. It is, I think, not sufficient for us to try to service the entire region from Georgetown and from Barbados. Barbados has its own peculiar requirements. Trinidad and Tobago is convenient because it also enables us to cover the Eastern Caribbean from there. So, the idea of putting an embassy there is one that allows us, in that sense, to *kill two birds with one stone*. At the same time, there is the political dimension – the need to constantly upgrade our Caribbean colleagues as to the political developments, especially as they pertain to our maritime zone and as they pertain to the problem of controversy.

Altogether, Mr. Chairman, the answer is that, even now, we are able to say, with the figures that are shown here, whilst they would appear to be high, the benefit/cost ratio of this undertaking is one that is greater than one and it is to our advantage.

Ms. Teixeira: Well, I hope with the embassy being in Trinidad we can manage our maritime boundaries with them as well because the agreement is with Venezuela that can undermine our position. Anyway, let us go on. Those are matters for the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee, I believe.

Under line item 6284 – Other - you have decreased from \$85.233 million. It was \$43.233 million that was budgeted for; it went up to \$85.233 million. Again, there was no supplementary financial paper (SFP) so I am asking for an explanation of how some of these heads, revised in 2016, were increased without SFP and or maybe they were virement and it is now declined to

\$65 million in 2017. Could you explain the increase of cost in 2016 and what will be the focus of line item 6284 – Other – in 2017?

Mr. Greenidge: This vote, in 2017, will largely fund bank charges and the charges associated with the funding of two new missions and their ambassadors. But, as regards to the jump or the reduction to which attention was drawn by the Hon. Member, from \$85.233 million to \$65 million... The difference could be funded without the resort to a supplementary financial paper because this was met largely by virement – the particular change.

The question as to the increase in 2016 itself is attributable to legal fees and expenses that had to be paid as a result of court action taken by one employee in 2016.

Ms. Manickchand: *[Inaudible]*...

Mr. Greenidge: Before you arrived, Madam, this was a quiet and quite reasonable exchange.

Ms. Teixeira: I am very pleased for my Comrade's presence. I am very happy for her presence.

Mr. Greenidge: That was why I could not hear you when you were speaking; she was heckling.

The problem here was that a staff member whose service was terminated took the Guyana Government to court and the court decided that compensation should be paid to him and the compensation was met with.

Before my Colleagues on the other side start sharing, let me take the opportunity to explain to you the cause of the judge's decision. These are contracts issued under the People's Progressive Party's (PPP) Administration, contracts with no proper legal basis arising from the fact that if the contracts, according to the court itself, were properly drafted, then the claims would not have stood. And so, we now have a situation in which what was happening was that the contracts and the arrangements in the embassy did not allow for record-keeping. That is why we get heckling afterwards; it is based upon ill-information across the benches. There was inadequate record-keeping as regards to the overtime done by the Drivers. And that was the issue; it was nothing else. And arrangements have to be made now for the contracts to be properly prepared in accordance with the laws. That is what had cost us all of this money; we should have done it before we came to office – yes, perhaps.

Thank you very much.

Ms. Teixeira: The court, in its wisdom, will rule on these issues, Comrade.

In other words, the \$65 million has to do with bank charges, *et cetera*, and the increase had to do with a legal matter. And this was done by virement. Is that what I am to understand? This whole heading has a lot of virement going on, which does not help because your Ministry was one of the very good ones to bring a supplementary financial paper on two major issues.

Let us go on. Line item 6294 – Other: Again, it was \$55.568 million and went up to \$61.168 million. Again, is this a supplementary financial paper or virement? And then it is going up to \$65 million? When we looked at line item 6294 – Other – last year, there was some discussion about the role of, I believe, the Diaspora Unit, *et cetera*. Could you say what line item 6294 would be used for this year?

And as I am on my feet, line item 6291 – National and Other Events: During the year of the 50th Anniversary – this year – your allocation was \$7.5 million. You have put back in \$7.5 million and 2017 is not a year of the 50th Anniversary. So, either that has become a standard now or you had under-budgeted for the anniversary in 2016. However, tangential to that, was additional money raised by the Missions towards the 50th Anniversary which are not reflected in the revised 2016 Budget?

Mr. Greenidge: As regards the first line item - 6294 – raised by our distinguished Colleague, she is right. The difference or increase was met by way of virement. As regards the reason for the increase, please bear in mind that there were the two new Missions and the additional Ambassadors and Honorary Consuls.

Now on the question of line item 6291, in 2016, whilst there was an increase, the increase went mostly not so much upon a great increase in terms of our funding of national events because the Ministry itself had a minimal role here that involved spending. But, for 2017, the items under this one would cover, if I am not mistaking, a different set of events - Mashramani and the other events in 2017 - rather than reflecting, if you like, a confusion or an excuse for maintaining expenditure that had gone in 2016. It is a different set of expenditure.

Mr. Chairman: I thank the Hon. Minister. Hon. Members, the time allotted for this segment ends at 2.50 p.m.

Ms. Teixeira: Clarification, Mr. Chairman: Is this for the entire three programmes or just this one that we are on now?

Mr. Chairman: It is for the entire programme, Hon. Member.

Ms. Teixeira: We had an hour and a half.

Mr. Chairman: I beg your pardon; I did not hear you.

Ms. Teixeira: I said that we had an hour and a half.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you.

Programme: 042 – Foreign Policy Promotion – \$2,971,735,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 042 – Foreign Policy Promotion – \$88,115,000

2.47 p.m.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, project code 1200500 – Buildings: The sum of \$30 million has been allocated for 2017 and \$30 million was allocated for 2016. The description in Volume 3 states:

- “1. Rehabilitation of building – Guyana Embassy, Washington.
2. Office, gate and bond – Guyana Embassy, Paramaribo.
3. Survey, design and licence – Guyana Embassy, Brazil.”

Could the Hon. Minister give us a breakdown of these areas and say if any other buildings or areas are included under this allocation of \$30 million?

Mr. Greenidge: Mr. Chairman, I will be happy to give a breakdown. The expenditure for the rehabilitation of the building in Washington has two elements and they come together to \$9 million; \$6 million is to maintain the distinctive characteristics of the building, including windows and so on, and \$3 million is for the rehabilitation of the chancery itself where currently there are leaks and cracks which affect the Ambassador's office.

The Paramaribo expenditure could be broken up into three elements. There is the renovation of the office and the installation of servers, a new gate for the entrance and a storage bond. These are respectively \$300,000, \$375,000 and \$1,035,000. That is approximately \$1.8 million.

In the case of Brazil, as you may be aware, the Government of Guyana received a plot of land from Brazil on which to build an embassy. We are required to make these payments and get architectural design, construction licence and fence in place before construction commences. The figures reflected here are meant to cover those. In terms of architectural design, it is \$10 million; the cost of construction licence is \$9.29 million. The total of that exercise is \$19.29 million. The breakdown is \$9 million for Washington, \$1.8 million for Paramaribo and \$19.29 million for Brazil. There are no other expenditure of that nature in the Missions.

Ms. Teixeira: Hon. Minister, was the design changed for the Embassy in Brazil? I am aware that the architectural design had been done previously. Has there been a redesign of the original design or is there a completely new one? There was an architectural design and costing done for a new Embassy for Guyana in Brazil. That was a few years ago.

Mr. Greenidge: I stand corrected, Mr. Chairman. The \$10 million is not for the change in the design; it is largely for the construction of the fencing around the site.

Ms. Teixeira: Thank you very much. Under project code 2400300 – Land Transport – Purchase of vehicles - \$30,000: In 2016, \$24 million was budgeted and I know there was a supplementary provision which increased the amount to \$57 million, which I believe was to buy two vehicles for the missions. In 2017, vehicles are to be bought valued at \$30 million. Could you say how many vehicles and are they for Guyana or for which missions overseas? Were the vehicles that were budgeted for in 2016 acquired and where have they been assigned?

Mr. Greenidge: None of the vehicles is for Georgetown. The vehicles, in 2016, were needed for Trinidad and Tobago, Switzerland, Beijing, Boa Vista and South Africa. For 2017, the figure you made reference to is for three vehicles because of problems with the existing vehicles. Those vehicles are for Toronto, Delhi and Ottawa.

Ms. Teixeira: Hon. Minister, having started your plan for 2015, 2016 and 2017, purchasing vehicles for the new Missions and replacing old vehicles, could you say if you are working with a three-year or five-year plan so that there would be a relatively new fleet in the various Missions? What is your plan and how long will it take you?

Mr. Greenidge: At this point in time, the plan is to try to reduce the average age of the vehicles ideally to five years but we are a long way from that. What we are doing is dealing with the most chronic cases. If you take a look at the spread of vehicles, I could quickly say to you that the ages of the vehicles are 11 years and 6 months, one year and 10 months, four years, eight years, two years, two years, 10 years, nine years, 16 years, four years, seven years and 11 years. Some of these vehicles are extremely old. Of the three vehicles we are replacing, for example the one in Toronto is a Mazda sport utility vehicle (SUV) which is over 10 years of age with problems to maintain the bodywork. The same situation holds in relation to Delhi where the vehicle is more than nine years old. The complaint is that it stalls so often in the busy traffic of Delhi that officers are somewhat embarrassed and they complain that that is dangerous. In Ottawa, the car is not so old but it has in excess of 140,000 miles and the challenge posed by the weather in Canada makes it necessary that a vehicle of greater reliability is acquired. We will, over the years, be trying to bring down the average age of the vehicles assigned to the various Missions. We will give you an average perhaps a little later on or next year, but it is far from a five-year or seven-year average at this point in time.

Ms. Teixeira: I have just one last question on this item, Mr. Chairman. Could the Hon. Minister say if the policy direction which has been put into law, in terms of importation of vehicles older than eight years being prohibited, being carried out by our Missions overseas in not acquiring vehicles that are older than four years?

Mr. Greenidge: Mr. Chairman, I do not think it is necessary to see our arrangements in that way because the Ministry does not buy or acquire second-hand vehicles for its Missions abroad.

Programme: 042 – Foreign Policy Promotion - \$88,115,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 043 – Development of Foreign Trade Policy - \$35,299,000

Ms. Teixeira: Hon. Minister, in 2016, when we were looking at the Budget, we had discussed the need to beef-up the Development of Foreign Trade Policy Programme and the staff. I believe it is reflected in the record of the proceedings. However, I am extraordinarily disappointed to see that staffing went down. When we look at line item 6116 – Contracted Employees – the numbers have decreased from six to three and the administrative staff, which was one, remains that way. Basically, there has been no beefing-up of this Programme. It is still, I believe, under-supported by finance and resources.

Mr. Greenidge: Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the Colleague for the comment and to say that, perhaps, the table should not be read too literally. There has been a transfer of staff to line item 6114 – Clerical and Office Support. In the interim, since last year, we have recruited a Director of International Trade who is paid from Programme 041. As regards other positions, I can say to you that the recruitment of additional technicians specifically trained in trade matters – law as well as economics and related matters – is a subject that is engaging us and the Public Service Commission, amongst others, at this point in time. Some of the Foreign Service Officers undertaking work in trade are shown under the category of Programme 041. The table underestimates those who are actually employed in carrying out work on trade and trade negotiations. During the course of the year, we took the opportunity to run a number of training programmes for all of the Officers in and outside of the programme you see listed here.

Ms. Teixeira: It is regrettable that one does not get a proper sense of what emphasis the Ministry is paying on its trade issues. Therefore, to look at this knowing that there is some staff under Programme 041, some activities are under Programme 041, then some are here, one cannot get a real picture of what is in your budget. By the way, I am lobbying for you to get more money under this Programme so we can deal with the ACP Group of States, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), the Mercado Común del Sur (MERCOSUR), the bilaterals and the others to find rice markets and so on. I do not know where

to start on this because it is so paltry. But you are saying there is money elsewhere. Could you say how and where in this... The Director General (DG) is not under the contractual employees under this head. He or she is somewhere else.

3.02 p.m.

Mr. Greenidge: The Director General can be found under Programme One.

Ms. Teixeira: Could the Minister explain why that was done, making it difficult for one to follow what is being done in trade?

Mr. Greenidge: First of all, I am sure that our distinguished Colleague would be happy to hear that I would be quite happy to configure something that would give her an outline of the establishment working on trade and the responsibilities of the section.

Secondly, as regards the bifurcation of the officers from Programme One and this Programme, as the Member puts it, it arises from the constraints placed on us by the existing establishment. The Ministry is not at liberty to restructure itself and to find an establishment that meets its requirement. This is a subject of negotiations between the Public Service Commission (PSC) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I do not think that it is any secret to tell the Hon. Member that I believe that a small bomb needs to be dropped on that arrangement because it takes too long to get these things done. I hope that, in the course of the coming year, this matter could be fixed in terms of having an easier mechanism for ensuring that establishments are as they are needed, rather than as they were crafted five or six years ago. Lack of skills, on all fronts, constrains our ability to deal with that particular problem.

Ms. Teixeira: The problem with this programme is that one cannot get a grasp of what the Ministry is doing with various countries in terms of trade. I know that for example, with Cuba, a rice farmer is negotiating directly with the Government of Cuba to do with rice. The negotiations are not going through the Guyana Rice Development Board (GRDB) and it seems to be self-financed. My discomfort with this is that it is supposed to be foreign trade being the guardian and the custodian of...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Ms. Teixeira, could you ask a question so that we can move on.

Ms. Teixeira: This is a policy issue Sir and the Standing Orders allow us to discuss policy issues. Hon. Minister, there is a \$1.3 million increase under “Foreign Trade”, is that satisfactory to do the kind of trade for Guyana, particularly to look for rice markets, which are needed? Will this \$1.3 million make a difference?

Mr. Greenidge: Mr. Chairman, I am reading into this question and invitation by my Colleague, as they would say, as “*putting my belly on plimpa*”.

The Minister of Finance and the Minister responsible for Public Service have been quite understanding. The answer to the question is that the figures that are shown are the figures we requested. They have been constrained by the points I made a few moments ago.

As regards information on the Ministry’s work, can I invite the Hon. Member to have a look at the Ministry’s website, where an increasing amount of information on the work the Ministry is undertaking in trade and other fronts are being put there? Also, on the website, are some of the statements I made in relation to the budget.

As regards rice and Cuba, what I can say offhand is that the Mission has assisted greatly in putting together Guyana’s exporters, the Central Bank and the banking authorities. In the case of Cuba, the challenge is to ensure that the payment arrangements are in place to allow importers in Cuba to pay exporters from Guyana. I think the embassy has intervened productively on that front to bring the various bodies together, not only with rice.

Just to say a favourite comment of mine, “The business of recruiting Foreign Service Officers is not a business of rice marketers”. There is a marketing agent in the various mills and elsewhere. This is to facilitate the framework and agreement within which they work, such as, for example, to ensure that, when they do sell the rice, the arrangements for payment can be favourable and that the buyers and sellers can be put together. The marketing of the rice is the function of a different agent. This is specifically of the GRDB and so forth that the Hon. Member mentioned, as the Member knows very well.

Ms. Teixeira: The point I was making is that the Mission is involved in the search for markets with an individual rice farmer and not the GRDB. Therefore, my concern about the Ministry’s role, as a facilitator on the conduit, is not established or appears not to be established. That is

why I am saying that the Ministry must be strengthened in this area of foreign trade to disallow these opportunities for collusion and other unsavoury activities by individuals, rather than by regulatory bodies, *et cetera*.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, I will allow one more question on this item.

Mr. Greenidge: All of the missions have been asked and they recognise a responsibility that if they are approached by agencies or individuals to try to facilitate them and that is what we are seeing here. The missions are not choosing between different entities and individuals. It is a facilitation exercise.

Programme: 043 – Development of Foreign Trade Policy - \$35,299,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 043 – Development of Foreign Trade Policy - \$1,000,000

Ms. Teixeira: There is \$1 million allocated under project code 2506300, Office Equipment and Furniture, could the Hon. Minister tell the House in what way the capacity of this programme to operate in the digital world is being modernised. Do not tell me about office furniture because I am not talking about that.

Mr. Greenidge: My Colleague is trying to tie my hands. I am working with one agency which is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Within the Ministry, there is an engine of administration. Within that engine of administration, the different elements within the Ministry are serviced. The Administration Department is currently in the process of having its servers and a lot of its electronic gadgets and gateways updated. The trade section will benefit from that exercise and undertaking. The bits and pieces that are seen here will facilitate their access or ensure that the peripheral tasks which are needed to be done are done. By and large, one will find a number of things taking place that are perhaps greatly overdue, ranging from the digitisation of filing.

I am embarrassed to tell the House that, last evening, as I was leaving, an officer was showing me around the office. I pulled a door and the officer urged me not to open the door. When I opened it, I found piles of stuff packed in a cupboard which was about seven feet high. It means

that that access to information on what work has been done with various countries, beyond the last two years is exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to find, unless the officer has been there for a long time. What we are proposing to do is to digitise that material so that it can be retrieved in a reasonable and expeditious manner. That applies to the trade section, as well as to the administration section and all other sections. It is an exercise which is, probably, going to take over two years to complete. It is very necessary and trade and the other sections will benefit.

Mr. Chairman: This is the final question.

Ms. Teixeira: Follow-up: I support the Minister in this. Is the Minister going to bring a supplementary financial paper to cover the additional cost of commencing a two year programme on digitisation of the Ministry's records? I know that the records are critical and important.

Mr. Greenidge: At the moment we do not envisage a supplementary. I can invite the distinguished Members to have a look at Programme One, which has a line item, specifically dealing with the digitisation. It is catered for there. I can make that information available, if necessary.

Programme: 043 – Development of Foreign Trade Policy - \$1,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 33 Ministry of Public Telecommunications

Current Expenditure

Programme: 331 – Policy Development and Administration - \$252,641,000

Ms. Burton-Persaud: Line item 6241, Rental of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister state how many buildings are rented and their locations.

3.17 p.m.

Minister of Public Telecommunications [Ms. Hughes]: Hon. Member there is one building that is being rented there and it is on the second floor of the Dependent Pension Fund building.

Ms. Burton-Persaud: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister state how many buildings will be maintained and how many are Government buildings?

Ms. Hughes: Two buildings, which are the Ministry's Head office and also the Arthur Chung Conference Centre (ACCC).

Mr. Hamilton: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I note that there is an increase of nine persons. Could the Minister indicate to the House the nine new staff, their specific areas of operation and the types of emoluments? Could the Minister indicate to the House whether the 45 persons, under line item 6111, is the full complement of persons the Ministry intends to hire under this line item?

Ms. Hughes: In fact, it has been reduced by 12 staff, six of those staff actually went to the Ministry of Business in the Tourism Department, then the Ministry has added 21 staff. I can give the breakdown of that. It is, one Administrative Assistant, emolument - \$73,037; one Handywoman - \$55,000; one Events Management Ceremonies - \$148,185; an Accountant - \$123,465; a Systems Development Officer - \$119,631; an Accounts Clerk - \$59,382; two Drivers/ Mechanics - \$55,394; one Electrician II - \$85,903; a Machine Operator - \$55,000; a Clerk (General) - \$ 59,382; a Cleaner - \$55,000; two Office Assistants - \$55,000; two Confidential Secretaries - \$63,490; a Receptionist - \$55,000; and a Labourer - \$55,000.

Mr. Hamilton: Whilst, I am glad that the Minister gave the House the long list, I was dealing specifically with the increase of nine staff under line item 6116, the persons who were employed, their skills and emoluments. The other list, maybe the Hon. Minister could lay that over to the National assembly. I am dealing with line item 6116 – Contracted Employees. In 2016, there were 36 staff members and in 2017 we are looking at 45 staff members.

Ms. Hughes: Hon. Member, we have actually reduced that figure by 12 staff members and then employed 21 staff members. So the difference is really nine staff members.

Ms. Burton–Persaud: Hon. Minister, under line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: The Hon. Minister stated that there are two buildings, one being the headquarters and the other being the Arthur Chung Conference Centre. I have noted that there is a decrease of \$4,900,000 for maintenance. Could the Hon. Minister say whether the maintenance will be for just one building or for both buildings?

Ms. Hughes: The maintenance is actually for both buildings, \$5 million for the Ministry's head office and \$3 million for the Arthur Chung Conference Centre.

Ms. Burton-Persaud: Thank you Hon. Minister, but I am a bit confused here. Five million dollars for the headquarters and \$3 million for the Arthur Chung Conference Centre, but I think the Arthur Chung Conference Centre would be refurbished or renovated. So how would it equate to the \$3 million for maintenance?

Ms. Hughes: Hon. Member, it is in case there are some things that they do not cover. We actually expect that, within a six-month period, there would be parts of the buildings that the Ministry would be able to access? So it is to cover that transition period.

Mr. Hamilton: Line item 6264: Could the Minister be kind enough to indicate to the House of the \$15,000,000 to be spent under 'Other', what it is to be utilised on and the specific areas? Secondly, line item 6322 – Subsidies and Contributions to International Organisations: Would the Minister be kind enough to indicate to the House what the \$28,300,000 is to be utilised on because there is an increase of \$11 million.

Ms. Hughes: Hon. Member, you said line item 6264, but that is in fact Vehicles, Spares and Services.

Mr. Hamilton: Sorry. It is line item 6284 – Other.

Ms. Hughes: That is actually payment for a Consultant. There are four pieces of legislation that the Ministry knows that it will need to bring next year and that is the legislation that deals with electronic transactions, data protection, intellectual property rights and electronic filing. So it is to cover the Consultant who would work on those pieces of legislation.

Mr. Hamilton: Could I find out Hon. Minister, how does the consultancy that the Ministry intends to do to develop the legislation fits into the Cyber Crime Bill that is before the House?

Ms. Hughes: In fact, there is no relationship with these specific pieces of legislations and the Cyber Crime Bill.

Mr. Hamilton: The other question I had asked was under line item 6322 – Subsidies and Contributions to International Organisations: There is an increase of \$28 million over \$17 million.

Ms. Hughes: Yes. Hon. Member. That increase is because the Ministry found that, in most of these agencies, the Ministry was behind in the payments of its dues, in some cases 8 – 10 years. Therefore, what the Ministry has tried to do is to come up with a settlement. So, although the Ministry owes for 8 years, it has been able to negotiate and is paying a current year and also one year of the arrears.

Programme: 331 – Policy Development and Administration - \$252,641,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 331 – Policy Development and Administration - \$750,000

Mr. Hamilton: Project code 1217300, Centre of Excellence for Information Technology (CEIT), we note that there is \$130 million allotted. Could the Minister state whether the \$130 million would be for the completion of the centre or if that is just the cost for the first phase of the project?

Ms. Hughes: It is to complete and to operationalise the centre.

Mr. Hamilton: Is that inclusive of the necessary equipment?

Ms. Hughes: Yes.

Mr. Hamilton: Project code 1217800 – E–Government: We note that \$314 million is earmarked to go this project. Could the Minister advise the House on the areas that the \$314 million is to be spent?

Ms. Hughes: We have: For the procurement to internet access points for Government buildings, to facilitate public internet access - we have \$114,600,000. Hon. Member, I can give you this list or do you want me to go through everything?

Mr. Hamilton: The Assembly, not me.

Ms. Hughes: No problem. Securing the E-Government network infrastructure and that is the procurement of remote security solutions, including motion sensors and Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras and that is \$73 million; extend the E-Government network to Timehri, in fact, that is going to Diamond, Timehri and then on to Amelia's Ward and that is \$64,236,000; procurement of software and that is for e-mail data storage and backup - \$25 million; design and implementation of a network infrastructure, and that is actually for the Ministry of the Presidency, which includes core switch and distribution switches - \$10,513,000; improving the standby power and efficiency at the data centre, which is located in Castellani House and that is to procure 250 KVA generator sets - \$8,500,000; to develop and implement software for a continuous feedback and interaction in terms of a Complaint Management Systems that allows citizens to report various complaints and that is - \$8 million; the acquisition of a mini-bus and a mini-van to facilitate travel to the Ministry's 56 Information and Communications Technology (ICT) hubs and sites that the Ministry is planning to implement - \$4 million; procure licences and that is for Oracle - \$2,200,000; connecting educational institutions, we are upgrading the connection to fibre optic cable between the University of Guyana (UG), both the Turkeyen and Tain, Campuses - \$1,240,000; and the acquisition of some cubicles for the E-Government Unit - \$600,000; implementation of an alarm monitoring and response network operating system at the E-Government Agency - \$500,000; improving occupational, health and safety, including the purchase and installation of a 16 port Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) Security System and that is to ensure that the Ministry could actually monitor the sites that it is going to create across the country - that is another \$495,000; equipment in terms of chairs for the E-Government Unit - \$286,000, those are for 10 chairs; the procurement of a satellite phone - \$250,000 and that is for when officers are in the areas at the sites; acquisition of four partitions, again this is for the E-Government Unit - \$80,000; and that is a total of \$314 million.

3.32 p.m.

Mr. Hamilton: Minister, could I enquire about information for the Assembly, part of the E-Governance Project, as I understand it, is to have all our ministries and Government agencies linked together. I know that there were conversations about even moving to deal with E-Medicine. Could the Hon. Minister inform the House where we are at the moment as regards the

linking up of Government agencies and ministries and how soon that component of the E-Government Project will be concluded?

Ms. Hughes: The Hon. Member is correct because what the Ministry is doing is connecting, with fibre, a series of different ministries to the E-Government Network. So far, we have connected 22 Ministries and those Ministries are the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Central Planning and Housing Authority (CHPA), the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, the Ministry of Legal Affairs, the Guyana Revenue Authority (GRA), the Guyana Public Hospital Incorporation (GPHC), Parliament Office, the Ministry of Business, the Guyana Police Force's Headquarters, the Department of Youth and Sport, in terms of the Ministry of Education's Annex, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of the Presidency, the Ministry of Public Telecommunications, the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs, the Ministry of Social Protection, the Ministry of Communities, the Department of Public Service, the Citizen Security Programme and the Arthur Chung Conference Centre.

Mr. Hamilton: Could the Hon. Minister indicate when that link will be completed? The second question is there was a component of the said project that would allow for citizens to interface with agencies and ministries. Could the Hon. Minister indicate how far have we gone with that and when that is also likely to be concluded?

Ms. Hughes: Hon. Member, we expect to complete the remaining Ministries by 2017. The interaction with the citizens, that is actually going to be done in 2017 and some of the things I mentioned, previously. For example, the Application (APP) that allows the citizens to bring complaints and suggestions to Government agencies. That was just one of the series of things, but 2017 is the time that we would be able to start implementing these things.

Bishop Edghill: Sir under the same project code 1217800 – E-Government: Could the Hon. Minister indicate to the House where the Government is buying bandwidth from for this connectivity and at what price?

Ms. Hughes: Hon. Member, we are buying one gigabyte per second from the Guyana Telephone and Telegraph Company (GT&T) Limited and it is at a cost of US\$145 per megabyte.

Bishop Edghill: Sir, just a follow-up: Could the Hon. Minister indicate whether this was a single sourced arrangement?

Ms. Hughes: GT&T is the only source for selling internet in Guyana.

Programme: 331 – Policy Development and Administration - \$750,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 332 – Public Telecommunications - \$1,573,265,000

Ms. Burton-Persaud: Hon. Minister, line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: There is a steep increase from \$5.557 million to \$20 million. Could the Hon. Minister state what will be the infrastructural works and where they will be carried out?

Ms. Hughes: Hon. Member, this allocation caters for the weeding and cleaning of the 54 Long-Term Evolution (LTE) sites and also the Ministry's data centre, and for minor repairs, for example, the fixing of fences, gates and padlocks. All these sites have to be weeded at least once a month and we do ensure that the Ministry gets contractors from the region.

Ms. Burton-Persaud: Hon. Minister line item 6284 – Other: There is an increase here under 'Other'. Could the Hon. Minister state what will be the programmes or activities under this line item?

Ms. Hughes: The programmes will be: Bandwidth for redistribution to Government agencies, the public internet access point and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) hubs across the country from GT&T and that is \$426,553,344; connectivity to six hinterland and remote sites using a Private Lease Circuit Network from DIGICEL and those sites are at Linden, Bartica, Mahdia, Port Kaituma, Mabaruma and Kwakwani and that is \$19,335,660; connectivity to seven hinterland and remote sites and that is, *via* a Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) Technology Services using a C Band Satellite System, which is actually better than the current system the Ministry has, in terms of weather, and the locations are Masekenari, Aishalton, Lethem, Annai, Paramakatoi, Waramadong, St. Cuthbert's Mission and it is at a cost of \$79,252,442 and that cost includes the installation fee and also the annual fee.

Then there is a payment of \$241,433,325 to Huawei Technologies and that is the annual maintenance and support contract. In fact, although the network was erected in 2010 and handed over in 2014, there has been absolutely no maintenance to the network. So, that is a maintenance contract.

Then there is \$40,200,000, which is for the development of an electronic document management system for the whole of Government. This would allow the Government of Guyana to store and transmit documents throughout the entire enterprise. Documents would be stored in such a way to ensure easy retrieval and indexing and this relates to the challenge that the Minister of Foreign Affairs was talking about, about accessing documents from the past. So, it is the digitisation of these documents.

We also have \$950,000 which is for the work required to improve the surroundings of the current data centre and safety. This fund is required to ensure that the data centre and its immediate surroundings are kept to a high standard, enabling staff to spot any deficiencies that would affect the operation of the data centre.

The 5678229 is a contracted service to install CCTV and electronic security equipment at data centres and LTE sites to replace security guards. So, what we are actually doing is, we think that, during the course of 2017, we are going to be transitioning into more electronic security management, which will reduce the cost tremendously. The contracted service 5678229 would also ensure enhanced security and the transition from physical security to monitoring; \$600,000 is to conduct a staff retreat for the development of our E-Government strategic framework; and then \$3.3 million is to develop the strategic plan and that would be a consultancy that we realise is very important to guide the agency in its current and future activities; \$52 million - cyber-security assessment of the E-Government Network, the network provides services for the whole of Government and it is, therefore, mandatory that security be addressed to ensure the smooth and safe running of the network; \$370,000 - a public symposium to launch the E-Government strategy. It is important that the strategy is socialised so that all key stakeholders would have a time and opportunity to make an input, in terms of their comments and recommendations into the final strategy; \$500,000 - is to develop an internship programme and that is in terms of computers, science, technology, law, statistics and this programme, we think, would be consistent with the University of Guyana's (UG's) Internship Programme. So, the \$500,000

includes funds for the preparation of training materials and we envision that there will be about 10 students.

3.47 p.m.

The university of course is a prime institution for providing talent and so we want to collaborate there and start working and building the deficit of skills within the Government and Guyana as a whole.

Three point three million dollars is for the hosting of workshops for technical working groups and those groups are cyber security, open source software, Government online presence, information technology (IT) management and leadership committee, which is a monthly committee, technical workshop will standardise information communications technology (ICT), will be deployed across all Ministries and agencies with buying for those responsible for implementing the same. What we are saying is that we want to set up a system where all the Ministries are on the same page, in terms of their approach, of how we digitise, how we store information and how we communicate.

There will be a million dollars public awareness television programme and that would be for a programme “E-government and You.” The target audience is the general public and the public sector. This is really to sensitise everyone to the role of the E-government Unit, the Ministry, is to get critical buy-in and to explain really what we are doing.

Fourteen million four hundred thousand dollars, that is for the development of the requirement specifications for information systems that will be used at Maritime Administration Department (MARAD), the Land Registry, the electronic document management system (EDPMS) solutions for the whole Government, social services, passport office, General Registrar Office (GRO), and that is just to ensure that there is a high level of expertise in this areas. They have to be acquired outside the e-government area. It also will create local employment.

Five hundred thousand is for the annual subscription for the secure socket layer (SSL) security certificates which is to ensure that Government’s websites are secured and are protected by malicious attacks. This security will be implemented at 25 sites at a time.

Eight hundred and forty-right thousand dollars is for technical support for the intranet platform. Technical support is required so that the agency can benefit from the full technical and operational capacity of the software.

Software licences, \$804,000: We do believe that we should be paying for software that we use. All office productivity software, purchased must be properly licensed. Once there is a proper licensed software it in... In fact, it is easier to hack into the software into the Government network.

Nine hundred and seventy-five thousand is for the leasing of a multifunctional machine network capable all in one printer, scanner, and photocopier. The work of the agency will require the printing and photocopying of several documents, especially in terms of the training that we intend to do. We see the purchase of this equipment as a cheaper approach than outsourcing this activity which could be very expensive and inconvenient.

Nine million dollars is for technical support and policy staff for the Ministry of Public Telecommunications which is for the period January to March 2017.

Bishop Edghill: It is a follow-up on the same line item 6284, Other. The Minister indicated to us that we will be spending \$2 million this year to buy bandwidth from Guyana Telephone and Telegraph (GTT). Could the Hon. Minister indicate to us what were we paying to the Brazilian provider and to do a comparison, because this is a recurrent expenditure that will be continuing year after year? Could she indicate to us what the plans are? Are we continuing to buy from GTT or are we looking for a cheaper source of bandwidth?

Ms. Hughes: Hon. Member, we have not been able to find any records regarding the arrangements with Brazil. The second thing, as you know, the cable that would have brought to Georgetown did not work. Therefore there was no other option to be able to provide the service now than to go with GTT.

Bishop Edghill: It is just a follow-up on this same line item to indicate to the Minister that the records of what was paid to Brazil could be found in the *Hansard* of this National Assembly.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I do not know that that is a question but it is gone.

Ms. Hughes: Hon. Member, there is no cable that could bring it to Georgetown. There was \$6 million squandered. Even if we went with that service, there is no way to bring it to Georgetown.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, I believe the word you wish to use is not “squander”. Perhaps you might find another word to express it. The Hon. Member would not want to stay with that word I believe.

Ms. Hughes: Hon. Chairman, I withdraw. Maybe, I would say that given the challenges of the implementation of the cable, we spent funds and are unable to use the product that we spent money for.

Mr. Hamilton: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees: I note that there is a decrease contracted employees from 86 to 82 but if you look at the emoluments it has increased from \$265 million to \$307 million. Could you indicate what is responsible for that increase even though you have four less employees under this category?

Ms. Hughes: That is the increases in salary that we got.

Mr. Hamilton: Line item 6271, Telephone Charges: Could the Minister indicate what is responsible for the sum moving from \$88 million in 2016 to \$4 million in 2017?

Ms. Hughes: We are now paying GTT charges under other charges and not in these categories, and that is the charge for the internet.

Mr. Hamilton: Line item 6241, Rental of Buildings: Hon. Minister, could you indicate what are the buildings we are renting? Secondly, why is there an increase from \$41,000,900 to \$52,000,800?

Ms. Hughes: The last budget was actually for ten months and this one is for 12 months. In terms of the office building, what do you want?

Mr. Hamilton: I want the amount of buildings.

Ms. Hughes: Okay. The buildings are 267 Forshaw Street, owned by Mr. Neil Sooklall, a warehouse owned by Kubir Persaud and that is in Peters Hall, front road.

Mr. Hamilton: Minister, if you recall in all the conversation we have had here about expenditure, the Government's position was these expenditures are reflected up to the 31st December. It is not right to say that we are dealing with 10 months. We are told that...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Mr. Hamilton, are you going to ask a question?

Mr. Hamilton: Yes Sir. There is a lot of distraction on the left side.

Mr. Chairman: The thing is to focus on what you are doing.

Mr. Hamilton: There is distraction. I am focusing. I am saying that the Minister just indicated that the reason why the increase from \$41,000,900 to \$52,000,800 is because 2016 we are just talking about 10 months, when in 2017 we are talking about 12 months. Could the Minister indicate to us the rent on specifically of the identified properties?

Ms. Hughes: Maybe I can just remind the honourable Assembly that the E-Government Unit was previously under the Ministry of the Presidency and then it moved to Ministry of Public Telecommunications which was in March 2016. Initially, in the last budget, the Ministry of Public Telecommunications got \$16.5 million in the operational budget. There were no additional funds given and therefore we got additional fund in the supplementary. The rental of the buildings is \$37,000,700. This would be the breakdown: The E-government Head Office is 27million, which is \$3 million per month times the nine months; the warehouse is \$1 million per month, which is \$9 million.

Programme: 332 - Public Telecommunications - \$1,573,265,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 332 - Public Telecommunications - \$444,000,000

Programme: 332 - Public Telecommunications – \$444,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

4.02 p.m.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 334 – Industry Innovations – \$38,550,000

Programme: 334 – Industry Innovations – \$38,550,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 334 – Industry Innovations –\$2,955,000

Mr. Hamilton: Could you inform us, when we look at the current expenditure, there was no staffing detail, but at the capital expenditure here at project 2509700, Furniture and Equipment, \$2,955,000, where and who is to utilise this furniture and equipment under this heading?

Ms. Hughes: Hon. Member, we have an approved structure, which we intend to fill, starting next year, so the persons are not on board yet, but they would be hired as of next year.

Mr. Hamilton: A follow-up question. Are you in a position, at this moment, to inform the Assembly how many staff you are likely to employ under this head?

Ms. Hughes: It will be 23 persons would be employed under this head.

Programme: 334 – Industry Innovations –\$2,955,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 49 Ministry of Social Protection

Current expenditure

Programme: 491 – Policy Development and Administration – \$283,356,000

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, line item 6112, Senior Technical. I notice there has not been an increase in senior technical person. Could you say what their responsibilities are and where they are placed?

Minister of Social Protection [Ms. Lawrence]: To the Hon. Member, the persons who hold those positions are the Planning and Management Analysis officer and the Superintendent of Works.

Dr. Persaud: Line item 6113, Other Technical and Craft Skilled: There has been an increase by four under that line item. Could you say if there are any more vacancies that exist under this line item? Do you have a full complement of staff?

Ms. Lawrence: Yes. There are four vacancies.

Dr. Persaud: Could you say what those vacancies are and what were the four positions that were filled and were these positions advertised? Could the Hon. Minister please give those?

Ms. Lawrence: The persons who now fill line item 6113 are four data processing officers. They were removed from the contracted line to this line.

Dr. Persaud: Line item 6114, Clerical and Office Support: I notice that there has been a significant increase from 11 to 23 persons, under this line item. Hon. Minister, could you say where these additional staff members have been placed and kindly lay over who they are, in terms of destinations?

Ms. Lawrence: Yes. There are four persons - Typist Clerks in the Registry, six persons in the Accounts Department and two persons who are General Clerks. They all came from the contracted employee.

Dr. Persaud: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees: Hon. Minister, you stated that you have moved some of those, but I have also seen a minimal decrease in salaries. Could you say if you kept on more high level staff under the contracted employees?

Ms. Lawrence: Yes, The minimal increase, which you see there, is in respect of the 2016 increase in salaries.

Dr. Persaud: My question was a bit different though. I was wondering if those who have been kept on under the line item contracted employees. Are they more high level staff? A follow-up question at the same moment: What is the destinations and emoluments of the top five contracted employees, under the time item 6116, and where are they are stationed?

Ms. Lawrence: To the first part of the question, the total number of employees, they are mixed. There are some persons who are over the age and some persons who are waiting to be placed on the fix establishment. With regard to the five persons who filled this position, it would be the

Permanent Secretary, who is stationed at the head office at Lamaha and East Streets, the Deputy Permanent Secretary, who is stationed at the same place, the Personnel Assistant to the Minister, the head of Special Projects and the head of the Public Relations who is stationed at Cornhill Street. The emoluments are \$638,500, \$295,231, \$367,500, \$157,225 and \$195,615.

Dr. Persaud: Line item 6281, Security Services: I have noticed that there is a significant increase in the security cost from the last budgeted figure, more than \$10 million, or at least \$10 million. Could you say the name of the security firm and which building has been added into this?

Ms. Lawrence: The security service is Special Constabulary. It is placed at the head office in Lamaha Street, at Cornhill Street and the Minister's residence.

Dr. Persaud: Could you say the additionally, though? I mean, I am sure that the constabulary would have been at all the offices beforehand. Could you tell me if the \$10 million was just purely the Minister's residence that it was added on to, to make a significance? I am just curious.

Ms. Lawrence: It is just to inform the Hon. Members that all questions would be answered, that what you asked, I did not mention, was the escort for the accounts section. There are for the escort for the Accounts Department, the Minister's residence, offices at Cornhill Street and Lamaha Street.

Dr. Persaud: Under line item 6284, Other, could you say what has been projected under this line item?

Ms. Lawrence: There are rental of photocopiers - \$950,000, internet fees - \$1.660 million, sanitact services - \$900,000, configuration of computer networks - \$2 million, consultancy for annual reports - \$1.2 million, advertisement of public tenders ad vacancies, notices - \$1 million, on programme activities, that is the maintenance of the close circuit television (CCTV) biometric and fire alarm systems - \$1.190 million.

4.17 p.m.

Dr. Persaud: Could you say who you are renting the photocopier from and why a rental in particular?

Ms. Lawrence: There are two photocopiers that are rented from Massy Industries and these are special photocopiers to take off heavy loads for our pension unit and also to do forms for probation, social services and all the other departments.

Dr. Persaud: Line item 6294 Other: Could you say what falls under other?

Ms. Lawrence: This entails replacement of new employee identification cards (ID) - \$200,000, stipend for work study students - \$300,000, activities such as receptions and round table discussions - \$2.5 million, annual staff conference - \$1.5 million and miscellaneous - \$500,000.

Dr. Persaud: Line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships): I note that there was only \$750,000 provided there. Who would be trained Hon. Minister? Does the Minister think this is sufficient, of all the programmes that the Ministry has planned for the year? What type of training is intended? What type of policies will this training be targeting?

Ms. Lawrence: This particular line the allocation there, Hon. Member, has to do with junior staff where they are being training in computer classes and middle management at the computer technology class and also provided in this amount is money for those single parents who passed through our Women Across Differences (WAD) and also through the Women of Worth (WOW) programme where we provided training for them and workshops.

Dr. Persaud: Could you say specifically what money is allocated to the single parents for WOW and the other programme that you mentioned out of this?

Ms. Lawrence: I am told that just over \$400,000 goes towards the single parents and the difference goes towards staff.

Dr. Mahadeo: Minister, could I refer you to line item 6294, Other, where you said that you have budgeted \$200,000 for cards for new employees? What will be the cost for card? While I know it is a \$500 card, it means that we are catering for 400 new employees.

Ms. Lawrence: To the Hon. Member, we are not catering for 400 new employees. This is for just the new employees who came on under this programme and also for replacement if anyone should have lost their ID card and the cost of an ID card is just \$1,800.

Mr. Bharat: Line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings: There is an increase of almost \$8 million. Could the Minister say which building or buildings will be maintained with this?

Ms. Lawrence: If I may point the Hon. Member to the budget that the revised shows \$15.5 million and the 2017 allocation is \$11 million, so there is a decrease, not an increase.

Mr. Bharat: If we are looking at it, the revised show \$3 million and not \$15.5 million. The budgeted amount is \$15.5 million but the revised amount is \$3 million.

Ms. Lawrence: To the Hon. Member, this was at the time when the budget was presented, but presently all of the moneys have been spent.

Mr. Bharat: The other part of the questions: Which building or buildings will be maintained?

Ms. Lawrence: That would be the buildings on Cornhill Street and Lamaha Street.

Mr. Chand: Line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Could the Minister provide the names of the five top local organisations that receive the most.

Ms. Lawrence: May I point the Member to page 589 where it is listed right there, \$5,065,000 - the Amerindian Handicraft Association, Friends of the Needy, Guyana Red Cross Society, Guyana Relief Council, Rural Women's Network and Women in Environment. They are right there.

Bishop Edghill: It is just a clarification from the Minister. Under line item 6242 Maintenance of Buildings, the Minister told the Assembly, just now, that \$15 million was budgeted and in the revised figures \$3,124,000 was expended, but then she went on to say as of now all of the \$15 million has been spent. Is the Minister indicating that the numbers in this book are incorrect?

Ms. Lawrence: The Minister is indicating no such thing.

Programme: 491 – Policy Development and Administration – \$283,356,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 491 – Policy Development and Administration – \$325,000,000

Dr. Persaud: Under project 1216400, Buildings, could you say which buildings are these?

Ms. Lawrence: This will just be for one building, that is the building on High Street and this \$200 million will be for preparation of plans, drawings, corrections to the defective work that was done so that we can move on to get the buildings in readiness for the Ministry.

Dr. Persaud: Could you say how long this will take and when it is intended to have the building ready?

Ms. Lawrence: We are anxious to get into this building, but with this allocation we are hoping that by the first week in January we can put out our advertisements in the newspapers and hopefully that within the first half of the year all of these works, which we have listed, can be completed.

Dr. Persaud: Project 1903700, Sustainable Livelihood and Entrepreneurial Development (SLED) Projects: Could you say the sum allotted? What community driven entrepreneurial interventions are you planning to have there, Minister?

Ms. Lawrence: At this point in time we do have communities earmarked for this, apart from the community of Buxton which already provided us with a project document. What we are going to do, however, we are going to be focussing entrepreneurial endeavour that promote value chain production systems. I spoke in the budget about agro and agri, so what we will be doing is inviting single parents and youths to provide us with their projects whereby we will have committee with the competent people who will evaluate those projects and then we will apply these finances to those projects.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, you said you did not really know as yet. How much of this will be used for Buxton? What will be left over and what the criteria is, in terms of where you will utilise this remainder?

Ms. Lawrence: This is a work in progress as this is a project that is now placed within the Ministry. Right now, as we speak, there is a team meeting discussing how we are going to set out the criteria. You know through the “Power” project we have had several persons and groups that came forward with projects. We pulled out some of those. The project at Buxton is the one which stood out because it will be feeding into another project that is being run through the Ministry of

Indigenous Affairs. We already saw the linkage there with those two projects to providing for the other using local materials, creating jobs within the communities. That is going to be part of the criteria that we are going to use with others. We do not want to lock anybody in, because if you go to the far-flung hinterland areas and you cannot use the same set criteria that you have for persons on the *coastland* in those areas. We are working to ensure that it is flexible and that it can give coverage to persons in any one of our ten administrative regions.

Dr. Persaud: Could you say approximately how many jobs you envisage and what this programme really entails that made it stand out from the other proposals that you would have got?

Ms. Lawrence: Thank you and I like it. It is a very interesting question. I cannot say how many jobs I envisage, but what I do know is that these projects will all be granted money, not loans, and so we want to ensure that we set the criteria in such a way that will be able to give persons, as I said before, the opportunity to be a part of. For it to have an evaluative mechanism placed within there so that we can evaluate each project as they come on their merit.

4.32 p.m.

In Region 1, women are already speaking about going back to ginger and so on. We will look at each project based on where they are and what is available to them, especially when they are using local materials in the communities.

Bishop Edghill: I would like return to project code 1216400 – Buildings: There is an allocation of \$200 million and I heard the Minister indicating that that is for the rectification of the work and there is some anxiety in getting into the building. I rechecked my profile of this project at page 211, Volume 3, and this project is entailed to cost \$1 billion. This \$200 million is just allocation for 2107.

Could the Minister confirm that they will be spending \$1 billion on the High Street property?

Ms. Lawrence: I cannot confirm that we will spend \$1 billion. I can confirm what is projected at this time and what is projected at this time is \$1 billion.

Bishop Edghill: A follow-up question: Could the Hon. Minister indicate how many years it will be before the completion of this project, if it is a \$1 billion project? Two hundred million dollars is budgeted in 2017.

Ms. Lawrence: The anticipated date is 2018.

Bishop Edghill: A follow-up: If the anticipated date is 2018 and \$200 million is allocated in 2017, could the Minister indicate to us if the anticipation is that a supplemental will be sought?

Ms. Lawrence: The \$200 million that is given is a projection to do what I said which are the plans, drawings and to correct structural defects. If we need to have more money to ensure that the building is safe for the employees and the persons to whom we will be providing a service and we need to come back to this House, I am quite certain that this House will graciously grant that extension.

Bishop Edghill: Could the Minister indicate if a project report with the requisite financing to equip this building to be utilised by the Ministry was done and if it was at a cost of \$1 billion?

Ms. Lawrence: Work was done by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure by its Engineers and technical staff. This is how the \$1 billion projection was arrived at.

Programme 491 – Policy Development and Administration - \$325,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme 492 – Social Services - \$14,788,649,000

Dr. Persaud: Line item 6112 – Senior Technical: Could you say if you have the full complement of Senior Technical staff under this line item? Are there vacancies outside of the central Ministry?

Ms. Lawrence: I am advised that there are 31 new positions to be filled and they are Probation Officers. The vacancies have been advertised by the Public Service Commission.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, could you say where the 31 vacancies exist and what has been happening in the interim where these vacancies exist in terms of delivery of service?

Ms. Lawrence: During the course of 2016, several new offices were established in various regions and sub-regions. As a result of that, these offices must now be staffed. We are also seeking to ensure that, in several of the offices which presently exist, we have more child protection workers there. This line item is to fill positions in Regions 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

Dr. Persaud: Could you say which regions do not have any Probation Officers or have the fewest and where in Region 9, in particular?

Ms. Lawrence: It would be Region 9, where we have only one office and we are hoping that, within the first quarter, we would be able to establish another office.

Dr. Persaud: Line item 6113 – Other Technical and Craft Skilled: I would ask you a question in a similar vein. I noticed that you have lost two staff members. Could you say how many vacancies exist in the region? Could you say what areas have been deprived of skilled and technical expertise because of the vacancies, if they do exist?

Ms. Lawrence: To get some clarity from the Hon. Member: we added 10; we did not lose there. Check it back please.

Mr. Chand: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I see that the complement has gone up by four additional yet the sum sought, \$185 million, is approximately \$15.7 million above 2016. Could the Minister explain why the steep increase notwithstanding that there might have been an increase in pay? The four additional persons that had been taken on, whether they are four new vacancies created, could the Minister name the positions?

Ms. Lawrence: You are correct. Apart from the four persons, the difference would also take into account the 2016 increase. The four positions would be a Business Development Officer for the Women of Worth (WOW) Power Projects. We also merged the Women's Affairs Bureau and the Men's Affairs Bureau into the Gender Affairs Bureau. We now have a Manager managing that whole Unit.

There is also an Officer appointed in Region 8, Sub-Region 1. At Kato, we have a new Officer. We also have an additional Officer in the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Unit. Those are the four persons.

Mr. Gill: Line item 6343 – Old Age Pensions and Social Assistance: Some of our senior citizens, especially those in the Hinterland areas, would be experiencing difficulties getting their old age pension in the new year because they are now required to have a new nine-digit Identification (ID) card to uplift their pensions. Could the Hon. Minister say what provisions are being made to facilitate those elderly who do not have birth certificates and those who now only have their old seven-digit and nine-digit ID cards?

Ms. Lawrence: I am very happy for that question so that I can repeat on national television so that persons can hear me far and wide. While the Ministry is seeking to streamline the old age pension system, we are asking persons to use their new ID cards. Many of them do have their ID cards but you know the older folks – they put it away and use their older ones.

Those persons without the new ID Cards, we are taking their information and, as I said before, we will be working with the Ministry of Citizenship and the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) to ensure that we provide these persons with the necessary documentation so that they can register and have the new ID cards. No one will be turned away if they do not have their latest ID cards.

Dr. Mahadeo: Hon. Minister, I would like to direct your attention to line item 6292 – Dietary.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Dr. Mahadeo, if you angle the microphone closer to you, it will be very helpful.

Dr. Mahadeo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Line item 6292 – Dietary: There is an increase of approximately \$12 million.

Could the Hon. Minister say how many persons this would cater for? I think that this is for the Palms Geriatric Institution.

Ms. Lawrence: This is not only meals and dietary items for the Palms Geriatric Institution but it is also for the Night Shelter, the Hugo Chavez Centre Rehabilitation and Reintegration and the Mahaica Hospital.

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

Dr. Mahadeo: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Please proceed.

Dr. Mahadeo: Hon. Minister, could you say what is the average that you calculate per person per day when you calculate their dietary?

Ms. Lawrence: Hon. Member, I look forward to the day when we can cost taking care of one of the persons who reside in any of these homes but we are not there as yet. I cannot give you the cost per person in these homes.

Dr. Mahadeo: Hon. Minister, you would have used something to do... This is a budget estimate so we would have used...

Ms. Lawrence: It is based on usage.

Dr. Mahadeo: I would like to direct the Minister's attention to line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies - \$1.5 million. Unlike the regions where the moneys are sent to the regions and then borrowed back to the Ministry, would this be all the moneys that would be used or would they be acquiring drugs and medical supplies from somewhere else?

Ms. Lawrence: This is just an allocation to ensure that our first-aid kits are stocked.

4.47 p.m.

At the Palms Geriatric Institution, there are two Doctors there who are on call. We can call them in. Presently, we are working and we are hoping to finish next week on the infirmary there. Then we will have two other nurses to come on and work. So, we will be having our own medication and so on at the Palms Geriatric Institution which will help those Doctors as they go out to the various centres: the Night Shelter, the Mahaica Hospital and the Hugo Chavez Centre for Rehabilitation and Reintegration. But this is just for first-aid kits.

Dr. Mahadeo: So, Minister, does your Ministry not cater for the drugs and medical supplies for the persons who will be there? Could you tell me where they might be getting drugs and medical supplies from?

Ms. Lawrence: That would be from the Ministry of Public Health.

Dr. Persaud: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under line item 6113 – Other Technical and Craft Skilled: 10 additional persons were taken on. Can you say where these persons will be placed and their designations? And can you also say if you have your full complement of social workers and counsellors across the region – if they come under this line item?

Ms. Lawrence: Those 10 persons are 10 new Probation Officers and they are placed in Regions 1, 3, 4, 6 and 10, and they were appointed by the Public Service Commission. There are also, on the same circular issued, 20 vacancies for Regions 1 through 10 for Probation Officers.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, what about counsellors, social workers – people who will be able to implement and deliver services such as dealing with suicide, domestic violence, alcohol abuse, and rehabilitation of any sort? Would they come under this?

Ms. Lawrence: Yes.

Dr. Persaud: Can you please tell me what is happening in terms of the regions? Are they adequately provided for and how many vacancies exist in these areas?

Ms. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, if the Member will so allow me, I will provide that for her.

Mr. Chairman: Very well, thank you.

Dr. Persaud: Thank you, Minister.

Dr. Mahadeo: Minister, under line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations - the Guyana Legal Aid Clinic moved from \$49 million to \$66 million. Could you explain that increase? Are we having more lawyers and how many, if we are?

Ms. Lawrence: With regard to the Guyana Legal Aid Clinic, we also have one now established in Linden. So there is one in Georgetown and one in Region 6, and so this is to help to build up the complement of lawyers to address the many cases that are coming before us with persons who need this type of help.

Dr. Mahadeo: Minister, could you advise me as to what complements are we looking at in Linden, Region 6 and centrally?

Ms. Lawrence: This is another list I will have to give to you; we did not walk with that.

Dr. Mahadeo: Thank you.

Dr. Persaud: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: Hon. Minister, can you advise why the significant increase under this line item?

Ms. Lawrence: We are going to be spending \$58,147,000 at the Palms Geriatric Institution where we will be working on blocks A, B and C and also the kitchen, the matron's office, the administrative office and the stores. We are also going to do some plumbing and electrical works there and repairs to the cupboards and so in blocks A, B and C; repairs to the floor and the sanitary blocks.

At the Night Shelter, we have allocated \$26.5 million where we will be dealing with a concrete and wooden structure. So, we are going to be doing some more plumbing works. We did some this year but we are going to be doing some more next year and we are going to refurbish the floors in dormitories one and three. We are going to rehabilitate the trestles and build a storage room. Also, the external washroom needs some work, so we are going to be doing something there and we are going to include a washroom in the administrator's office and do a few little minor repairs there.

Also, we are going to expand the security building because, right now, it is so small that we cannot have our social worker in there when the persons are coming in and they have to open the gate, which puts a little problem with the staff and the security there – everybody wants to rush in and not be documented. So, we are going to do something with that. And for the outside shed, we are going to put more tables and benches. We took in a part of outside and we made it into an office for the staff and now we are going to look at the shed where the residents have their dinner and lunch and so on; we are going to fix that up.

With regard to the Guyana Women's Leadership Institute (GWLI) building, we are going to spend \$3.720 million and we are going to do some repairs to the boardroom, the internal and external wall and we are also going to look at the general office to do some repairs there also.

At the Mahaica Hospital, we have allocated \$9.5 million where we will look at the walls and stairs, the flooring and windows. Also, the laundry area and the female and male wards we are

going to be doing some repairs there. At the Probation and Family Welfare Centres at Anna Regina and Linden, we are going to be doing some work on those offices too.

And all of those will come up to a tune of \$105,000,867.

Mr. Bharrat: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Line item 6302 –Training (including Scholarships): There is a \$15 million increase. Can the Hon. Minister say what type of training will be done and who will be the beneficiaries?

Ms. Lawrence: This is where we are going to embark on training in the community with advocates on gender-based violence and trafficking in persons in all of the 10 Administrative Regions. We are also going to continue to collaborate with the University of Guyana with regards to the specialised training for our probation officers in trauma, response management, grief counselling, developmental psychology, mental health, community development and gerontology.

Mr. Bharrat: Just a follow-up question: Can the Hon. Minister say if the East Bank Demerara will be a beneficiary of this programme?

Ms. Lawrence: All 10 Administrative Regions, and we are working with Region 4's Regional Democratic Council (RDC) to get an office on the East Bank Demerara so that we do not have to have persons coming all the way to Georgetown.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, can you advise me, under line item 6133 – Benefits and Allowances? I noticed that there was an increase from 2015 which started with \$2.032 million, and in 2016 \$21.272 million and only \$16.280 million spent in the last Budget and now there is provision for \$20.646 million. Can you say what the additional \$4 million will be utilised for?

Ms. Lawrence: I am told that this will cater for the allowances for the additional staff who were removed from contract and placed on the fixed establishment by the Public Service Commission.

Dr. Persaud: Can the Hon. Minister say how many staff will be catered for – the additional?

Ms. Lawrence: Over 30 persons will be catered for.

Dr. Persaud: Thank you. I just have two more questions.

Mr. Chairman: Just one other question, please.

Dr. Persaud: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): I noticed that there has been an increase to \$20.7 million. Can you say what training is intended and if GWLI is under this and how much will be given to GWLI? And will this training be decentralised in terms of regions?

Ms. Lawrence: Just over \$6 million of this is allocated to GWLI. As I told you, we dropped the ball on this one in 2016 so we are having our plan set out for 2017. We are looking at numeracy and literacy for grassroots women – information technology and leadership courses for those women, apart from the skills programme.

Dr. Persaud: One minute, Mr. Chairman. There was a second part to the question. Can the Minister kindly answer that bit for me? I was asking if the remainder of the moneys will be spent on training that is decentralised and what is the training that she had planned?

Ms. Lawrence: Yes. The difference is what will go to the gender-based violence and trafficking in persons. We are going to do some training with that and also with the probation officer in collaboration with the University of Guyana in several areas. I responded earlier on – trauma, response management, grief counselling, developmental psychology, mental health, community development and gerontology.

Programme: 492 – Social Services – \$14,788,649,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 492 – Social Services – \$71,500,000

Dr. Persaud: Project code 1216400 – Buildings: Can the Hon. Minister say what buildings are provided for here?

Ms. Lawrence: The \$26.5 million is allocated as follows: we are going to rehabilitate one of the buildings in the Mahaica Hospital compound to accommodate children with disabilities. So we will be able to house them and take care of them. We are going to construct a driveway at Region 6's Probation Office for \$500,000.

5.02 p.m.

We will construct one also in Region 5 for \$1 million. We are going to change the guard hut that we have at the Palms Geriatric Institution for tighter security and expand the waiting area. We are also going to build some sheds there so that some residents can go down and enjoy the coolness of the day and interact with persons.

At the Mahaica Hospital, the rehabilitation of the building for the children with disability will cost \$17 million.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, under project code 2405700 – Land Transport - could you say who would utilise the vehicle that is to be purchased and where would this vehicle be utilised?

Ms. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, this \$7.5 million will purchase three all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) which will go to Regions 1, 8 and 9. They will be used by the officers in those Regions, whether in the Childcare Protection or Probation Officers.

Dr. Mahadeo: Mr. Chairman, project code 2511000 – Furniture and Equipment: It just states here, “Purchase of furniture and equipment”. Could the Hon. Minister indicate what sort of equipment and where they would be placed?

Ms. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, we are spending \$37.5 million to install two lifts at the Palms Geriatric Institution, which would cost us \$8.4 million and we are also going to install one exterior lift to take up or bring down persons, laundry and other things. We are going to purchase two industrial washers for the Palms Geriatric Institution. We have been buying washers again and again so we are going to invest \$792,000. We are going to purchase two industrial driers along with the washers to which we have allocated \$605,000. At the Palms Geriatric Institution and at the Night Shelter, we are going to install closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras, monitors and recorders for \$1.2 million.

Programme: 492 – Social Services - \$71,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, it is now 5.00 p.m. and we have quite some time remaining on this matter. We will take the suspension now and resume at 6.00 p.m.

Assembly resumed.

Sitting suspended at 5.02 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 6.06 p.m.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply.

In Committee of Supply

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we will resume our consideration of Agency 49, the Ministry of Social Protection.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 493 – Labour Administration - \$514,560,000

Ms. Persaud: Mr. Chairman, line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: There is a reduction by 12 for the year 2017. Could the Hon. Minister explain the decrease and what might have been the cause for the decrease?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I understand that Hon. Minister Mr. Keith Scott will be the Minister responding to questions in relation to this matter.

Minister within the Ministry of Social Protection [Mr. Scott]: Mr. Chairman, there has been the removal of four staff to the Ministry of Natural Resources, one Chief Cooperative Development Officer resigned, one Assistant Chief Cooperative Development Officer resigned, one Compliance Officer resigned, three Typist Clerks were appointed by the Public Service Commission, once Confidential Secretary resigned and one Driver was dismissed.

Ms. Persaud: Line item 6224 – Print and Non-Print Materials - \$7 million: Could the Hon. Minister say what is covered under this line item?

Mr. Scott: Mr. Chairman, this is to facilitate payment for newspapers - *Guyana Times, Stabroek News, Guyana Chronicle and Kaieteur News*; the creation of posters and banners for national observances for each department and other regions which were added on and restructuring employees.

Ms. Persaud: Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Hon. Minister, there is a sum of \$259,991,000 for 2017. If we turn to page 590 of the details for those subventions and contributions, we will note the breakdown. Hon. Minister, there is an amount of \$8 million budgeted for support to other trade unions. Could the Hon. Minister state how this amount will be disbursed and the criteria?

Mr. Scott: The criteria are based on what the unions submit to us, as they did last year. The large unions would tend to get a little more than the small unions.

Ms. Persaud: Hon. Minister, there is also an amount of \$24 million listed for the Guyana National Cooperative Union Ltd. Could the Hon. Minister state what this Union represents for that amount of \$24 million? There was no amount for last year. Is this a new organisation?

Mr. Scott: That money is for the Guyana National Cooperative Union Ltd. and I am certain you have been passing that building every day. It is not a new building; it has been around and the Guyana National Cooperative Union Ltd. has also been around. What has happened is that we are giving them money because we need them to play their role. The role is to help oversee other cooperative societies. They are the ones who are self-stationary so it is important that we keep them alive and make sure they are viable.

Bishop Edghill: Sir, under the same line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations - there is no subsidy that went to this Union in 2015 and there is no subsidy that went to it in 2016. It is a new item in 2017 of \$24 million. Could the Hon. Minister indicate to us who are the principals of this organisation and what were the criteria used to provide funding to this organisation?

Mr. Scott: We are awaiting Cabinet's approval. We cannot just sit and not make anything available. We already got the approval from Cabinet so it will be...

Bishop Edghill: Sir, the question to the Hon. Minister is who the principals are of this Union. He might wish to state where they are located. And what are the criteria used to facilitate this allocation to this organisation since it never received funding before?

Mr. Scott: Mr. Chairman, I will provide that information to you later. When would you like to have it? Tomorrow.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, a question has been put to you. Did you say that you will provide the information tomorrow?

Mr. Scott: Yes, Sir.

Bishop Edghill: Sir, on the same line item, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister if representation was made to him for funding to this Union and what were the reasons offered for the need for funding now?

Mr. Scott: We are in the process of resuscitating this Guyana National Cooperative Union Ltd. as an umbrella body, more or less, to make sure that the cooperative movement is revitalised properly. This is one of the areas we have to give some emphasis.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister tell this House if there is still a Chief Cooperative Development Officer who is responsible for the supervision, regulation and quality control of all registered cooperative unions?

Mr. Scott: What line item are you talking about?

Ms. Teixeira: The same one.

Mr. Scott: Yes, there is a Chief Cooperative Development Officer.

6.17 p.m.

Ms. Burton-Persaud: Could I ask the Hon. Minister to list the individual unions which fall under this umbrella organisation, the Guyana National Cooperative Union Limited?

Mr. Scott: All of the cooperatives report to this organisation and pay moneys toward that organisation every year. So they are all, more or less, affiliated in that sense.

Ms. Teixeira: Under the same line item, Hon. Minister, could you say whether this body is in compliance with the laws governing cooperative societies in Guyana? Sir, you will recall that the Anti-Money Laundering laws and the Cooperative Societies' laws were amended to ensure that the cooperatives were making their reports, being properly monitored, *et cetera*. Could the Minister say whether this organisation fulfils all of that?

Mr. Scott: They are compliant and as far as we are concerned, we are the ones who are, more or less, pushing the development and observation of the Anti-Money Laundering laws. The cooperative unions have been recently encouraged to get on board and that body is one them. So they are compliant at the moment.

Ms. Teixeira: Hon. Minister, have you used the wrong word in saying that this body needs to be resuscitated with an injection of Government's funds of \$24 million? If it is in compliance, then there is no need to resuscitate it because it is functioning. If there is need to resuscitate the union, then it is not functioning. Which one is it?

Mr. Scott: I thank you for the correct words and I will not argue and quibble about the meaning of words. I will accept the Hon. Member's definition. If the Member feels that we should not use the word "resuscitate" but instead "revitalise" I do not mind accepting that.

Ms. Burton-Persaud: I had asked a question under the same line item and that is whether the Hon. Minister could list for the House the unions that form the line of individual unions, as he did state that the union is an umbrella body. We know that an umbrella body covers a number of other individual unions.

Mr. Scott: The unions report to this union and those that are now functioning are in compliance and the others are in the process of doing so.

Mr. Chand: Line item 6116, Contracted Employee: The staff complement has decreased by 12, yet the sum allocated has been increased by \$9 million, could the Minister explain why the increase and the reason for the reduction of the staff complement.

Mr. Scott: The reason for the increase is because there have been the increase and revision of salaries.

Ms. Burton-Persaud: Continuing under line item 6321, Subventions and Contributions to Local Organisations, I am kindly asking the Hon. Minister if he can say how many unions are under this umbrella organisation of the Guyana National Cooperative Union Limited.

Mr. Scott: It is a co-op league, but there are 10 unions, one from each region.

Ms. Burton-Persaud: Now that the Hon. Minister has stated that there are 10 unions, could he say the names of the 10 unions which fall under this umbrella.

Mr. Scott: Regions 1 to 10 would all have unions.

Ms. Burton-Persaud: Mr. Chairman, I thank the Minister, but to say Region 1 or Region 2 union, as a trade unionist, every union has a name. Could the Minister kindly say to this House the registered names of those 10 individual unions?

Mr. Scott: Every region has a regional union and those are the ones that are referred to.

Ms. Burton-Persaud: Mr. Chairman could the Hon. Minister say how the disbursement will be done for these unions. For the \$24 million, could the Minister say to which individual union will the money be given? I am not aware that there is anything such as a national union for a region, whether it is a cooperative or trades union.

Mr. Scott: The \$24 million is allocated for the national body and that will then be disbursed to the bodies.

Ms. Burton-Persaud: Could the Hon. Minister layover to this House the names of the 10 individual unions that fall under this umbrella organisation and the disbursements as per union because he is seemingly having some difficulty in getting the names of those unions

Mr. Scott: I will do so.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, it will be helpful if you were able to give some indication as to when that particular document will...

Mr. Scott: In two weeks' time. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Ms. Teixeira, do you have a question?

Ms. Teixeira: Yes, I have a question.

Mr. Chairman: Then please proceed.

Ms. Teixeira: I also want to bring to your attention that the information promised from last week had not been received.

Mr. Chairman: Hon Ms. Teixeira, I have spoken in this House about undertakings given. It falls on the Member who expects the information, if the promise is not fulfilled, to bring it to the attention to the Speaker, not necessarily in this gathering, when nothing can be done at this moment. It is not at every opportunity that one seeks to present something which cannot be treated now. I said that any Member who fails to honour an undertaking should be brought to the attention of the Speaker. I said that before now and Hon. Members ought to do that.

Ms. Teixeira: Sir, with due respect, there were promises made in this House and I am reminding in this House that those obligations have not been fulfilled.

Under the National Cooperative Union Limited, Hon. Minister, I was not quibbling when I said that you may have used the wrong word, resuscitate and revitalise are two completely different words. Which one are you referring to with a \$24 million injection of taxpayers' money? Secondly, what is the money to be used for? The Minister certainly must have a plan of what \$24 million will be used for in relation to the cooperatives. The Hon. Minister has come totally unprepared to this House and it is unacceptable.

Mr. Scott: Mr. Chairman, when I said two weeks it was because I wanted to make sure that we could have kept the word that the Hon. Members have demanded to have the answers given in a timely manner.

Secondly, with the money that is being expended and the amount of time that is being put into it, it is because, in 1974, there was a policy that was adumbrated by the People's Progressive Party (PPP) to kill the co-op movement. So, we agree...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, I must ask you to stay within 2015 or 2016. You are taking us back a quarter of a century. Let us try to be more current in our approach to the answering of questions.

Mr. Scott: Mr. Chairman, what you are asking for, in effect, is a breakdown. I will provide that breakdown tomorrow.

Ms. Burton-Persaud: Under the same line item, under the details of the Subventions and Contributions to Local Organisations, again the breakdown shows that organisations to benefit from this sum are the Board of Industrial Training, Federation of Independent Trade Unions

(FITUG), Guyana Trades Union Congress (GTUC), along with the Guyana National Cooperative Union Limited. Could the Hon. Minister say if the Critchlow Labour College will be benefitting from any contributions and subventions from this allocation and, if yes, could he say how much?

Mr. Scott: Is the Critchlow Labour College not under the Ministry of Education?

Ms. Burton-Persaud: I have not noted that Hon. Minister. I have checked.

Mr. Scott: This Ministry has never budgeted for the Critchlow Labour College.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member could you repeat the question.

Ms. Burton-Persaud: Could the Hon. Minister say whether there is a budgeted amount under this line item for the Critchlow Labour College? The Hon. Minister has said that it was listed under the Ministry of Education, I have checked under the Ministry of Education's subvention and I have not seen it there. I could vividly remember, in this House, in 2015, it was stated that the subvention would be returned.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, we are getting to a point where we are going to go off the rails. Hon. Members, when you hear the voice of the Chairman trying to attract your attention, if nothing else and even without the Standing Orders, courtesy not requires, but it demands, that you cease what you are doing and listen to the Chairman. I will not attempt to speak over the voice of the Hon. Members to attract their attention. We have to get it right. We are making two steps forwards and four steps backwards. We are deteriorating into last year and we cannot have that.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Ali, you wanted the floor for some time now. Do you still want the floor?

Mr. Ali: Yes Mr. Chairman. It is the same question which the Hon. Member had asked.

Mr. Chairman: So you do not have a question any longer.

Mr. Ali: The question was not answered. The question is whether there is any subvention for the Critchlow Labour College and how much?

6.32 p.m.

Mr. Scott: Mr. Chairman, we are looking after labour and there is no allocation under labour for the Critchlow Labour College.

Ms. Burton–Persaud: Mr. Chairman, I have been able to pick up the amount and I apologise to the Minister because I did find the allocation. However, under the same line item...

Mr. Chairman: Are you going to ask a question Ms. Burton–Persaud?

Ms. Burton–Persaud: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Well, please let us get the question quickly.

Ms. Burton–Persaud: Could the Hon. Minister say what will be the criteria used for the disbursement of the \$8 million to the individual unions?

Ms. Ally: You asked that already?

Ms. Burton–Persaud: And I am asking again. I did not get an answer.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, if you do not get an answer the first, second or the third time, I do not think that you will get an answer or the answer that you are seeking on the fourth occasion. So, unless we are going to have this repeated over and over, then we are not going to get beyond that question.

Bishop Edghill: Sir, I would like to return to line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations and to return to the \$24 million allocated to the Guyana National Co-operative Union Limited. I am asking whether the Hon. Minister could make available to this House the document that was submitted to the Ministry of Finance requesting this allocation with its justification. Secondly, I would like the Minister to answer, if he could now, whether the members of this organisation are required to make financial contributions or are they financial members of this union? Do they pay dues?

Mr. Scott: The unions do not necessarily have to contribute. What happens is that, from that amount of money, whenever they make their requests and if they have any difficulties, we would give them.

Bishop Edghill: Sir, for the purpose of clarity we are dealing with Labour Administration. We are told that this union is not a labour union, but a co-op union, limited. Sir, if it a union that is a co-op and it is incorporated because it has 'limited' with it, it must have shareholders and people who own shares. Could the Hon. Minister tell this House what is the total share capital for this union and how many shareholders are in this Union?

Mr. Scott: Only co-op societies go with shares, not the unions.

Bishop Edghill: Sir, could I have a clarification...

Mr. Chairman: Would you like to repeat the question?

Bishop Edghill: No. I would like to have a clarification. The Minister is indicating to the House that only societies have shareholders, not unions, but if this incorporated, there must be incorporators and directors. There must be a share capital, even if it is one dollar, based upon the law. So could the Minister indicate who the incorporators, shareholders, are and what is the total share capital and who is the Secretary of this union? Sir, do I have to receive abuse about collection in this House? Do I have to hear that Sir?

Mr. Chairman hit the gavel.

Mr. Scott: Hon. Member, I will lay it over for you.

Mr. Chairman: I will say to Hon. Members, could we try to rise rather than descend? Could we try to do that? Whatever the term, we can differ and have questions that cannot be answered or there would be answers that are unsatisfactory, without showing dissatisfaction in the manner in which we are doing it. So let us try. And to answer your question Hon. Member, no you do not have to suffer abuse nor should you be giving any either.

Bishop Edghill: Sir, I did not give any.

Mr. Chairman: No. Hon. Member, you have not given any. It is a cautionary comment.

Bishop Edghill: Sir, but I just needed to clarify.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you have gotten your answer to the question?

Bishop Edghill: No, Sir, but I just need to clarify because I think when I ask a question, what I expect in return is an answer from the person I have asked the question, rather than sarcasms and comments being made that has nothing to do with the question that is being asked.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I thank you. Hon. Minister, have you answered the question which has been asked?

Mr. Scott: Hon. Chairman, every question that had been asked, I endeavoured and have successfully answered truthfully. What I cannot answer I have said that I will lay over, which means the Hon. Member is still getting the answer.

Ms. Burton–Persaud: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister say to this House the rationale used to allocate \$8 million to the other unions, as against the \$24 million allocated to this organisation, which only has, as was stated by the Minister, 10 unions as against apparently over 15 other individual unions, which \$8 million will be used to be disbursed to.

Mr. Scott: Mr. Chairman, those unions are given money according to their sizes. It is the same way it was done last year, when the Guyana Teachers' Union (GTU) and the Guyana Public Service Union (GPSU) had requested money. They were given according to their sizes – if one could remember that.

Ms. Burton–Persaud: Could the Hon. Minister then say that the makeup of the 10 Unions is far more than the other individual unions that come under the other two umbrella organisations?

Mr. Scott: The Hon. Member is speaking about the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Guyana (FITUG) and the Guyana Trades Union Congress (GTUC)? We are speaking about the co-op movement. The other unions that were asked about, as I said, it is a regional situation, not an individual body like with the GTUC giving moneys to teachers, *et cetera*. So it is being given according to the regions.

Ms. Teixeira: A follow–up question. Since the Hon. Member said that the GTUC and FITUG represent a hundred thousand plus workers, could the Hon. Member say how many cooperatives or persons in the cooperatives does the Guyana National Cooperative Union Limited represent?

Mr. Scott: We have 10 unions and there are over 1200 cooperatives in this country. [Ms.

Teixeira: Functioning?] Some are functioning and some are not. We are in the process of going to them and helping to bring back those that are not. These moneys will help us to help those to get back on their feet. There is a big difference between that and saying how many or that 16,000 persons belonging to a specific labour union.

Ms. Teixeira: Would the Hon. Minister consider that \$24 million or part, thereof, being shared more equitably with FITUG and GTUC would have been a better investment in the working people of this country?

Mr. Scott: Are you asking me to pass value of judgement on FITUG and GTUC?

Ms. Teixeira: That is what Ministers do.

Mr. Scott: You already recognise the virtual impotence of those two bodies in this country to look after the interest of workers properly.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, when the answer is being given, allow the answer to be completed before you make your comments. It is not helpful to the answers themselves, to the Speaker or indeed to the person who asked the question.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: I have noted that a number of things will be laid over, but we will be called upon just now to vote on this matter. Could the Hon. Minister, at least, tell the House where the registered office of the Guyana National Cooperative Union Limited is located?

Mr. Scott: That is in Waterloo Street, between Middle and Quamina Streets.

Programme: 493 – Labour Administration - \$514,560,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 493 – Labour Administration - \$18,500,000

Ms. Burton–Persaud: Project code 2405700 – Land Transport: Could the Hon. Minister state, for the sum of \$7 million allocated for the purchase of a vehicle, to which department and what the vehicle will be used for?

Mr. Scott: Mr. Chairman, that vehicle will be for the Co-op Department at Cornhill Street to be used by Chief Co-op Development Officer and staff.

6.47 p.m.

Programme: 493 – Labour Administration - \$18,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 494 – Child Care and Protection - \$552,727,000

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, line item 6112 – Senior Technical: I noticed that there are three less staff. Could you say what vacancies have been left and where?

Ms. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, this represents three Senior Probation Officers who have retired.

Dr. Persaud: Could the Hon. Minister say if there will be more staff employed under Senior Technical, in terms of giving more expertise and skill in this area?

Ms. Lawrence: That answer is yes, Mr. Chairman. We will have six more officers coming on board and the circular, by the Public Service Commission (PSC), is already out.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister could you say where these Officers will be placed?

Ms. Lawrence: Yes Hon. Member, in Georgetown.

Dr. Persaud: Line item 6113 – Other Technical and Craft Skilled: Could you say Hon. Minister what is the ratio of Case Workers to homes or shelters in Regions 4, 5 and 6?

Ms. Lawrence: Thank you Mr. Chairman and thank you Hon. Member. I will ask that we layover that information.

Dr. Persaud: Could the Hon. Minister say whether there is a deficiency of staff in these regions to these homes and shelters, and if one Case Worker has to service more than one home, in addition to maybe working in Region 6, would that one Case Worker also have to work in Regions 4 and 5?

Ms. Lawrence: When the Case Workers are assigned to specific regions that is where they work. They do not double in regions. Secondly, yes we do need more Case Workers in several of the regions and that is why the Ministry is trying now to *beef up* the number of staff and that is why the Ministry has all these vacancies out there.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, under the same line item, could you say if there is a plan to have Child Psychologists because I understand that there has only been one Psychologist. If there is, where will these Psychologists be placed, are there priority areas and is there a plan to train any existing persons in the area to deal with specific problems affecting children?

Ms. Lawrence: Presently, the Ministry has one vacancy. There is a position for one such person, but we are depending on the Ministry of Public Health that has several persons in training, and when those persons return, many of them will be assigned to the Ministry of Social Protection.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister could it then be said that children are without the requisite care and attention they need in this area and what happens to the children who require this in the immediate time?

Ms. Lawrence: The answer is yes to the Hon. Member. As I indicated earlier, we do need more of these persons, but, presently, these children are taken to the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation, the Psychiatric Department, for treatment so that they could be dealt with.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, are you saying that the children from all the different regions are taken to the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation and how often does this occur? Under the same line item, in terms of homes where children suffer from depression or post trauma syndrome, what happens to them?

Ms. Lawrence: Hon. Member, I know that this is an area very close to your heart and that is why we are working to ensure that we could deal with all of these gaps within the system.

Dr. Persaud: Under line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): Sixteen million dollars have been budgeted for training. Could the Hon. Minister say what the intended training is and whether it will be sufficient to fill all the gaps? Would it include students who are in the University of Guyana, Berbice, as well as in Georgetown, in terms of having specialist training to fill these gaps, are these students going to be utilised in the system?

Ms. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, to the Hon. Member, under this line item, we are going to be utilising this allocation for the training of staff who work with the children and also some special parenting programme. We are also going to deal with six skilled professionals for special services for the children in the care centres. They are: a Dancing Instructor for the three centres; a Karate Instructor to work at two centres; a Sports Instructor to work at two centres; and three Tutors for remedial work with the children at the Mahaica Drop-in Centre and the Sophia Centre.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, under line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I noticed there has been a decrease. Could you explain where these persons have been lost from?

Ms. Lawrence: To the Hon. Member, five persons were Child Protection Officers, one Deputy Director of the Child Care and Protection Agency (CPA), one Secretary who resigned, plus one Social Services Assistant and one House Services Assistant were dismissed.

Dr. Persaud: Could the Minister say whether these vacancies do exist and have these vacancies been advertised?

Ms. Lawrence: Yes, Mr. Chairman, to that answer by the Hon. Member. These vacancies do exist and they have been advertised on Circular 4 of 2016. They are for two Assistant Directors of Children's Services, six Senior Probation Officers and 31 other Officers for the Child Care and Protection Agency.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, before we continue we have 10 minutes remaining to complete this particular item and one other.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6343 – Old Age Pension and Social Assistance: Madame Minister, there has been an increase from \$41.6 million to \$60 million. Could you advise me on the increase and what are the areas or what are the stipends, I believe, this covers? Obviously, this allocation is not for pensions, this is, I think, for foster care. So, could the Hon. Minister tell me,

for the increases, whether it is for the actual stipend or in anticipation of a larger number of foster parents, to cater for the number of children that the Ministry is dealing with?

Ms. Lawrence: Hon. Member, this is just for the increase in terms of the stipends from \$18,000 to \$20,000.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister a follow-up question on that line item. Could you say what monitoring and evaluation systems are being put in place for the foster care programme to ensure that the systems run smoothly, in terms of the increase in stipends versus those persons who will want to now take in children and what criteria are being used to determine those who qualify as foster parents?

Ms. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, in this last quarter of the year, the Director of the Child Care and Protection Agency held a workshop with the staff and one of the issues discussed at that workshop was the new methodology that would be used in terms of monitoring children in foster care. That is why we are working very assiduously with the Department of Public Service to ensure that we get these persons on board, so there could be more visits to the homes where these children are housed.

Dr. Persaud: Under the same line item, when children are placed in foster care and it does not work out *per se*, what provisions are made to get these children out of those homes? How immediate does this occur because I know of instances where children have been found wandering on the road for three or four days before they get attention?

Ms. Lawrence: We are very grateful for the Family Court and once the report is made or once the child indicates that there is an issue or someone calls in and indicates that there is an issue with any one of our children, that child is removed from the home. Once the Ministry gets that report that child is removed from the home and an investigation follows.

Mr. Chairman: This is the last question I will allow on this item.

Dr. Persaud: Line item 6294 – Other: Could the Minister say what that entails and could she also advise whether the School Feeding or Hot Meals Programme and the Uniform Programme fall anywhere under this head?

7.02 p.m.

Ms. Lawrence: Neither of that falls under this head. There are under other heads here. However what falls under this head would be screening and processing of potential foster parents, maintenance or the adoption board, media awareness programme, operation of the child advocacy centre and we are going to open three more this year, special forum for children, which is something we are going to have this year, given the convention of the rights, we want to try this out to children speak to the people in authority, as you and I, and all of us in the Assembly. We are going to try that out this year. We are also going to have other parenting programme. We have started a pilot project this year. We would like to carry it to another community next year which is the prevention of the programme of teenage pregnancy.

Programme: 494 – Child Care and Protection - \$552,727,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 494 - Child Care and Protection - \$62,869,000

Dr. Persaud: Project 1216400, Buildings: There is mentioned of provision for buildings and payment of retention. Could the Minister tell me what buildings are there and if there are more than one, obviously there are buildings could you say how much is allocated for each?

Ms. Lawrence: To the Hon. Member, the allocation will go to complete the Sophia Care Centre that is \$.8690 the continued extension of the Child Protection Agency (CPA) secretariat at Broad Street for \$20 million, and we are going to rebuild a new centre to house the children who were housed at the Drop In Centre and to take care of the children who comes in in the weekends, and so on, as the processing centre. There is \$20 million for the infrastructure work to begin this new year.

Dr. Persaud: As a follow-up to that question. Hon. Minister, could you say where the new centre will be built? You are saying that it is for the beginning of the infrastructure. What is the projected cost of the entire thing? When do you envisage that will be operational? Subsequent to that in the meanwhile, what will happen to the children who are waiting on the building to become operational?

Ms. Lawrence: Let me start with the last part first. Presently the children are housed between the home at Mahaica and Sophia Care Centre. The allocation here is for us to start the groundwork such as the drawings, so we do not have an estimated cost. We know what we want and when we have the drawings we will be able to estimate what will be the cost then we will come again, and I know you will give your approval.

Dr. Persaud: I will never ever stand away anything for children once we get the right answers. Project 2405700, Land Transport: Could the Hon. Minister say the vehicle that would be purchased, who will utilise this and where would this vehicle be placed?

Ms. Lawrence: This is to purchase a 15-seat bus so that we can transport the children from the centres to schools and extra lessons. It will be used between Mahaica and Georgetown.

Programme: 494 – Child Care and Protection - \$62,869,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 54 Ministry of Public Security

Current Expenditure

Programme: 541 - Policy Development and Administration - \$741,947,000

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister give a breakdown of the contracted employees that are listed under this line item?

Minister of Public Security [Mr. Ramjattan]: There are Data Entry Clerks, Liaison Officers, Science Officers, staff that was transition to permanent from contract, Cleaners, the Coordinator for task force for narcotics and drugs and illicit weapons, Personal Assistant, the Director of the Guyana Forensic Science Laboratory, Administrator of the Stray Catching Unit, Assistant Secretary of Finance, and Head of Strategic Management. I could give you the list because it is a very lengthy list. Do you want me to go through it?

Mr. Rohee: The only problem is that the Hon. Minister had promised me a list the last time but I never got it, but I heard what you said and I shall certainly make use of that offer.

Mr. Ramjattan: All right, if I did not keep my promise the last time I will do so this time.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister tell the Assembly of the contracted workers who transitioned where did they transition from, to what post where they transitioned to and what were the salaries?

Mr. Ramjattan: I understand they were transitioned from contracted to permanent employment and that there are under line item 6114, Clerical Clerk and Office Support, one Clerk and 19 staff members.

Mr. Rohee: The number of contracted employees moved from 183 to 192 at a cost \$305 million. Could the Hon. Minister say whether this amount is sufficient for these contracted employees?

Mr. Ramjattan: Yes. It is sufficient.

Mr. Hamilton: Line item 622, Drugs and Medical Supplies: I note that you budgeted for \$40,575,000 and your revised is showing that all of the sum was spent. Could you confirm, Mr. Minister, that under this line item \$40,575,000 is already spent? Secondly, what is responsible for the same line item being halved to \$20 million in 2017?

Mr. Ramjattan: If I may proffer an answer here, this line item catered for supplies such as laboratory test kits and laboratory consumables for the forensic science laboratory as well as the supplies for the main Ministry's head office. The decrease was due to the fact that the Ministry received approvals to procure laboratory items for the Guyana Forensic Science Laboratory in December 2016, and these supplies will be adequate for most of 2017. That is why it is reduced.

Mr. Hamilton: Are you saying that the \$40,575,000, which is shown as revised, is not expended?

Mr. Ramjattan: It will be spent by the 31st December.

Mr. Gill: Line item 6243, Janitorial and Cleaning Supplies: It shows a decrease in janitorial and cleaning supplies from \$5.3 million to \$4.3 million. Would the Hon. Minister explain why it was necessary to cut \$1 million from this line item?

Mr. Ramjattan: The reduction is reflective of the Ministry's need for 2017 as projected.

Mr. Nandlall: Line item 6284, Other: I see there is a budgetary sum there of \$27,687,000. Could you tell us what those moneys are going to be spent for?

Mr. Ramjattan: It caters for payments for advertisements, advisories and internet services. The increase is to facilitate payment for software upgrades, renew of antiviral software and software licence subscriptions.

7.17 p.m.

Mr. Nandlall: Could the Minister elaborate on what software we are speaking about because it is a lot of money for software?

Mr. Ramjattan: I understand that the subscription fee for that would prevent hacking and all of that and that anti-viral is the word use here. If you want the specifics, I could provide that to you.

Mr. Nandlall: I would be grateful for that, Sir.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6294, Other: There is an increase of approximately \$10 million. Could the Hon. Minister inform the Assembly what has brought about this increase and for what purpose?

Mr. Ramjattan: The increase is to facilitate the payment for stipends for Members of ministerial tender board and evaluation committee for the procurement of goods and services.

Mr. Hamilton: Hon. Minister, a follow-up question and then I would ask my question. What the sums were and what it was increased to?

Mr. Ramjattan: The line item, please.

Mr. Hamilton: The same line item, I am following up the question, 6284, Other, I think.

Mr. Ramjattan: Please, I would like to get that correct, line item 6284, Other or 6294, Other.

Mr. Hamilton: It is line item 6294, Other.

Mr. Ramjattan: Just explain what the question is again.

Mr. Hamilton: Okay. I am following up the question.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you just ask the question, let the Hon. Minister deal with it.

Mr. Hamilton: Hon. Minister, you indicated that part of the sum is to pay stipends for evaluators and persons on the tender board. I am seeking to find out what the sum was and what it was increased to. Secondly, the budgeted sum for this line item 6294, Other, was \$37,886,000 with the revised sum is showing what was spent, \$58,247,000. Could you indicate why the increase and how this \$20-odd million has got by the Ministry?

Mr. Ramjattan: Well, this line item caters for a number of things: the expenditure for Juvenile Holding Centre, community policing groups, Fire Advisory Board, the Strategic Management Department at the Ministry's head office. That increase of \$10 million from \$58 million to \$68 million is the increase that I mentioned just now for the payment of the stipends to the ministerial tender board and the evaluation committee.

Mr. Hamilton: I am asking a different question. I am saying that, the same line item, you budgeted \$37,886,000. That is what it was. The revised is showing \$20 million increase of 2016. The question is why the \$20 million increase. Secondly, how did the Ministry receive that added \$20 million? Is it through a virement or through a supplementary provision?

Mr Ramjattan: It was through a virement that it was increased and it was increased as a result of the increase expenditure for those, the Juvenile Holding Centre and the ministerial tender board and the various other things that I mentioned, Fire Advisory Board and Strategic Management.

Bishop Edghill: Under line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Could the Hon. Minister indicate, since there is no allocation for the National Commission of Law and Order, if this commission continues to exist and how it would be financed?

Mr. Ramjattan: It is currently under review whether it should continue or not. We did not spend any money on it in 2016, but this line item caters for expenditures for some other things, Parole Board, National Road Safety Council and the Guyana Legion.

Bishop Edghill: A follow-up question. The Hon. Minister just told the Assembly that we did not spend any money under this line item in 2016.

Mr. Ramjattan: It was for National Commission on Law and Order (LCNO).

Bishop Edghill: In your book, Sir, it indicates that the budgeted sum was \$21,587,000 and the revised is \$21,587,000. Could you tell me what the \$21,587,000 was spent, if it was not spent on the National Commission on Law and Order?

Mr. Ramjattan: It was spent on the Parole Board, the National Road Safety Council and the Guyana Legion.

Bishop Edghill: Sir, it is just to bring to your attention, if you, turn to page 590, you would discover that all those entities that the Minister has just indicated, they had their own budgetary allocations. We are speaking specifically about the National Commission on Law and Order. The Parole Board had its own money...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Bishop Edghill, please state your question. You have made the point. Please, let us go to the question.

Bishop Edghill: The Minister is saying that no moneys were spent on the National Commission on Law and Order. The answer, which he gave, suggests that the money, which was budgeted for the National Commission on Law and Order, was spent on other entities. The budgetary allocations show that those entities had their own budgetary allocations. I am seeking clarifications.

Mr. Ramjattan: Those come under Subsidies and Contributions Local Organisations, line item 6321, please.

Mr. Chairman: There is a question or observation.

Mr. Ramjattan: I maintain what I earlier said and that the amount of money, which was spent for Local Organisations, was that which is revised 2016, \$34 million, and it went towards the Parole Board, the National Road Safety Council and Guyana Legion. There was absolutely no money even spent because I never convened any meeting of NCLO. None was spent whatsoever.

Mr. Nandlall: Line item 6272, Electricity Charges: Hon. Minister, in 2015, I see \$14,982,000, nearly \$15 million was budgeted, in 2016 - \$77,046,000 and then 2017 - \$75,124,000. That is a lot of money. Could the Hon. Minister explain to us which buildings are consuming these electricity charges hopefully there are many buildings and not one building?

Mr. Ramjattan: Well, the line item caters here for payment electricity charges for the entire Ministry building, Juvenile Holding Centre, Citizen Security Strengthening Programme office, the forensic laboratory and head of the task forces that is what it is catered, for the \$77,046,000. Before it was the Ministry Finance that used to meet the shortfalls, but it had to come under the Ministry of Public Security this time.

Bishop Edghill: I would like to return to the line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations. I am seeking clarification from the Minister. The Minister said that all \$34 million that was budgeted was spent. None was spent under the National Commission on Law and Order and it was spent on the Parole Board, the National Road Safety Council, and the rest. Would the Minister agree with me that if other moneys, apart from what was budgeted, were spent on these organisations, the revised should have shown the increase? According to this document, there was no increase that was allocated these entities as against what was budgeted.

Mr. Ramjattan: Well, I would not be able to answer that question in the way it is put there because the \$34,007,000 did do to the Parole Board and the National Road Safety Council, and so on. NCLO was not functioning and it had no meetings, so that is my answer to that.

Bishop Edghill: My final question in trying to get clarification here. Twenty million dollars out of this \$34,007,000 was to go to a particular organisation and it was not spent on that organisation. Was the \$21 million spent or not spent?

Mr. Ramjattan: It was not spent on that organisation.

Mr. Gill: Line items 6292, Dietary and 6293, Refreshment and Meals. Jesus was able to feed the multitude with a loaf of bread. Could the Hon. Minister explain how he intends to repeat this miracle with 38 additional employees and cuts in dietary by \$948,000 and also cuts in refreshments and meals by \$3,975,000?

Mr. Ramjattan: The way he preambles, it might be the best answer, but, indeed, the line item caters for dietary needs of 45 inmates, Sophia Holding Centre, that is line item 6292, Dietary, and the other item that he asked about cater for the purchase of water and refreshment for the forensic laboratory, Sophia Holding Centre, Citizen Security Strengthening Programme and refreshment for the meetings that we generally have in the conference room and it is manageable.

Mr. Chairman: There will be one other question after this.

Mr. Rohee: I have a three in one question.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, as you wish, there is one other question after yours.

Mr. Rohee: It is a threesome.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I know that all of us understand the English Language.

Mr. Rohee: I would like to return to line item 6116, Contract Employees: It is if the Hon. Minister would be kind enough to give us the top five contracted employees, destinations, salaries and where they are located.

The next sub-question is on the question of line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships). Could the Hon. Minister say how this \$11,326,000 is intended to be spent? Finally, line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: I would like to return to this question of the \$21 million. The Hon. Minister said that no meeting of the NCLO was held, but yet, the money was spent. Could the Hon. Minister explain this seemingly contradictory position?

Mr. Ramjattan: In relation to the very final one, line item, Training (including Scholarships), I would maintain that that amount of money were spent on the Parole Board, National Road Safety Council and Guyana Legion. None was spent on the NCLO, although, indeed, there was \$21 million for that organisation. It did not go there. It went to those other organisations.

7.32 p.m.

In regard to five positions, the number one position is Coordinator, Task Force Narcotic Drugs and Illicit Weapons, Michael Atherly.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I will not allow you to name names.

Mr. Ramjattan: Sorry, I will not call names. The salary is \$624,000, Personal Assistant to the Hon. Vice President and Minister - \$450,000, Director, Guyana Forensic Science Laboratory - \$421,000, Assistant Secretary Finance - \$352,000, Head of Strategic Management - \$295,000. The other question on line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships): It is to conduct training for staff of the forensic laboratory and toxicology thermo scientific instrument, training and

sampling handling, storage and transport of the matter that will store there, DNA, as well as training for other staff of the Ministry.

Programme: 541- Policy Development and Administration - \$741,947,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 541 - Policy Development and Administration - \$382,092,000

Mr. Gill: Project 2405800, Land Transport: Could the Hon. Minister say how many vehicles will be purchased under this line item, what type and for whom?

Mr. Ramjattan: It will be two vehicles for National Anti-Narcotics Agency (NANA), a 4x4 and a RAV 4.

Mr. Rohee: It is on the same Project 2405800, Land Transportation: Could the Hon. Minister tell the honourable Assembly when would he return the Community Policing Groups (CPGs)' vehicles to the CPGs?

Mr. Ramjattan: That will be on a needs basis because I think at present moment the police require them more than the CPG, but as soon as we get some more funding we will find some other vehicles for the CPG.

Bishop Edghill: Project 1216500, Citizens Security Strengthening Programme, in 2016 this programme underperformed, \$250 million was budgeted and only \$50 million was expended, and \$230 million is being sought in 2017. Could the Minister tell this Assembly what should have happened in 2016 that did not happen that led to the underperformance and what is expected from the \$230 million budgeted in 2017?

Mr. Ramjattan: First of all, the reason why it was not spent during the course of this year is that it had a very late start. The community component had a very late start, but the commitment to date, from the moneys, is \$192 million and payment to that commitment to date has only been \$43 million. For 2017, we expect the amounts to be lots more and will include capacity training and community safety plans - \$15 million, technical and vocational training programmes - \$40 million, job readiness training workshops - \$2 million, community members training in parenting

education - \$2 million and there is another list of about 11 more items here that brings it up to this very big sum that will be done for this year. It includes the Smart City Programme, study on crime and violence in Amerindian communities, safe neighbourhood surveys and the rehabilitation of 12 police stations at Cane Grove, Mibikuri, Suddie, La Grange, Mackenzie, Kwakwani, Port Kaituma, Issano, Mabaruma, Aishalton, Annai and Aurora. I can give this list over to you.

Bishop Edghill: Under project 1216700, Citizens Security Strengthening Programme II, there again this programme underperformed, only \$80 million out of the \$160 million, which was allocated, was spent and a \$100 million is being sought. Could the Hon. Minister tell this Assembly what the \$100 million being sought in 2017 would be spent on and how did the underperformance in both Citizen Security Strengthening Programmes impact the crime situation in the country, knowing that we were supposed to be dealing with hotspots in depressed communities?

Mr. Ramjattan: The first part of the question, the moneys are going to be spent primarily on training of at risk youths which will come up to about \$100 million, the entire aspect of the training - moneys and stipends, with the schools involved and everything. The amount that was not spent in 2016 was as a result of the same late start of the programme and that is why that money last year was not spent.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister say whether late starts of these two programmes envisaged any penalties?

Mr. Ramjattan: From the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) funding, it is absolutely not.

Bishop Edghill: Did you have to pay commitment fees?

Mr. Ramjattan: Well, I understand that we will not because there were some good reasons that we provided as to why we could not get them off earlier.

Bishop Edghill: Just a reminder, one aspect of my question was not answered by the Hon. Minister and that was the underperformance of both of these programmes in 2016. What was the

impact of not having these programmes in place in 2016 as it relates to the current crime situation?

Mr. Ramjattan: That will be very difficult to say, but I hardly suspect that it was a negative impact, because of a number of reasons we still have managed to bring the crime rate down to a far cry from last year, according to the statistical sheets that I am provided by the Commissioner of Police.

Mr. Nandlall: Project 2608200, Office Equipment and Furniture: I see we are being asked to approve \$25 million under this heading. Could the Hon. Minister explain to us what furniture and equipment are going to be purchased and where are they going to be located?

Mr. Ramjattan: There are three areas where the budgeted amount will be spent: Secretariat, the Juvenile Holding Centre and the forensic laboratory. At the Secretariat, \$17.9 million will be spent, that is for bookshelves, semi-executive chairs, office chairs, fans, Dell Computers, guillotine, power strips and a variety... I can share this with you. The Juvenile Holding Centre at Sophia – computers, router, fire extinguishers, telephone systems, all coming up to \$784,000. At the forensic laboratory, there will be electronic media storage cabinets, hard drives, analytic microbalance hydrogen sensors and key storage blocks and cabinets along with printers. Those will be amounting to \$6, 0280,000, all estimated to \$25 million when you total it up.

Programme: 541 - Policy Development and Administration - \$382,092,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we have completed the first programme capital and current for this agency, Agency 54. I wonder whether Members would agree that we can continue to work and Members as they wish may leave the room to stretch their legs and return while we continue to work. If that is acceptable to honourable Members we may proceed.

Mr. Nandlall: What about the Speaker, Sir?

Mr. Chairman: What about him, Hon. Member?

Mr. Nandlall: I would like you to stretch your legs.

Mr. Chairman: I thank you for your solicitude.

Mr. Nandlall: I always have your welfare at heart.

Mr. Chairman: I am fortified by that knowledge but let us concentrate on the work. I thank you.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 542 - Police Force - \$10,990,094,000

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6111, Administrative: there is a projected expenditure in 2016 for \$270,290,000 compared to \$379,949,000 in 2017. The staffing details show an increase of 152 persons to 198 persons. Could the Hon. Minister inform the Assembly when did the recruitment take place and whether the recruitment was in the various police divisions? How many per Division and whether there is a plan to increase police salaries by the promised 20%?

7.47 p.m.

Mr. Ramjattan: This does not cater for recruitment at all. This is primarily moneys for the payment of salaries for members at the senior level – Cadet Officers to Deputy Commissioners - and the increase is due to the promotion of several Officers at various levels.

Mr. Gill: Line item 6291 – National and Other Events: The gala parades and celebrations to commemorate Guyana's 50th Anniversary are now over but allocations for this line item in every Ministry and in every Programme have been increasing rather than decreasing. Could the Hon. Minister say what major activities are planned for 2017 that requires more participation and more extravagance than our Jubilee celebrations?

Mr. Ramjattan: The increase here is just \$100,000 and that is a small sum, knowing the very many activities that the police have to be present for during the course of the year. It is due to the projected increase of the above activities at national events and the police presence there.

Bishop Edghill: Line items 6111 to 6117 – Staffing Details: There is an increase of 310 persons or so. Could the Hon. Minister indicate if this caters for the inclusion of the Members of the Presidential Guard Service that is being paid through the Guyana Police Force?

Mr. Ramjattan: Sorry, please say again, I missed it.

Bishop Edghill: I am at Staffing Details. These are various ranks and categories of police officers, a total in excess of about 310 over 2016. My question is, does this cater for the inclusion of ranks from the Presidential Guard Service who are now being paid through the Guyana Police Force?

Mr. Ramjattan: Yes. It does include ranks of the Presidential Guard Service.

Mr. Chand: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: The number reduced from 27 to 15, yet the allocation for next year has increased by over \$700 million. Could the Minister explain? Although there is this steep increase, you have such an increase in the allocation.

Mr. Ramjattan: In relation to line item 6116 – Contracted Employees – 27 being reduced to 15, we understand that 10 Members of the Strategic Management Department, the Band Master and the Public Relations Officer (PRO) retired.

In relation to the increases, it will be as a result for the need for increased amounts of gratuities.

Mr. Nandlall: Line item 6116: \$75.151 million is being requested to pay 15 contracted employees. This averages up to about over \$400,000 per month per employee. Could the Hon. Minister explain to us what functions these persons are performing and where are they stationed?

Mr. Ramjattan: The positions are Assistant Commissioner of Police, Pathologist, Policy Analyst, Legal Advisor, Financial Investigator, Risk Management Officer and Superintendent. That caters for the 15. If you would like their monthly salaries, you can get that too.

Mr. Chairman: I would now put the question. Mr. Rohee, I would allow you one question.

Mr. Rohee: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Not a triple question, but a question.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Hon. Minister say, of the drugs and medical supplies, which are the most in demand for the Guyana Police Force and used by the ranks?

The second question is in respect to training and scholarships. Could the Hon. Minister say how many scholarships and training programmes have been organised in 2016 and envisaged...

Mr. Ramjattan: Which line item is that?

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships).

Mr. Ramjattan: Because of the intention to purchase additional dogs and horses, the acquisition of these animals will increase the need for more drugs and medical supplies for the treatment of these animals. That is what the amount is there for.

In relation to line item 6302, it caters for payment for both local and overseas courses and lecture fees. The increase is due primarily to the projected increases of courses both local and overseas in 2017. I understand that it will be 75 local courses and 32 overseas courses that this amount will cater for during 2017.

Programme 542 – Police Force - \$10,990,094,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme 542 - Police Force - \$915,000,000

Mr. Gill: Project code 2608300 – Equipment - Police: With gun violence on the increase, I am pleased to see that there is an increase in allocation for the purchase of equipment, arms and ammunition.

Could the Hon. Minister say whether this amount is enough to provide modern weapons to our police officers to keep them safe and to replace the World War II relics that they now carry?

Mr. Ramjattan: This was what was approved and we will have to work along with this in the context of the nature of the resources that we have and it will do justice to what we have ongoing.

Mr. Hamilton: Project code 1216800 – Police Stations and Buildings: \$430 million was budgeted for completion, construction and rehabilitation of police station buildings and quarters and for payment of retention. Could you advise how many projects this money caters for?

Mr. Ramjattan: This money caters for 35 projects. I have the list of them here that I can provide.

Mr. Hamilton: You could layover that.

The second question is: of the 35 projects to be completed in 2016, how many of those have been completed or are to be completed by 31st December, 2016?

Mr. Ramjattan: Eighteen projects were completed in 2016.

Mr. Hamilton: Could you indicate to us what is the status of the 17 other projects? Were the projects advertised? Was a contract awarded and have the projects started?

Mr. Ramjattan: If I understand the question, it would be this year's projects that you are talking about.

Mr. Hamilton: Yes, you said 35 projects.

Mr. Ramjattan: All the rest except the one at Parfaite Harmonie are on stream. We are awaiting approval from the National Procurement and Tender Administration Board (NPTAB) for the one at Parfaite Harmonie, which should be approved by the next few days.

Mr. Hamilton: For clarification, of the 18 projects...

Mr. Ramjattan: Of the 18, 17 have started.

Mr. Hamilton: No. You said 18 were completed.

Mr. Ramjattan: The 18 are for this...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, please take your seat when the other Member rises. Please go ahead.

Mr. Ramjattan: The 18 projects have started and they are continuing right now. They have not been completed. The Parfaite Harmonie project is yet to start.

Mr. Hamilton: I asked how many projects this \$430 million was to take care of. You said 35.

Mr. Ramjattan: No, this is 35 for 2017.

Mr. Hamilton: I was dealing with 2016.

Mr. Ramjattan: I am sorry.

Mr. Hamilton: I am dealing with...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, somebody has to sit. Hon. Member Mr. Hamilton, you are asking questions. Please ask them.

Mr. Hamilton: The Minister is speaking about 2017. I am speaking about 2016. Four hundred and twenty-seven million dollars was budgeted for. We see a revised for \$400 million. I am seeking to find out from the Minister, of the \$427 million that was budgeted, how many projects were to be executed in 2016?

8.02 p.m.

Mr. Ramjattan: Let us just add them up because I have them. There are 23 projects in 2016 and they included rehabilitation of the Tactical Services Unit (TSU) arms store, rehabilitation of officers' quarters at Port Kaituma, special administration building, rehabilitation of TSU Enmore Outpost and Reliance Police Station, rehabilitation of living quarters at Mahaicony and La Penitence Police Station, construction of stable at Lethem, Mibicuri and the band room and a number of things – those were completed.

Mr. Hamilton: Of the 23 projects that this money was to be utilised for, how many of those were completed or are likely to be completed before the end of 2016?

Mr. Ramjattan: A number of the projects are work in progress – the band room, the police station and the New Amsterdam one. The following are work in progress: Brickdam lockups, rehabilitation of quarter master, *et cetera*. I can give you the list of work in progress and what is being completed.

Mr. Hamilton: Minister, you are confirming that, of the 23 projects...

Mr. Ramjattan: Yes. Of the 23 projects, some are still work in progress because they could not have been completed and will not be completed by the end of the 31st December, 2016. They will be rolled over.

Mr. Hamilton: Let me go over. I asked, of the 23 projects to be executed...

Mr. Chairman: After this question, I am putting the question.

Mr. Hamilton: Of the 23 projects to be executed, how many were completed? And secondly, for the ones that would not be completed, as indicated by the Minister, are we to understand that they would now become rollover projects?

Mr. Ramjattan: Yes. That is correct. And the completion on this list numbers nine and the rest are to be rolled over.

Mr. Chairman: I thank the Hon. Minister. I will take one more question.

Bishop Edghill: Sir, I would have been doing an injustice to the people if I did not ask this one. Under project code 2608300 – Equipment – Police: Sir, moneys in this programme entail the 911 emergency service. Could the Hon. Minister tell this House what is taking place with the 911 emergency service and when we will get it up to its optimal performance?

Mr. Ramjattan: It will be early in 2017. Certain equipment will have to be purchased for the Brickdam Police Station and the connections made through the Guyana Telephone and Telegraph Company (GT&T). There is a training process for six officers – I think it is 12 officers but six at eight hours shift, and that would complete it. And I rather suspect that that would be by late January.

Programme: 542 – Police Force – \$915,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 543 – Prison Service – \$1,756,605,000

Mr. Gill: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Line item 6243 – Janitorial and Cleaning Supplies - shows an increase in janitorial and cleaning supplies from \$20.8 million to \$30 million. Could the Hon. Minister explain why prisoners are not used to perform these services which will save taxpayers \$30 million, and can be part of a work programme to earn credits that can be used in conjunction with good behaviour to earn early release?

Mr. Ramjattan: The moneys from this line item are to be used to purchase cleaning detergents and sanitising equipment for purposes of cleaning up the prison system in there. It is not for what my Friend is indicating.

Mr. Rohee: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: It has moved from 299 to 349. Can the Hon. Minister give us a breakdown of...

Mr. Ramjattan: That is line item 6114.

Mr. Rohee: It is line item 6116.

Mr. Ramjattan: Well, line item 6116 is...

Mr. Chairman: The Hon. Minister must await his invitation to speak. Hon. Mr. Rohee, have you finished the question?

Mr. Rohee: I am addressing the question of contracted employees at line item 6116, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Please proceed.

Mr. Rohee: Thank you.

The number has moved from 23 to 21. Could the Hon. Minister explain this downward movement?

Mr. Ramjattan: Mr. Chairman, two of the contracted employees who were cleaners were moved to line item 6115 – Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled - as can be seen there. They are on the fixed establishment.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6114 – Clerical and Office Support: There has been a significant movement upwards from 299 to 349 staff. Could the Hon. Member give a breakdown on the rationale for the improvement of this number of staff?

Mr. Ramjattan: That is because there were 50 ranks who had to be increased as a result of the needs there at the prison.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Hon. Minister tell us what the drugs and medical supplies are?

Mr. Ramjattan: These are drugs and medical supplies required for staff and inmates suffering from chronic illnesses in the prisons.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister tell us what are the most prevalent chronic illnesses affecting inmates at the prison?

Mr. Ramjattan: It is tuberculosis, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6302 –Training (including Scholarships): Could the Hon. Minister provide the House with a breakdown of the number of training courses that took place last year and those that are envisaged for this year? And also, who are likely to be the persons to be participating in these training courses?

Mr. Ramjattan: It will be what is called supervision training of officers for prisoners, outdoor kitchen officers seminar, operation room procedures, reception officer principle and procedures, security management, registry management, financial management. There will also be customer care, chief officers seminar, organisational ethics, basic recruit training and stores management. There are some others here of those training programmes that that money will be spent on. And then there is a final one – emergency responders training.

Mr. Chairman: I thank the Hon. Minister. I will take one last question, Hon. Members, before I put this question to the House.

Mr. Gill: Line item 6293 – Refreshments and Meals: The staffing details show an increase of 49 employees. Could the Hon. Minister explain how he intends to provide refreshments and meals to 49 more employees when the allocation remains the same as in 2016 and the cost of living is expected to increase by another 14% come January?

Mr. Ramjattan: This allocation does not cater for the prison staff or the entire staff. It is an allocation catering for the preparation of meals for some ranks – task force. In addition, it also caters for providing refreshments for the meetings that are kept at the prisons.

Programme: 543 – Prison Service – \$1,756,605,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 543 – Prison Service – \$743,500,000

Mr. Rohee: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am having a difficulty with project code 1216900 – Buildings – Prisons. It states in the Legend, “Provision for prisons, quarters, kitchen, headquarters and payment of retention.” Could the Hon. Minister explain the first part of this Legend which speaks to provision for prisons?

Mr. Ramjattan: The provision for prisons really mean the construction of houses: 10 at the Mazaruni Prison, preliminary works that is land clearing at Mazaruni Prison. By the way, the construction of the 10 houses will cost in the vicinity of \$80 million; construction of brick prison Georgetown - \$66 million; and the preliminary works at the Mazaruni Prison land clearing - \$6 million.

The designing of buildings and preparation for bidding documents and all of that at the Mazaruni Prison, which is to accommodate more prisoners from the Camp Street Prison, is \$15 million. And then the rehabilitation of the other prison at Lusignan officers’ quarters - \$1.4 million; rehabilitation of the front kitchen at the Georgetown Prison - \$5.8 million; extension of the headquarters prison there at Camp Street - \$12 million; reconstruction of the wood prison at Georgetown - \$80 million; and the reconstruction of the Mazaruni Prison - \$268 million, all totalling \$537 million.

8.17 p.m.

Mr. Hamilton: Mr. Chairman, project code 1216900 – Buildings – Prisons: Hon. Minister, the budgeted sum under this programme was \$371 million. The first question is: how many projects was this sum to execute? The revised sum shows \$268 million. Could you confirm whether all the projects listed were completed for 2016 or will be completed by the end of 2016?

Mr. Ramjattan: The projects are work in progress. I doubt if any of them will be completed before 31st December, 2016. I have the list here and they are all work in progress.

Mr. Hamilton: Could you be kind enough to turn the list over to the National Assembly? The final question is: could you say what would be the likely expenditure from the \$371 million with the work in progress by the end of 2016?

Mr. Ramjattan: It will be approximately \$371 million at the end of the year.

Mr. Hamilton: Mr. Chairman, a follow-up: Hon. Minister, if we budgeted \$371 and you just indicated to me that none of the projects are completed or none will be completed before the end of 31st December, 2016. In no way could the amount be approximated to the same \$371 million that was to be expended.

Mr. Ramjattan: I understand that only the retention fees will be rolled over for next year.

Mr. Hamilton: Are you confirming that all the projects will be completed before the 31st December, 2016?

Mr. Ramjattan: I am advised that the 18 or 19 projects will be substantially completed. Whatever is left will be rolled over.

Mr. Hamilton: Mr. Minister...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, let the Minister complete his answer.

Mr. Ramjattan: I am saying that the approximate amount given to us will be utilised for the purpose allotted. What was written up here for 2016 was the latest estimate, \$268 million, which will be spent by the end of the year, but a number of the projects will be rolled over.

Mr. Hamilton: Hon. Minister, you said that the only thing that will remain of the \$371 million is retention. That is suggesting that these projects will be completed by the end of the year. The second point is that either the projects are completed or not completed; retention suggests that it is a completed programme.

Mr. Ramjattan: My advice is that if they proceed in the way they are now, the projects will be completed. It is not as black or white as you are mentioning it, but even if they are not done on 31st December, they will be rolled over. I do not know what the quibble is about.

Mr. Hamilton: Mr. Chairman, I just want to indicate that I am not quibbling. I am asking questions based on the answers given to me. The Minister indicated that the projects will not be completed. Therefore, the question of retention does not come into play. Could you confirm that all 19 or whatever number of projects will be completed by 31st December, 2016 and ready to be handed over to the Guyana Police Force?

Mr. Ramjattan: I have nothing further to add. I have already answered the question. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Rohee, two other questions and then I will put the question. We are cutting into some other agency's time, Hon. Members. I think we can make better use of our time.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, I am seeking a clarification from the Hon. Minister. The Hon. Minister said words to the effect that there would be an extension to the Georgetown Prisons to accommodate more prisoners. I am wondering why accommodate more prisoners in Georgetown when the plan is to accommodate the prisoners at Mazaruni.

Mr. Ramjattan: If I have misspoken, it is the extension of the Mazaruni Prisons to hold more prisoners.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, the final question, project code 2406000 – Land and Water Transport – Prisons: There is provision here for a launch and a vehicle. Could the Hon. Minister inform the House of what type of launch the service is considering to procure and for which location? What type of vehicle is envisaged here and for what purpose?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, could you repeat the project code?

Mr. Rohee: Project code 2406000.

Mr. Ramjattan: The 32-seater bus is for Lusignan and will be for \$17 million. The launch will be a secure launch to carry inmates and prisoners from Parika to Mazaruni. The cost is \$118 million.

Programme: 543 – Prison Service - \$743,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 544 – Police Complaints Authority – \$26,463,000

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: There is an increase from \$8.2 million to \$15.3 million. Could the Hon. Minister say if the two additional staff are the investigators? In 2014, there was a plan for the Police Complaints Authority (PCA) to hire its own investigators so as not to be dependent on time taken for the police to do the investigation of complaints. Are these two additional staff covering that? If not, has the PCA hired any investigators for its own use, as was planned in 2014/2015?

Mr. Ramjattan: The increase to \$15 million from what was budgeted in 2015 is for one cleaner, one typist and five more investigators.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, could I just ask for clarification? Hon. Minister, you said five more. How many do you have now in total?

Mr. Ramjattan: We have four presently and that gives the total of nine.

Ms. Teixeira: Thank you.

Programme: 544 – Police Complaints Authority – \$26,463,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 544 – Police Complaints Authority – \$4,688,000

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, this vehicle that is earmarked for the...

Mr. Chairman: The project code, Hon. Member.

Mr. Rohee: Project code 2608700 - \$4.688 million: Mr. Chairman, a vehicle is to be procured along with the equipment. First, the vehicle, is it an SUV and who is it for?

Mr. Ramjattan: I understand it is a 4Runner required for investigators when going out into the field to conduct investigations.

Mr. Rohee: Is it envisaged that the investigators themselves will be driving the vehicle or will a driver be hired?

Mr. Ramjattan: I believe the investigators, to save cost.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, on the same project code, with respect to the equipment, could the Hon. Minister give a breakdown of the nature of the equipment envisaged and for what purpose?

Mr. Ramjattan: Mr. Chairman, the equipment include a colour printer, computers, a scanner, an uninterruptible power supply (UPS), a digital camera, a vacuum, an integrated fire alarm system, fire extinguishers, a compact disc (CD) player and radio, a shredder and a microwave.

Programme: 544 – Police Complaints Authority – \$4,688,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 545 – Fire Service - \$1,054,758,000

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister inform the House about the lack of movement here? There is \$16.6 million that would be paid for seven contracted employees. Could the Hon. Minister give a breakdown of this humongous sum that is being paid to contracted employees?

8.32 p.m.

Mr. Ramjattan: I understand that there is a \$6 million increase and this caters for vacation allowances, salaries per month, commuted allowance and overtime. It includes an Assistant Support Officer, Instructor, Welfare Secretary, Welfare Officer, Mechanic, Senior Welfare Officer, a Strategic Officer and their gratuities.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6133, Benefits and Allowances: There is a significant increase from \$74.2 million to \$98 million. Could the Hon. Minister explain the reasons for the significant increase and say who the beneficiaries will be?

Mr. Ramjattan: The increase is because of a recruitment exercise and the expenses that go with uniform materials, apparels and other benefits, such as car allowances, duty free concessions on vehicles and so on.

Mr. Rohee: On the same line item, could the Hon. Minister give the House a general idea with respect to wastage in terms of the Guyana Fire Service?

Mr. Ramjattan: I am advised that there is no wastage in relation this line item.

Programme 545 – Fire Service - \$1,054,758,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 545 – Fire Service - \$315,035,000

Mr. Hamilton: Project code 1217000, Fire Ambulances and Stations: The Legend reads:

“Completion and construction of fire station and quarters”

Hon. Minister, in 2016, \$69.866 million was budgeted, could the Hon. Minister say whether this sum included the construction of fire stations at Melanie and Lethem?

Mr. Ramjattan: Yes, it included both.

Mr. Hamilton: Could the Hon. Minister say whether those two fire stations have been completed or will be completed before 31st December, 2016?

Mr. Ramjattan: I am informed that the Lethem Fire Station is completed and that the fire station at Melanie is a work in progress. I understand that it will not be completed before 31st December, 2016.

Mr. Hamilton: Hon. Minister, would you agree with me that, if, as indicated, the Melanie Fire Station would not be completed, then the revised sum could not be \$69.8 million?

Mr. Ramjattan: I thank the Hon. Member for his comment, but I do not want to quibble over it. I understand that is reflective here.

Mr. Rohee: Project code 2406100, Land and Water Transport – Fire: The Legend reads:

“Provision for fire boat, water tenders and ambulances”

Could the Minister say whether these items to be procured would be reconditioned?

With respect to the fire boat, could the Minister say whether it will be constructed locally?

Mr. Ramjattan: The fire boat will be brand new, built from scratch. The water tenders and ambulances would be reconditioned.

Ms. Teixeira: Project code 2608900, Tools and Equipment – Fire: Forty million is budgeted for the purchase of tools and equipment and the Profile gives an idea of some of the tools and equipment that will be purchased, for example, breathing apparatus, *et cetera*. Could the Minister say whether the purchase of the fire suits is included in the Guyana Fire Service’s budget for 2017, which would be to keep maintaining and replenishing the fire resistant suits that the firemen and women wear?

I do not see any provision in the capital budget for the purchase of the foam that is usually used by the fire station at the Cheddi Jagan International Airport (CJIA), where there is a particular fire to do with chemicals and water cannot be used. Is any being provision made for such item because the next budget is too small and I could not find it there that is why I am asking under this one?

Mr. Ramjattan: If I can be of some help to the Hon. Member. I am being informed that it is being catered for in the current budget under line item 6222 - Field Materials and Supplies.

Ms. Teixeira: Is it for both the foam and the fire suits?

Mr. Ramjattan: Yes.

Ms. Teixeira: Okay, thank you.

Mr. Rohee: Follow-up question under project code 2406100, could the Hon. Minister say whether there will be a tendering process for the procurement of the fire boat or whether it will be single sourced?

Mr. Ramjattan: I understand that the procurement of the fire boat would be through a tendering process.

Programme: 545 – Fire Service - \$315,035,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 546 – Customs Anti-Narcotics Unit - \$205,866,000

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees: There is a provision which has increased from \$99.9 million to \$118.4 million, yet, in the Staffing Details, I have seen any numbers with respect to 2016 or 2017. Could the Hon. Minister explain?

Mr. Ramjattan: I think this question was asked last year. For security reasons, we do not indicate our staff strength in relation these officers.

Mr. Rohee: The staff strength, as distinct from the functions of the officers at CANU, I think that a distinction which ought to be made. We are not asking about the functions of the staff, what we are asking for are the numbers. Does the Hon. Minister have a number of operative at the CANU?

Mr. Ramjattan: We do have the numbers. I understand that the practice over the years has been to not indicate numbers for CANU. But if the Hon. Member would like to make that information public now, then I do not have a problem. The number is 47.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6284, Other: There is an increase from \$1.8 million to \$2 million, could the Hon. Minister give the House a breakdown of the contents of this line item?

Mr. Ramjattan: This amount caters for the purchase of storage containers and other such areas which do not fall under any particular line item. It is also for two telephone lines for internet service and also for maintenance expenditure pertinent to the internet.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships): Provision is made for \$5.6 million, could the Hon. Minister give the House a breakdown of the training programmes that are

envisaged here and say whether scholarships are going to be offered and whether the training programmes would be local or overseas?

Mr. Ramjattan: It will be done both locally and overseas in areas like Basic Narcotics Investigation, Advanced Narcotics Investigation, Intelligence Analysis, Officer Leadership and Management, Port Facilities Security Training, Photography and Prosecutor Training.

Mr. Chairman: The next question would be the last one under this programme.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister say whether it is the intention of the Ministry to reintroduce polygraph testing of CANU officers?

Mr. Ramjattan: Indeed, CANU officers go through a vetting process which has just been completed, recently, *via* the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

Programme: 546 – Customs Anti-Narcotics Unit - \$205,866,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 546 – Customs Anti-Narcotics Unit - \$125,000,000

Mr. Rohee: Project code 2609200, Customs Anti-Narcotics Unit: The Legend reads:

“Provision for buildings, vehicles, boat, furniture and equipment”

8.47 p.m.

Could the Hon. Minister say whether this is an existing building; whether it is a building to be renovated or whether is it a new building; and what is the cost envisaged in respect to the building? With respect to the vehicles, could the Hon. Minister say whether this will be a Sport Utility Vehicle (SUV) or Land Rover type vehicle and whether the boat will be one that will be built locally or procured from overseas and whether there will be a competitive bidding process for the construction locally of the boat or the procurement externally for the boat?

Mr. Ramjattan: Mr. Chairman, there will be one new building at Timehri, an Interview Room at the Customs Anti-Narcotics Unit’s Headquarters and the building is also being expanded at the

CANU's Headquarters. That constitutes the expenses for the building. The inflatable boat is being sole sourced from counterparts in the United States of America (USA) and the vehicle will be a pickup to be used in either Lethem or the Moleson Creek area.

Mr. Rohee: In light of the regular claim about drugs, arms and ammunitions coming across the borders. Could the Hon. Minister say whether it is envisaged to have CANU outposts located at the borders in order to prevent, as far as possible, the infiltration of drugs across the borders of Guyana?

Mr. Ramjattan: We do have multi-purpose complexes at the border areas in Lethem that include the GRA, CANU and the Police and at Moleson Creek and also at Charity. So, indeed, we do have a combination of those at the border areas which require, quite frankly, lots more.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister say, in the fight against drugs, when is it envisaged to have an aircraft for CANU?

Mr. Ramjattan: Sir, as soon as we have the resources for it.

Programme: 546 – Customs Anti –Narcotics Unit –\$ 125,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we have now completed the consideration of Agency 544 – Current and Capital Expenditure, all the programmes have benefitted from approval by this House.

Current Expenditure

Agency: 43 – Ministry of Public Health

Programme: 431 – Policy Development and Administration - \$1,435,848,000

[Mr. Chairman left the Chair]

[Mr. Adams in Chair]

Mr. Adams: We are waiting on the Hon. Dr. Norton to gather his team together.

[Mr. Chairman assumed Chair]

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, are you ready to proceed?

Minister of Public Health [Dr. Norton]: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we will now consider Agency 43 – Ministry of Public Health. I will tell Hon. Members that we have one hour and fifteen minutes to conclude this item.

Mr. Ali: Sir, I just wanted to have some clarification. In the Schedule there are two hours set aside for the Ministry of Health.

Mr. Chairman: But Hon. Member, there is also the 10'o clock hour which is the outside time. Now, if we could pack the time remaining into two hours that is quite alright. Ten' o clock is the cut off time.

Mr. Ali: Could we continue tomorrow on the Ministry of Public Health.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, we will finish each day on that day. We are not revising any understandings we have.

Mr. Ali: No.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, what are we discussing here?

Mr. Ali: In the Business Committee we agreed that, regardless of the circumstances, every agency will have the time that is allocated to that agency and for the Ministry of Public Health two hours has been allocated. We cannot have a big agency like this have less than the agreed time.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we are considering Agency 43 – Ministry of Public Health. I would advise you to be guided by my admonitions when we begin this consideration.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Minister tell this House how much money will be expended on drugs and medical supplies and give some examples of these items?

Dr. Norton: Just to inform the Hon. Member that this amount is just for reagents for the Food and Drug Department.

Dr. Anthony: Could the Minister lay over the list of the items that would be purchased for food and drug? Could he give a clarification because I understand that there is a Bill that is coming before this House to separate food from drug? That Bill was laid in the National Assembly. So if there is that separation then, would we need all these items?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, to answer the first question about the legislation to separate food from drug, that legislation has not been passed as yet. Could the Hon. Member, repeat the other part of the question.

Dr. Anthony: Mr. Chairman, I am just asking that the Minister lay over the items that would be purchased under line item 6221.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, we do not purchase drugs, we purchase medical supplies. That we could lay over in the National Assembly.

Dr. Anthony: Mr. Chairman, the medical supplies that would be purchased under this heading, I would ask the Minister to lay that over.

I would like to move on to line item 6241 – Rental of Buildings, in 2016, \$18,725,000 was used for the rental of buildings, in 2017 it is proposed or projected to use \$180,000,000. Could the Minister say which buildings would be rented in 2017 for this exorbitant sum?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, one of the buildings would be that which is being used to house the Chief Medical Officer (CMO), the other is a building in Queenstown and the third building is for the drugs storage bond to MMU.

Dr. Anthony: Mr. Chairman, could I kindly ask the Minister to give us a breakdown of buildings and a disaggregated sum for each one of them.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, for the building at Echilebar, 5th Street Campbellville, for the Chief Medical Officer, it is a monthly rental of \$25,000, for the building at 149 Crown Street, Queenstown, it is \$1,500,000 and the drugs storage bond is for \$12.5 million a month.

9.02 p.m.

Dr. Anthony: Mr. Chairman, could I ask the Minister to kindly clarify the drug storage bond? Where is this bond located?

Dr. Norton: That is the bond in Sussex Street, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Anthony: Could I ask the Minister whether or not there are drugs and medical supplies that are stored at the bond at Sussex Street? What percentage of the Ministry's drugs and medical supplies are stored in that facility?

Dr. Norton: I can give the Hon. Member a list of all the items that are stored in that bond that are not necessarily tablets, but are medical supplies. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Chairman hit the gavel.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member if you are going to hand over documents, then at least you could continue with your presentation and then the document could be handed over.

Dr. Norton: I could do either, Mr. Chairman. I could read it out, for instance, we have a total of 2130 (50) milligram amphotericin B injections; we have 21,996 bottles of Chlorophan Expectorant of 120 millilitres...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member is it a voluminous list; is it a long list? If it is a long list then it may be that you could satisfy the requirements by making the list available, if the questioner is so minded. If the questioner is so minded, then the list could be supplied.

Dr. Anthony: I do not mind having the list of what is stored at the Sussex Street bond, but my question was that the Ministry of Public Health would have bought, over the year, a number of drugs and medication. The Sussex Street bond is one of the facilities and all that I am asking for is and I know that there are other storage facilities, what percentage of the Ministry's drugs and medical supplies are stored in the Sussex Street bond?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, I would not be able to say the percentage that is stored, at any one time, because that percentage varies.

Dr. Anthony: Mr. Chairman, maybe on an average, what is the percentage in a month or in any month, whether it is this month? I think that would be helpful. The other thing that I would like

to ask the Minister is whether drugs and medical supplies are still stored at the New Guyana Pharmaceutical Corporation (GPC) bond.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, I would like to inform the Hon. Member that the drugs and medical supplies from the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC) are still stored at the New GPC bond.

Dr. Anthony: Mr. Chairman, could the Minister tell the House how much money the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation or the Ministry of Public Health is spending on the New GPC bond? What is the monthly rental and has the Ministry been paying the rent?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, that question will be answered when we are at Programme Four. We are at Programme One now and that does not cover the GPHC.

Dr. Anthony: Mr. Chairman, from the contract that we would have seen for the Sussex Street bond, it entails that the Ministry of Public Health would have been paying for security, I think, Value Added Tax (VAT), electricity and water. Is that budgeted for in this sum that the Minister would have quoted?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, to inform the Hon. Member that those costs are all covered with the sum that I mentioned.

Mr. Nandlall: The same line item 6241 – Rental of Buildings: Hon. Minister, it was reported in the press that the Cabinet’s Sub-Committee, which was established... [*Interruption*]

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, it seems that everyone else wants to assist with how this matter, in which we are engaged, should be conducted. I would hope Hon. Members will do their best to try to elicit information that is relevant without giving occasion for uproar in this House.

Mr. Nandlall: Hon. Minister, it was reported in the press that a Cabinet Sub-Committee recommended that this contract, in relation to the bond, be amended. So, could the Hon. Minister tell the House whether that tenancy agreement was amended to shorten its fixed term of three years, and if so, what does the contract now say, in terms of its duration?

Dr. Norton: To inform the Hon. Member that we are addressing the rental for the year 2017.

Mr. Nandlall: For my own guidance and edification, the Hon. Member is saying that he has budgeted to pay for this bond for another full year. Could he confirm that that is what he is saying to us?

Dr. Norton: The answer to that is yes, once again.

Mr. Nandlall: Sir, a follow-up question...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I would just say to all of you that we have to get beyond the present line of questioning. There are many other issues in the document and the time is going. Please proceed Mr. Nandlall.

Mr. Nandlall: Yes, Sir. Could the Hon. Minister state how much money was spent for the provision of the freezing facilities in this bond?

Dr. Norton: To inform the Hon. Member that that is was all covered in the overall cost that I had mentioned before.

Dr. Anthony: Mr. Chairman, line item 6294 – Other: Could the Minister tell that House what the Ministry would be expending \$200 million on?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, to inform the Hon. Member, that that is for medical treatment due to the expansion of the cardiac care based on the establishment of the Hybrid Catheterisation Laboratory.

Dr. Anthony: Mr. Chairman, could the Minister inform the House about the policy of helping patients, how much money would be allocated per patient and would this sum also cover patients who are on dialysis?

Dr. Norton: To answer the second question first, yes, it does cover a patient's hydro dialysis and also to say that, at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation, at the moment, a patient could approach the Accident and Emergency Department needing the use of that Hybrid Catheterisation Laboratory and will have access to that facility.

Dr. Anthony: Mr. Chairman, under the same line item. Would the access that the Minister spoke about be for free or would the patient have to pay? On the issue of dialysis, is it now a new policy that patients needing dialysis would only be given help for 40 sessions?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, thank you very much and to inform the Hon. Member that, yes patients are limited to 40 sessions and that the facility that is provided by the Hybrid Catheterisation Laboratory from the Accident and Emergency Department, as an emergency, is free of cost.

Dr. Anthony: Mr. Chairman, under this same line item. Would the Minister not agree that limiting the access to dialysis to only 40 sessions would endanger the lives of these patients? This is because, once they require dialysis, they would need it for a more protracted period and sometimes for years, and by limiting this access the lives of patients are actually being endangered.

Dr. Norton: To inform the Hon. Member, this Coalition Government will certainly wish to provide dialysis for every person in Guyana that requires it for the rest of their lives, but we are limited by the funds available and, while we agree that, yes, the patients would be at a disadvantage, they are much better off than if the Ministry was offering no dialysis or if they had to pay an exorbitant price to get it.

Mr. Nandlall: Sir, line item 6272 – Electricity Charges - \$89,550,000, could the Hon. Minister state whether any of this money is going towards the payment of electricity for the Sussex Street bond?

Dr. Norton: To inform the Hon. Member, that electricity is just one of the costs that is covered by the rent.

Dr. Anthony: Mr. Chairman, could the Minister tell the House, under line item 6272 – Electricity, which are the buildings in the Ministry this charge would cover and could he tell the House why there is such a decline by approximately \$31 million?

9.17 p.m.

Dr. Norton: To inform the Hon. Member, it involves the Ministry of Public Health compound, the bond at Kingston, the Food and Drug Department at Turkeyen and the warehouse at Material Management Unit (MMU), Diamond.

Dr. Anthony: Mr. Chairman this is the last question on this line item here, that is, line item 6322, Subsidies and Contributions to International Organisations. In 2016, it stated that the Ministry would pay moneys owed over to the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute, Caribbean Epidemiology Surveillance Centre, Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute (CF&NI) and so forth. Could the Minister confirm that these moneys were paid to these organisations? In 2017 similar sums were budgeted, but as far as I am aware these organisations have ceased to exist.

Dr. Norton: To inform the Hon. Member, while there might be certain changes in the names of these organisations, they do exist and we have paid up our dues.

Programme: 431 - Policy Development and Administration - \$1,435,848,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 431 - Policy Development and Administration - \$274,500,000

Programme: 431- Policy Development and Administration - \$274,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 432- Diseases Control - \$1,651,688,000

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Minister give us a breakdown on how much money would be expended on drugs and how much on medical supplies? Could the Minister also tell us when the tenders were awarded for the sums in 2016? Was it by public tendering? How many bids were made? What were the types of procurement done? Was it advertised? When were the bids opened? Who were the people who received the final award? Are the importers of drugs and medical supplies compliant with the food and drug administration?

Dr. Norton: While we did have an open competitive bidding, yes the medication are all certified by the food and drug department. The other details, which the Hon. Member asked for, is quite a large amount and if he so desires we are willing to lay it in the Assembly.

Dr. Anthony: As the Minister said, if I so desired, the information that I requested and that is why I requested it. Could the Minister tell us why in 2017 the sums of money being expended have been reduced? It is the same the same line item?

Dr. Norton: This reduction was only by a small amount which was what was paid over from 2015 to 2016.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6272, Electricity Charges: Could the Minister tell us which buildings will be paid for under this heading?

Dr. Norton: To inform the Hon. Member there are the building of the National Aids Programme Secretariat, building of the National Public Reference Laboratory, and that of Vector Control, malaria.

Dr. Anthony: In the light that from next year we will have to pay 14% VAT, could the Minister explain why from 2016 to 2017 the projected sum under electricity has dropped by more than 50 million?

Dr. Norton: The increase in VAT is not part of this budget presentation.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, have you answered the question?

Dr. Norton: There is another part. To inform the Hon. Member that, as in the first case, we paid over some moneys from 2015 in 2016, hence the drop in the actual projection in 2017.

Dr. Anthony: I am a bit confused because what we are being told here now is that the allocation for 2016 was not used in 2016, but was paid up for 2017 and that is why there is a projected reduction. Consumption remains the same, according to the Minister, but his reduction is because he would have paid the allocation for 2016 into 2017. That is what I understand.

Dr. Norton: To inform the Hon. Member, it was not an advance payment. As a matter of a fact, it was paying for money that we owed but from 2015 in 2016.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6272, Electricity Charges: The Hon. Minister said that he utilised money in 2015. How could you find \$50 million when the budget for actual 2015 was \$3 million? Where did this extra money come from? Budget 2015 on electricity under this programme was \$3 million, if you paid you carried forward, which you are not allowed to do and pay advance. The public accounts know that this is always a query by the Auditor General. How did you do it when there was no such provision in the budget for that quantum of money?

Dr. Norton: I would lay this over to the Assembly.

Ms. Teixeira: Could I ask the Hon. Minister what exactly is he laying over, if you did not have the money in actual 2015? If the money does not exist, how do you lay it over?

Dr. Norton: I am advised that all the moneys, which were owed to the National Public Reference Laboratory, were not being paid for in 2015, so we owed that and they were given to us in 2016.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6321, Subsidies and Contribution to Local Organisation: Under this heading, I understand that the Ministry is providing a subsidy to the Cancer Board. Could the Minister tell us who makes up the Cancer Board? What report have they generated? Would he be kind enough to lay over the reports in the Assembly?

Dr. Norton: To inform the Hon. Member, the Cancer Board is under reviewed at the moment.

Programme: 432 - Diseases Control - \$1,651,688,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 432 – Diseases Control - \$373,864,000

Dr. Mahadeo: Project 1216200, Ministry of Health – Buildings: I see here construction of Mental Health Institute in Georgetown. Could the Hon. Minister tell us where would this institute be constructed? What would be the cost of the construction of this Mental Health Institute? What would be the purpose of the institute?

Dr. Norton: To inform the Hon. Member, that Mental Health Institute would be in Quamina Street, Georgetown, and the cost will be \$60 million. That is, as it states, the institute where training, particularly of our mental health care professional, will take place.

9.32 p.m.

Dr. Anthony: Project 4402700, HIV/TB/Malaria Programmes: Could the Hon. Minister disaggregate the sum and tell us how much money would be coming in for Human Immune Virus (HIV), tuberculosis (TB) and malaria?

Dr. Norton: To tell the Hon. Member, the budgeted Estimate is divided as follows: grant for HIV - \$125,560,305, grant for tuberculosis would be \$34,259,805 and grant for Malaria - \$20,179,890.

Dr. Anthony: Would the Minister not agree that for HIV in 2017 the disbursement allocation from the Global Fund is much higher and similarly for tuberculosis. Is it that the Minister is anticipating that these grants were underperformed and we would not be able to receive the sums of money that was projected for disbursement in 2017?

Dr. Norton: To inform the Hon. Member, that this sum, which we projected, and the others would be spent by Global Fund.

Dr. Anthony: I am getting from the Minister that this is perhaps Government's allocation, but it is very specific here, the source of funding is Global Fund. Global Fund has actually projected to disburse much more money than we have allocated here, this \$180 million. That could only lead us to one conclusion that we would be underperforming in 2017.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, there is a question which was addressed to you. I am sorry Hon. Members.

Dr. Norton: To tell the Hon. Member, that I am total in disagreement with him.

Programme: 432 – Disease Control – \$373,864,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 433 – Family Health Care Services – \$1,021,815,000

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Hon. Minister give us an indication how much money would be spent on drugs here, how much on medical supplies and whether these medical supplies would include vaccinations?

Dr. Norton: To inform the Hon. Member, these medical supplies would be primarily vaccines, dental supplies and contraceptives.

Dr. Anthony: For 2016, we expended a sum of \$360 million. Could the Hon. Minister give us a breakdown, again, of the tenders that were done? Were they public, the dates when they were opened and who were the suppliers of these medications?

Dr. Norton: To inform the Hon. Member, that where vaccines are concerned, that is done through Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) and we have been doing so over the years.

Dr. Anthony: The Hon. Minister did mention that apart from vaccines, there were other products and could we get how those were tender for and the other things that I asked for?

Dr. Norton: We would supply the Hon. Member. To inform him, yes, it was open competitive bidding.

Dr. Anthony: Mr. Chairman, also if the Hon. Minister could be kind enough to tell us the different types of vaccines and the quantities because we know during the year of 2016, we had a shortage of yellow fever vaccines. We would be very happy to know what are the quantities. The Hon. Minister does not have to give that now. He could lay that over and for Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) whether or not we are still sourcing HPV vaccines and whether we have adequate stocks.

Dr. Norton: With the HPV vaccine, we had a bad start some year ago. We are changing our approach. We are getting a fresh approach and we are starting in 2017. With regard to the yellow fever, the Hon. Member is quite familiar with what causes the need for the vaccine during 2016. The nature of the production of these vaccines causes not only a shortage in Guyana, but the whole world. We would lay for him in this Assembly the information he so required.

Dr. Ramsaran: Vaccines is very important, especially HPV. Could the Hon. Minister indicate what mistake he is moving away from, the original mistakes that he spoke about?

Dr. Norton: We had women folks, mothers, grandmothers, aunts and daughters picketing the Ministry of Public Health, clamouring for an opportunity to speak with the Minister of Public Health then because they were not sufficiently informed of the effects of the vaccines. Hence, we certainly educate them, we would have, as I said before, a fresh approach.

Programme: 433 – Family Health Care Services – \$1,021,815,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 433 – Family Health Care Services – \$174,095,000

Mr. Anthony: Project 1216200, Ministry of Health – Buildings: I just want a disaggregation of this sum because there is money allocated to Port Kaituma. There is also money allocated to for the construction of a drug bond at Kingston, a furnace at Kwakwani...

Dr. Norton: Wrong programme.

Dr. Anthony: Sorry, Mr. Chairman, we would come to that later.

Programme: 433 – Family Health Care Services – \$174,095,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 434 – Regional and Clinical Services – \$13,656,258,000

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Hon. Minister tell us what he would be buying under this line item, how much drugs, how much medical supplies and give us some examples of what drugs and medical supplies would be bought under this line item?

Dr. Norton: I would once again offer the Hon. Member to lay this information in the Assembly because of the volume of the information, if he so desires.

Dr. Anthony: I could accept the documentation that the Minister would provide. I want to ask the Hon. Minister another question and that is under line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies, we were told repeatedly ...

Mr. Chairman: Are we on the same line item, sir?

Dr. Anthony: Yes Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Very good, proceed.

Dr. Anthony: We were told repeatedly that the purchase of drugs for the different regions would come to the Ministry, and then the Ministry would place the order. Could the Hon. Minister say how he is able to collect that money and distributed different programmes under the Ministry to purchase these drugs and medical supplies for the whole country?

Dr. Norton: To inform the Hon. Member, the regions submit that warranted to Programme 4 with their list, of course.

Programme: 434 – Regional and Clinical Services – \$13,656,258,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 434 – Regional and Clinical Services – \$1,029,160,000

9.47 p.m.

Dr. Anthony: I was premature in the question I was asking earlier about the buildings. Could the Minister give us a disaggregation of how much money would be spent on these various buildings?

Dr. Norton: Once again, I would offer the Hon. Member the facility of laying it over, or I am free to read it all out, if he so desires.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, there is an offer to lay over, please indicate. The clock is running against us.

Dr. Anthony: Could the Minister tell us how much money he will be spending on the bond at Kingston?

Dr. Norton: We have a budgeted for the provision of a drug bond at Kingston a sum of \$250 million.

Dr. Anthony: Could the Minister tell us what the size of the bond is and what will be stored in that bond once it is completed?

Dr. Norton: It states here drug bond for drugs and medical supplies. This sum of money that we earmarked for the construction of this bond was done with the consultation and help of the Ministry of Infrastructure and it arrived at this sum. From here, we can go on and decide all the details of the construction that will take place.

Dr. Anthony: I did ask for the size. I did not hear the Minister tell me about the size. The other thing I would like to know is whether or not this bond would be able to do cold storage. This is since I understand that at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation, the Ministry lost quite a bit of money because the erythropoietin was not properly stored. The temperature was wrong. Therefore I want to know whether this bond would be able to store things such as erythropoietin.

Dr. Norton: To inform the Hon. Member, it is a modern bond and that would be a part of the infrastructure.

Mr. Chairman: This is your final question, Dr. Anthony.

Dr. Anthony: Upon completion of this bond would we then be able to terminate the contract with the bond at Sussex Street so that we will now have enough storage in the Ministry of Public Health.

Dr. Norton: We are as anxious as the Hon. Member to terminate that contract.

Programme: 434 - Regional and Clinical Services - \$1,029,160,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 435 - Health Sciences Education - \$605,617,000

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships): Could the Minister give us a breakdown of what type of training would be done by the Ministry and how many persons would benefit from this training?

Dr. Norton: These are all the regular trainings we do at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation, Nursing Schools in Linden and New Amsterdam - the Laboratory Technicians that we train, the Pharmacy Assistants, the Patient Care Assistants, the Nurses Assistants, Midwifery programme and the Community Health Workers.

Dr. Anthony: I did ask that the Minister also provide how many persons would benefit from this training. The Minister can lay that over. Could the Minister also tell us why in 2017 there is a drop in the sums of money allocated for training and who would be affected by this drop?

Dr. Norton: To let the honourable Member know we can only know how many persons will benefit because it is open application to the public – they apply.

Programme: 435 - Health Sciences Education - \$605,617,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 435 - Health Sciences Education - \$61,652,000

Programme: 435 - Health Sciences Education - \$61,652,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 436 - Standards and Technical Services - \$784,428,000

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Minister tell us again how much drugs, how much medical supplies and disaggregate the sum? Could he tell us about the method of procurement in 2016 whether it was public, sole sourcing and of course when these were advertised, who eventually won those bids and whether the person winning the bid was in compliance with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations?

Dr. Norton: To first of all inform the Hon. Member that the drugs and medical supplies in this programme have much to do with x-ray and x-ray material along with blood banking and also with laboratory supplies. We use both the open competitive bidding as well as sole sourcing for authorised distributor of certain products. With regard to the criteria, FDA approved and it is one of those criteria so that is applicable to anyone who wins the contract. With regard to the other data of when the tender was open and who won, and so on, we can certainly lay that over for the Hon. Member.

Dr. Anthony: I look forward to the information for the 2016, all the bids that were done, the timings whether it is open or sole sourcing, the persons who would have won those bids and their FDA compliance. I look forward to the Minister providing that information.

Bishop Edghill: Under line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings, there is a sum allocated of \$3,100,000. Could the Minister tell this Assembly how many of our public health facilities are licensed based upon the Public Health Facilities Licensing Act of 2007?

Dr. Norton: To inform the Hon. Member that the information can be had on the website of National Procurement Tender and Administration Board (NPTAB), all who won the bid and the different conditions.

Dr. Anthony: He did not ask you that.

Bishop Edghill: Sir, if I could help us along, I did not ask about procurement.

Dr. Norton: We can certainly provide the information about the number medical facilities that are licensed by this programme management. We can do that.

Bishop Edghill: Just a follow-up: Could the Minister tell us approximately out of the 375-plus medical facilities that we have what percentage is licensed?

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 10(1)

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, we will seek the motion from the Prime Minister, leader of Government Business for us to go beyond 10 o' clock to complete our business. Hon. Prime Minister, we are mindful that our cut off point is 10 o' clock and would not want to abuse that time which is given us please.

First Vice President and Prime Minister [Mr. Nagamootoo]: With all due respect, we have literally exhausted the time that was agreed upon and it places me in a very difficult position to seek to vary unilaterally an agreement that has been reached on a bipartisan basis.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Prime Minister, a short extension of that time would enable us to complete our work.

Mr. Nagamootoo: I move, Sir, that the sitting proceeds for another 15 minutes by which time I hope we could conclude this part of the business of the House.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you Hon. Prime Minister. Hon. Member, are you in agreement with that? I thank you and we will proceed.

Question put, and agreed to.

Standing Ordered suspended.

Bishop Edghill: Sir, I have a question that is to be answered.

Dr. Norton: We can certainly provide that percentage that the Hon. Member so badly needs.

10.02 p.m.

Bishop Edghill: A follow-up on the same line item: Could the Hon. Minister confirm that there are health facilities where the public is accessing medical services that are not licensed based upon the Licensing Act of 2007?

Dr. Norton: Could the Hon. Member give us the line item?

Bishop Edghill: I would like to remind the Hon. Minister that I was asking under line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings.

Dr. Norton: We are speaking about the maintenance of the building and not the licensing of the building.

Bishop Edghill: The Programme that we are dealing with is Programme 436 – Standards and Technical Services. In my understanding, this is the unit that is responsible for ensuring that health facilities are licensed and that they are adequately prepared for services offered to the

public. I asked the Hon. Minister a question earlier: of the 375 buildings or so, what percentage is licensed?

Dr. Norton: I answered that question before.

Mr. Chairman: Could you give the answer again, Hon. Minister?

Dr. Norton: I will lay it over to the Hon. Member.

Bishop Edghill: The question that is before the Minister is...

Mr. Chairman: Is this a follow-up question, Hon. Member?

Bishop Edghill: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Well you have...

Bishop Edghill: Are there buildings that are not licensed under the Health Facilities Licensing Act 2007, which are being used by the Ministry of Public Health, offering services to the public?

Dr. Norton: I am informing the Hon. Member that I am not aware of that.

Programme: 436 – Standards and Technical Services - \$784,428,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

[Interruption]

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we have to complete this work without so much interruption.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 436 – Standards and Technical Services - \$46,078,000

Dr. Anthony: Project code 2508900 – Office Furniture and Equipment: Could the Hon. Minister tell us how many pieces of equipment would be bought for the Blood Bank and where would the equipment be distributed to?

Dr. Norton: A fire alarm system with two-switch system, a USB Bar Code Scanner, a laptop computer, Blood Bank refrigerators, a computer server, a camera, an APC, a UPS, an executive chair, visitors chairs and printers would be bought.

Dr. Anthony: Under the same project code, where would the refrigerators be sent to, what are the locations and how many?

Dr. Norton: The Blood Bank refrigerators would be sent to Mabaruma, Bartica and Skeldon Hospitals.

Programme: 436 – Standards and Technical Services - \$46,078,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 437 – Disability and Rehabilitation Services - \$353,480,000

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): Could the Minister tell us what scholarships would be offered under this heading?

Dr. Norton: There are no scholarships, but just local training.

Dr. Anthony: What type of training and how many persons are expected to benefit from this training?

Dr. Norton: It is much more training in Audiology and Rehabilitation Services.

Programme: 437 – Disability and Rehabilitation Services - \$353,480,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 437 – Disability and Rehabilitation Services - \$21,837,000

Programme: 437 – Disability and Rehabilitation Services - \$21,837,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: That concludes our business for today, Hon. Members.

Ms. Teixeira: Before we close, I know everyone is in a hurry but we have not received the Bills as yet that were tabled for First Reading at 10.00 a.m. this morning and we are rather worried that we have not seen them as yet. I know that the Minister sincerely promised to have them circulated today.

Mr. Chairman: I thank the Hon. Member.

[Mr. Chairman in aside with the Clerk.]

Hon. Member, in answer to the question which you just raised, I am informed that there were some technical issues associated with the printing of the items. That has now been overcome and we have been promised that, early in the morning, we will receive the documents for distribution. Clearly, this is discomfoting but it was *out of our hands*, so to speak, in terms of the reproduction of the matter. Thank you.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister, we will receive from you the movement for the adjournment of the Assembly.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Nagamootoo: Mr. Speaker, It gives me great pleasure to move that this House be adjourned until 10.00 a.m. tomorrow, being Wednesday.

Your Honour, if I can crave your indulgence, I hope that, after protracted and marathon sessions, all Colleagues of the National Assembly and staff would join me for a parting drink after we would have completed our work early tomorrow, hopefully.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister, you are saying tomorrow. Would that be correct?

Mr. Nagamootoo: Yes, Sir.

Adjourned accordingly at 10.14 p.m.