

Official Report

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION (2012-2014) OF THE TENTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA HELD IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BRICKDAM, GEORGETOWN

80TH Sitting

Thursday, 10TH April, 2014

The Assembly convened at 2.02 p.m.

Prayers

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

For Written Replies

1. ESTABLISHMENT OF A LIBRARY AT THE MAHDIA SCHOOL DORMITORIES

Mrs. Garrido Lowe: Whereas the Mahdia School Dormitories do not have a library, hence, students living in these facilities are denied the opportunity of reading for relaxation and enjoyment and for the expansion of their consciousness;

And whereas it is the duty of the State to create a good study environment for these students:

Could the Hon. Minister say if her Ministry has any plans of setting up a library in the Mahdia School Dormitories anytime soon and, if so, how soon would that be?

Answer not supplied by the Minister of Education.

2. COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe:

1. Could the Hon. Minister state the qualifications required to be trained as a Community Health Worker and the duration of the training?
2. Could the Hon. Minister state the Job Description of a Community Health Worker?
3. Could the Hon. Minister state how many Community Health Workers were trained each year since the programme commenced and how many were employed for each consecutive year?
4. Could the Hon. Minister state how many Community Health Workers are presently employed in hinterland hospitals, health centres and health huts and for how long have been working in these locations?
5. Could the Hon. Minister state the locations where a Community Health Worker is the only staff at the health post?
6. Could the Hon. Minister state how many Community Health Workers were sent on upgrading courses since the commencement of the programme, for how long and what positions were they upgraded to?

Minister of Health [Dr. Ramsaran]:

Admission Requirements

1. Two subjects at CXC Grades 1-4 inclusive of English Language or A sound primary education in the case of applicants from remote communities.
2. All applications must be endorsed by the Regional Chairman, Regional Executive Officer and the Regional Health Officer of the each region.

Successful applicants will be required to sign a contract to serve the Government of Guyana for a period of two years.

Reports to: Medex/Public Health Nurse

Purpose: To provide a measure of curative and preventive health care to communities in the hinterland and riverine areas of the country.

Key Outputs;

Effective health education programmes

Accurate information system

Range of activities:

- Plan, organise and implement health education programme in schools and in the general community collaboration with other health workers.
- Carry out basic first aid procedure in cases of accidents and other serious illness does referral of such cases as required.
- Administer simple drugs for specific simple illness for example, diarrhoea, cold, gastro enteritis, worms.
- Give vaccines and monitor the health condition of pregnant women in the community.
- Collect data and maintain a basic information system.
- Prepare and submit reports as a community profile.
- Assist the midwife in deliveries and does other basic and simple procedures.
- Make home visit to provide health care.
- Collection and analysis of data.

Qualifications, Knowledge and Experience: Award of a certificate on successful completion of a six-month training course in community health studies.

Decision making, problem solving which require the and impact on results:

- Protocols and guidelines exist for the purpose of decision making. However, certain problems of a complex nature may arise which the incumbent to use his/her initiative and technical training to make decision on management o the problem or to refer same.

Resource Management: The incumbent has direct responsibility for the equipment and drugs supplied to him/her; value of drugs and equipment in excess of \$20,000.

Communications: The incumbent is in frequent communication with the people in the community. In issues of a sensitive nature, cooperation and tact are required.

Working conditions: the incumbent works for a health post if such a facility is available or from his/her home. Work is primarily of a field oriented nature.

Answers to Questions 3, 4 and 5 are on the attached Table 1.

3. MAHDIA SCHOOL DORMITORIES

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Whereas a safe, comfortable and healthful learning environment should be of utmost consideration for students living in dormitories;

And whereas the Mahdia Dormitories need urgent attention.

Could the Hon. Minister state when will all the following concerns be addressed with a view to creating a safe, comfortable and healthful living and learning environment for the students presently living in the Mahdia Dormitories:

1. Almost all the double bunks presently in use, in both the boys' and girls' dormitories, are rocking and may collapse at any time - some of the boards are also falling out;
2. Thin plywood walls in both dormitories have huge holes;
3. A bedroom door is missing in the girls' dormitory and louvre panes are missing from both the girls' and boys' dormitories;
4. In the girls' dormitory there are exposed electrical points and wires which the students have to join together in order to get light;

5. In the boys' dormitory there are exposed electrical points and wires and there is no electricity in the bathroom area;
6. The plumbing system is down and students fetch water from a distance to flush the toilets when the tanks are empty which is quite often and this lasts for more than a week at times;
7. The incinerator is not functioning so garbage is being disposed of by dumping on the ground (back yard) to be burnt later;
8. The television set is not functioning since last year.

Minister within the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development [Mr. Whittaker]:

1. New beds will be procured as part of the RDC8 education Capital programme for 2014. Additionally, based on allocations of funds provided, repairs will be done to existing beds.
2. The matter of the plywood walls be addressed as part of the RDC 8 recurrent work programme for 2014.
3. The bedroom door will be installed; repairs will be done to louvre windows. It should be noted that constant replacements have been done during the years.
4. Electrical faults will be corrected immediately.
5. A spring was recently cleaned and excavated in the vicinity of the Dormitory. The RDC is currently examining a long term solution to provide water and to pressurise the network at the Dormitory.
6. The Department of Education pays for the collection of garbage within the compound of the School and the Dormitory.
7. A new set will be budgeted for in 2015.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

GOVERNMENT'S BUSINESS

MOTION TO APPROVE THE ESTIMATS OF EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER, 2014

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

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

AND WHEREAS Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of Guyana for the financial year 2014 have been prepared and laid before the Assembly on 24th March, 2014;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly approves the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 2014, of a total sum of two hundred and five billion, three hundred and seventy million, five hundred and eighteen thousand dollars (\$205,370,518,000), excluding fourteen billion, and six hundred and seventy six million, one hundred and forty three thousand dollars (\$14,676,143,000) which is chargeable by law, as detailed therein and summarised in the under-mentioned schedule, and agree that it is expedient to amend the law and to make further provision in respect of finance.”

[Minister of Finance]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, we will resume the consideration of the Estimates for 2014.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply.

In Committee of Supply.

Mr. Chairman: Just to remind Members, these were Estimates to be considered last evening but because of time, we adjourned them to today. We have set aside two hours for consideration for the Ministry of Health and its various departments so I will be keeping within that timeline.

Agency: 46 Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation

Current Expenditure

Programme: 461 – Public Hospital - \$5,309,867,000

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, line item 6112 - Senior Technical - under staffing details, there is an increase of three. Could the Hon. Minister tell us what are the designations and the wages of these three senior technical officers?

Minister of Health [Dr. Ramsaran]: Thank you for the question, Hon. Norton. I am advised that these are tester councillors and the rate of pay is \$75,000 per month per person.

Dr. Norton: Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. Mr. Chairman, under Staffing Details, there is an increase of two for Clerical and Office Support with an increase in salaries of \$11 million. Could the Hon. Minister say what are the designations and wages of these?

Dr. Ramsaran: I am advised by the CEO that one is a Quality Improvement Officer with a salary of \$100,000 per month. That is a relatively new department created. And there are two officers in the Quality Improvement Department or Unit at \$100,000 a month per person.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, this increase in salaries for the same Clerical and Office Support, according to line item 6114, there would be an increase of about \$11 million. Could the Hon. Minister explain how the two officers at \$100,000 a month would arrive at that figure?

Dr. Ramsaran: We are just going to check it and correlate the lines for you. I am advised that there are two other senior officers who are also concerned with maintaining quality control to some degree. Those are an Infection Control Officer and an Occupational Health and Safety Officer.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, we are talking about a particular line item under the programme. According to the Staffing Details, there was an increase only by two. Could the Hon. Minister tell us why the two other persons he is referring to are not reflected here in the Staffing Details?

Dr. Ramsaran: I am advised by the CEO that these were persons who were approved sometime prior to the preparation of this. So if you can hold on that item, Dr. Norton, the CEO will get his notes together and then we will proceed on that.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, just a follow-up: is the Hon. Minister saying the information provided to this honourable House is incorrect?

Dr. Ramsaran: No, Mr. Chairman. I am saying that the CEO needs to get his notes together. If you give us a minute, we will do that now. There is a difference of two workers and we need to account for the difference in salaries. This is under line item 6114 - Clerical and Office Support. The information I am getting from the CEO is that the two officers are Quality Control and Quality Assurance Officers working in the Quality Control Unit. The salary rate is \$100,000 basic salary and other benefits bring the total to \$115,000.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Minister is telling us about four clerical and office support staff on an average having a salary scale of \$100,000 a month, which cannot account for the increase of \$11 million that is reflected in this line item. Could the Hon. Minister explain this?

Dr. Ramsaran: Dr. Norton, I think if you do the Mathematics, including the additional year end benefit of 5%, a quick calculation will show it is accurate.

Dr. Norton: Is the Hon. Minister saying that this 5% would not be reflected here for this year, and that he is referring to last year?

Dr. Ramsaran: What I am saying is that two persons have been employed and I am assured they are Quality Control and Quality Assurance Officers in that department. They are supposed to be accounting for this increase which caters also for the adding of the 5%.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, we will leave that and go on to line item 6131. There is an increase of a princely sum of \$52 million under this line item, Other Direct Labour Costs. Could the Hon. Minister elaborate on the nature of this direct labour cost?

Dr. Ramsaran: Under this head falls acting allowances and such other things. For example, there are such activities as acting allowances and overtime. Under this head, there are those types of expenditure.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister say if the same allowances were not there last year? There is an increase of over \$50 million all of a sudden from last year to now, and he is telling us about allowances and so on.

Dr. Ramsaran: Hon. Norton, we should explain that the 5% will also be applicable here across the board. If you check that, it could be part of the accounting - 55% on the incentive allowances like acting and overtime allowances. I think there is another category called Meal Allowances in that catchment, and Responsibility Allowances too.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, seeing that the Minister mentioned allowances, we were recently informed that the nurses' allowances were not increased for over two decades. Could the Hon. Minister say if with this increase that may be catered for?

Dr. Ramsaran: Are you referring to the nursing students? No, this is for medical and not the nursing staff. This is for the Cuban trained medical doctors working there. That is the catchment area we are talking about.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, line item 6281 - Security Services: we see there is a princely increase of \$30 million as compared to 2013. Could the Hon. Minister explain if they are continuing with the same security firm and what accounts for this increase?

Dr. Ramsaran: That is an anomaly. If you check the year before, it was \$25 million. What happened in this year, because of certain hiccups, the contract was not signed with the private external security company until late in the year – December. Therefore, during that period, the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation's (GPHC) internal security had to take up the slack. If you go back to 2013, the expected expenditure would have been \$25 million. However, because of whatever administrative difficulties, it was only one month of external force helping. Therefore, the internal security of the Hospital took up the burden and that is why you are seeing that blatant anomaly with just \$1.058 million for the revised year of 2013. A likely figure should have been in the vicinity of the \$25 million. That is how the \$32 million comes in as being more realistic.

Dr. Norton: Could the Hon. Minister, Mr. Chairman, point to where that excess was paid for the internal security?

Dr. Ramsaran: Again, the security is already on staff. They might have benefited from additional allowances that we just spoke on in case they had to do extra work. But that small force had to take up the cudgels and was definitely a strain. Therefore, we are back again to a

more likely figure which, if you look at it, is slightly above the \$25 million which will take into consideration the recent dispensation regarding minimum wages, the 5% and so on.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, under line item 6283 - Cleaning and Extermination Services: could the Hon. Minister account for the increase of \$10 million under this line item?

Dr. Ramsaran: I would like to tell you that on the northern side of the compound, the completion of a new wing is expected. That is the new inpatient facility which is quite a large facility. The addition should be, I think, approximately 98 beds. The lower flat has not been completed as yet. If you check further down in Capital, you will see it is slated to be completed. That facility will also need special cleaning units which are privately sourced. They will have to be specially equipped to deal with internal hospital conditions.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, line item 6292 – Dietary: could the Hon. Minister explain to us what this \$12 million increase entails?

Dr. Ramsaran: Over the year, the management and Board have been noting the escalation or changes in prices, and to be certain that the volume of patients in the Hospital is cared for, more particularly since we will be having an additional wing. Calculation has been made which comparatively speaking is small to accommodate this increase in expected prices which have already been noted, and the expected additional workload regarding patients, moderate though it may be.

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, to the Hon. Minister, line item 6221 - Drugs and Medical Supplies: can you give us some of the companies which you purchase these supplies from?

Dr. Ramsaran: Yes, we definitely can. That is usually advertised for open tender. Companies would be like IDA, an international agency; New Guyana Pharmaceutical Corporation (GPC), which is local; Pharmagen Enterprises, another small, emerging local provider/vendor; International Pharmacy Association (IPA); and KD Enterprise, another local provider.

Mrs. Lawrence: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Could you kindly indicate whether any of these agencies at 31st December had any balance outstanding for drugs which were not delivered, and, if so, how much?

Dr. Ramsaran: I would not be able to tell you that, but I can tell you what happens. For this quarter, we purchased drugs not only for GPHC but for the regional and wider system. Drugs are usually ordered in such a way that they roll over. So there might be things ordered last year that should be in the process of being delivered now. However, those should be at the minimum. I do not have that information now, but we could definitely get it for you. The moneys for this first quarter would have been provided for, or drugs provided for, by moneys which would have been mobilised and documents prepared towards the end of last year. So the answer is that that should be at the minimum. I cannot tell you now but we can promise to check for you, as soon as possible, to see when and how much. Since Mr. Chairman is being very accommodating, I can probably ask my technical person if he knows of any particular major contract outstanding for the supply of medications.

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, through you to the Minister, in order to save time, could we have a list? And I am particularly interested in the last quarter of last year.

Dr. Ramsaran: At my last meeting with the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation, when we were looking at whether there would have been any threats of stock-outs, I was advised that there is minimum delinquency in this regard. But we can definitely give you a more detailed list of any outstanding medication. What I can assure you is that across the board, we do not note currently the shortage of the fundamental or basic, the most important items in the Hospital.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, did you want your CEO to respond to something?

Dr. Ramsaran: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. He prompted me and reminded me that this was discussed at the last monthly meeting at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation. The briefing was that there are no significant shortages and that the contracts were being monitored. We have tightened that up, especially under the new Board which is headed by a new Chairman. The way business is done at the Hospital is more scrutinised and tighter.

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr. Minister, could we go back to line item 6116. I note in the Staffing Details that there is an increase of 99 contracted employees. Could you kindly tell us of some of the positions and the allocations for this particular line item?

Dr. Ramsaran: This seems to be a significant increase but it also coincides with the deployment of several returning Cuban trained doctors. I am advised by the CEO that that is the major component. The basic salary is what any Government Medical Officer (GMO) gets. And we have had some foreign consultants in areas where we are weak, for example in the areas of Nephrology, Intervention Cardiology, Obstetrics and Gynaecology (OBGYN). But predominately, it is due to the addition of the graduate doctors who have recently completed training.

Dr. Ramayya: Line item 6221: Mr. Chairman, I discussed, in my presentation on the Budget, my great concern for the people of Berbice because of my experience last year with the shortages of drugs. Patients were given prescriptions to fill their needs at drug stores. I would kindly ask the Hon. Minister, with the \$40 million increase, how much of the drugs will be dispensed to the hospitals in Region 6 for this year? What percentage of the Budget will go to the Region for drugs?

Dr. Ramsaran: Which line item is this?

Dr. Ramayya: It is line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies.

Dr. Ramsaran: Mr. Chairman, I think the goodly Doctor has lumped everything together. But for the purposes of study, we are now looking at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation. We can answer that a little later.

Dr. Ramayya: My apologies.

Mr. Chairman: Very well.

Mr. Greenidge: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Would the Minister be good enough to tell us, in relation to line item 6284, what is accounting for the fall we see here compared with \$127 million, and could he give us an idea of the three main categories of services they purchased or acquired under this line item?

Dr. Ramsaran: Under this head, we cover airfares for Cuban and Chinese doctors and such tests or investigations that the Hospital or the public sector does not have, for example computed tomography (CT) scans which are now becoming more in demand by practitioners. That is why

the public sector is considering, having done a cost analysis, procuring or providing its own service. Other things that would fall under this would be customs brokerage for subscription fees, customs brokerage when we bring in items for the Hospital or when we get gift items which sometimes we need to help clear.

Mr. Greenidge: Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, could the Minister tell us whether the services provided under this line item include - since he has mentioned services not available through the Government system - where patients may be sent to private clinics for dialysis?

Dr. Ramsaran: This bill is footed by the Ministry of Health but the Georgetown Hospital has an evolving service. The question is not directed to that, but I will take the opportunity. They have, I think, four dialysis units and, because of the need to train more nurses, they work just six days a week; we are hoping to up that. They work sixteen hours a day and six days a week. We are hoping to train more nurses for that specialised service. They deal basically with acute patients they have in the wards. Due to the restricted capacity, as you understand, the follow-up sometimes has to be done privately. As we expand the number of units we have, we will be able to also take those persons who are not acute but need chronic treatment. As a matter of fact, I can tell you that there are people from the islands who have been making approaches. I know of at least one or two persons who came making repeated enquiries as to the service. So we definitely hope to push that, and in more specialised institutions; if we do get them, that will be an area of concentration.

Mr. Greenidge: Mr. Chairman, the Minister was very kind enough to take the question, although he indicated that it is met under the Ministry. Could he just give me some clarifications? First of all, are the four dialysis units mentioned operated by the public system?

Dr. Ramsaran: These are operated by the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation for inpatients, that is, patients who would have gone into an acute crisis and who would have needed immediate help.

2.32 p.m.

Mr. Greenidge: That is clear. As regards the nurses, who the Minister mentioned, whose salaries are met by the hospital, do they all work at these four units, and there only?

Dr. Ramsaran: The four units mean it is one service, building and enclosure; four units mean four apparatuses. That is what I mean by units. It is not four buildings or four separate rooms. They do work with these four pieces of equipment.

Mr. Greenidge: Minister, I am not really so much concerned about the number of units, but the interface between the public system and the private. I am aware that there are two or three private units that provide dialysis and I believe patients are referred to those units. I am wondering to what extent support is provided by the Government to those units. This is a very important area; it is something that we did not have in existence very long in Guyana. The arrangements for that collaboration, I think, are very crucial and I would like to know.

Dr. Ramsaran: Yes. This is important; it is evolving. It is a new experience that we are having, the sharing of resources, public/private partnerships. The Ministry would rather to be independent so that it does not have to answer, exactly, these types of questions, so that it deals more extensively with our patients directly. That is why there is this as a priority and we are even thinking of a chronic disease centre. We are hoping to have that, so that there will be more units and we will need to share fewer resources.

There is an evolving Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with one of the services called the Doobay Centre, and that is to allow us to have patients taken at a cheaper rate. We are still doing a review of that to see how effective it is, but I will tell the Member frankly that we would rather not have to do such reviews, but to expand our own capacity, which we are in the process of doing.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I would like to say that the Ministry of Health has seven programmes. Two hours have been set aside for it and we are still on the programme for the hospital after a half of an hour. There are other Members at the back who have been waiting for some time. Mr. Greenidge, it will be one question and then I need to go to the backbenchers.

Mr. Greenidge: I thank you for your understanding, Mr. Chairman. I am really trying to get from the Minister - if he does not have all the information he can give it to us subsequently, rather and take the time - the basis upon which this centre was chosen, the nature of the MOU and whether the conditions are known. It is important that when he is collaborating on this basis,

especially since these are new entrances, that the conditions for participation be known and that all the participants feel that they have an equal chance to provide the service.

Dr. Ramsaran: That is noted, the concept of a levelled playing field. Incidentally as the Member said, there are other centres, we did have discussions with them, I think we did even share the ... Some of them are going into various things, such as home dialysis, and so on. That is a good point and we are acutely aware of the need to have transparency and a levelled playing field, so we will have further discussions with you on that issue.

Mr. Greenidge: Will the Member provide us with some information on that?

Dr. Ramsaran: Yes. We could even possibly, as soon as possible, get it.

Mr. Trotman: I would want to take the Minister back to line item 6116, Contracted Employees. The increase in dollar terms, in relation to the expenditure that the Minister is asking permission for, is \$135 million. Without having a sense of what is it Government Medical Officers (GMOs) earn, I and this House would like to know because we want to know if the request is justified. We would like to know exactly what it is we are looking at in relation to the emoluments for those 99 persons.

Dr. Ramsaran: The contracted employees will include persons such as the Director of Medical and Professional Services which will attract a salary of \$833,490 per month; Medical Director (Education) - \$771,750 per month, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who gets \$869,946 per month; the Director of Financial Services - \$772,470 per month, a Medical ...

Mr. Trotman: Mr. Chairman, if I may, I do not think the Minister understands the question. I am not dealing with persons who are already there. I am dealing with the 99 new persons who will be employed or are already employed.

Dr. Ramsaran: Okay.

Mr. Trotman: We want to have a sense of what it is those persons will be getting to justify the request for the increase of \$135 million.

Dr. Ramsaran: They are basically the GMOs I referred to. We are getting significant access to new Government Medical Officers or let us call them graduate doctors. A person, such as that,

would be a medical officer earning \$274,274 with minimum allowances such as telephone and housing allowances, \$3,000 and \$20,000 respectively.

Ms. Ferguson: Line item 6241, Rental of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister explain the reason for this increase and the amount of buildings that are currently rented by the Guyana Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC)?

Dr. Ramsaran: Rental of Buildings: There are nine buildings being rented. There is a list of the buildings and their providers; those are there. We can share that with Member too. We have the list of names of persons from whom we rent and we have the cost per month of each building. These are rented in particular for the consultants. There are consultants working with us. For the Cuban brigade, we are, in Campbellville, for example, renting a property where several of the members and, more particularly, the head of it and the head of the faculty group of the Cuban training group in Guyana live.

Ms. Ferguson: Mr. Chairman, it is just a follow-up. I trust the Minister will hold to his word because last year I can recall asking him on this very line item... and he had promised to provide this National Assembly with the required information. I trust that you hold to your word, Sir.

Dr. Ramsaran: Which information? I have just made it public.

Ms. Ferguson: It was under this very line item – 6241.

Dr. Ramsaran: I am making it very public here. I do not know if it is acceptable to read the landlord's name here, but I am saying that there are nine landlords in Georgetown. I will give the Member an example of one location and the purpose for which it is done. For example, the obstetric- gynaecology (ob-gyn) consultant is a foreigner on contract, one of those contracts which was just referred to, the more weighty salaries there, and that person is provided with housing by the hospital. We could give it to the Member.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Chairman, if it is no problem calling names I can do it now or I can simply hand this across the aisle. That is exactly the position we took last year. We can probably, through you, Mr. Chairman, give it.

Mr. Ramjattan: Mr. Chairman, it is if I can ask the Minister, in relations to the line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies,...He did indicate that a number of corporations supply the drugs. I want to know what the percentage is for the New Guyana Pharmaceuticals Corporation (GPC) supplies, for this \$1.86 billion.

Dr. Ramsaran: I have not worked out a percentage, but I can tell that, from just looking at the figures, it is significantly the largest slice. I think that is the answer the Member wants to hear.

Mr. Ramjattan: How much significant? Is it \$1.2 billion?

Dr. Ramsaran: I have not worked out the percentage and we have not worked it out here. We have not brought here what...

Mr. Ramjattan: Forget the percentage. Out of the \$1.86 billion, how much is it?

Dr. Ramsaran: We have not worked out here and we have not anticipated the question of what percentage each provider would have given. That can be given. Once it is here as a summation, the aggregate parts can be got quite easily.

Mr. Ramjattan: A follow-up, Minister. Is there a Procurement Manager at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation to find out if the best prices are being obtained from the New GPC as against other? We know about the Ketoconazole and the Depo-Provera issues.

Dr. Ramsaran: What I will tell you is this: The wider health sector too goes through the tender process. There is a tender board and it deals with such issues. I think the tender process involves having people review it. The hospital and the Ministry of Health will be having an arm's length approach to that. The central tender board, as I am advised, will be dealing with such issues.

The requirement for items, medications and supplies would have been made and the necessary tenders have to pass through the process, not directly to the GPHC or the Ministry.

Mr. Ramjattan: Is it possible for a price per unit, in relation to the items for the last three months in year, be given to this National Assembly so that we can do a comparison?

Dr. Ramsaran: I suppose that is easy; it can be done.

Mr. Ramjattan: Thank you very much. How early can we get that? I think it is all computerised.

Dr. Ramsaran: We can give you that within a reasonable period of time, probably by next Monday or before.

Mr. Ramjattan: Thanks.

Mr. Chairman: Dr. Norton, I think that you can wrap up for consideration of the hospital.

Dr. Norton: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Just before I leave this Public Hospital Corporation with the current expenditure, could the Hon. Minister tell this Assembly, under Training (including Scholarships), if any consideration has ever been given, and if so, is it positive that the doctors or persons employed at the hospital, or wherever, considered being given the opportunity to have leave with pay to pursue further postgraduate studies?

Dr. Ramsaran: I think that is a standard Public Service Ministry approach. As a matter of fact, I can tell you now that there is – I think I can call his name because it is very positive – a Dr. Kishore Persaud who is now over at the University of Calgary. He has been there for some time now, probably the better part of the year. He is being taught to do kidney transplants and things related to kidney health. That comes from almost a good interaction with the University of Calgary, which has been one of our emerging centres of excellence or strategic partners. As a matter of fact, it left only a few weeks ago, working in your hospital.

Yes, there is that facility and at the same time there are in-country postgraduate programmes. I spoke about this last year and the year before. The postgraduate programmes, I am told, are nine in number now. They started a few years back with just general surgery.

Mr. Ramjattan: I do not want that.

Dr. Ramsaran: Well, they are just under emerging. There are quite a few now, quite a handful, at least six. Those attract Guyanese and Cuban trained doctors and there is at least one foreign trained doctor. On that, they are allowed to do their studies while still receiving their normal emoluments or salaries, right here. In cases where they travel overseas, in some cases they travel,

other expenses are even footed by the Government of Guyana (GoG), the GPHC, or by the fraternal partner that we have engaged.

Dr. Norton: The Hon. Minister mentioned one. Could he say whether or not there is more than one and if there are plans ahead, for this year, to increase that number?

Dr. Ramsaran: The Member must know too that the postgraduate scholarships are now coming to the fore from Cuba. Previously, Cuba gave us only for graduate doctors. In the recent years, we have been able to negotiate for a handful of scholarship, postgraduates, and there are a few others who are from the previous batch of Cuban trained graduates. They are over there studying in areas such as psychiatry, obstetrics and gynaecology and pathology. I think, it is three or four spheres. There are more and this is an evolving programme. Postgraduate studies are expensive, so we need to leverage them. The gentleman who is overseas doing the study on kidney transplant, it came about because of a transaction or an interaction that happened only two years ago. As these things get better we will send more.

Further to that, three or four eyes specialists have been trained. One has now been working for about two years at the Linden Hospital Complex. She was one of the first inductees. She is a Cuban trained graduate doctor who then went...

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, we are quite *au fait* with this information.

Mr. Chairman: Dr. Ramsaran, I hate to interrupt, but we are closing in on one hour and have six other programmes to look at in the other hour. If this is our record we are not going to do well. I know you are very fond of giving all the facts and getting it right, but if we continue in this vein we are not going to finish.

I recognise Dr. Cummings with a question.

Dr. Cummings: I think it was answered.

Mr. Chairman: Very well.

Programme: 461 – Public Hospital - \$5,309,867,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 461 – Public Hospital - \$414,000,000

Dr. Norton: Project 1209900, Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister say where is the construction work going to be done on the operating theatre and the Intensive Care Unit (ICU)? Is it going to be an extension of what exists at the moment or is it going to take another place for the extension of either the ICU or the operating theatre?

Dr. Ramsaran: This is a good question and this is linked with other items so the Member will need to follow this up again. As I said, the northern aspect of the hospital, the downstairs flat, is being done up - you had a question to that - and that will allow us to decant the paediatrics ward, which is now in the new Ambulatory Care Unit. That will allow us to have spaces to expand the services of the Caribbean Heart Institute (CHI) and at the same time, if the CHI will be expanding, we will need the services of an expanded capacity in the ICU. In the space, which is being liberated because we are decanting the paediatrics, which has a fairly collection of patients there, on the middle floor of the northern aspect, or the Lamaha Street, aspect of the property, which is freed up area, we hope to utilise to make the ICU and to put this...

Dr. Norton: Project 2404400, Land and Water Transport: The national budget refers to \$117 million for 12 ambulances. Here we are referring to an ambulance for \$8 million; an average of the cost of those 12 ambulances would be much more than the \$8 million. Why are we buying an ambulance for \$8 million for the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation?

Dr. Ramsaran: This will be, of course, enjoying the duty-free concession of Government vehicles and that might be part of it, but the ambulances are similar to the two that are in the compound here with basic equipment. I think it is a good investment and these are the prices that have been quoted. They can be upgraded, upscale and more things can be put in them. This explains this purchase; an ambulance of a good quality that we can call an ambulance and not as how some people try to picture it as a minibus. It is not a converted vehicle; we are buying it from companies, which produce these things for a purpose.

Dr. Norton: My only question is that there is, I would think, more money available. For that \$117 million, to just think that 12 ambulances are supposed to be bought and to use only \$8

million to buy one for the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation does not tell me that it probably could.

Dr. Ramsaran: That is a good observation, too, Dr. Norton, but as you would understand our conversation, which has been going on, we are hoping to evolve a National Ambulance Authority. For example, the ambulances, which are in this compound, can be called to go anywhere at any time because of a certain system. That is why we have started certain training for the Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). I am seeing some of them around here. There are quite a collection of them. I had their names recently...

Mr. Chairman: It is not necessary.

Dr. Ramsaran: I know. I would not do that, but what I am saying is they are here and the EMT programme. It is not only buying the ambulance, it is creating the workforce and there are relationships with universities overseas which are pushing the postgraduate programme for emergency medicine. There is one product so far.

Dr. Norton: It is just that \$12 ambulances at \$8 million; 12 times \$8 million is \$96 million. There is \$117 million. That is my question.

Mr. Chairman: It is to account for the extra.

Dr. Norton: Exactly.

Dr. Ramsaran: Those ambulances will be predominantly for the regional system. We will discuss that when we meet the different... The Ministry will be deploying these in different areas for the national system. This one for the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation, I think, is a fair price and if there are any additions that need to go into it those will be put in, but this will give the basic services of an ambulance.

Dr. Norton: Under project 4500203, Equipment – Medical, there is a purchase of laser equipment, could the Hon. Minister say what type of laser and what speciality this...

Dr. Ramsaran: It is called an Yttrium-Aluminium-Garnet (YAG) laser. It is to replace one that has now become unserviceable due to age and wear and tear.

Dr. Norton: That YAG was long overdue. On the same line item, could the Hon. Minister say what particular speciality would the surgical instrument be bought for?

Dr. Ramsaran: As you know again, the equipment we have right across the surgical profiles are worn and tired. It is basically to replace existing instruments, in the main.

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, through you to the Hon. Minister. Minister, projects 4500202 and 4500203, could you kindly say whether any moneys from these allocations will be used for the histopathology lab. I am told that since 2001 nothing was done.

Dr. Ramsaran: That is a good question and up to recently we ran into some more problems when a knife, a specified thing for slicing specimen, went down and we had to borrow from the University of Guyana. If the legend is checked, it is definitely there. It states, for example, "...knife sharpener, tissue processor, microtome and accessories. That is on page 185.

"Equipment". "The project includes the purchase of chiller, condensing unit, centrifuge, knife sharpener, tissue processor, generator, microtome and accessories." That is key and critical, especially for diagnostic and even legal purposes.

Dr. Norton: The \$150 million for buildings, the maternity building, which is supposed to be built, could the Hon. Minister shed some light on the quality of this building, the type construction and where would it be located?

Dr. Ramsaran: It is an existing structure. It will be extended so that we will be able to meet standards better in the quest for attaining our Millennium Development Goals. It is described as the extension of the maternity building, the existing building, to more space and so on.

Ms. Williams: Project 2404400, Land and Water Transport, "The purchase of ambulances": Could the Hon. Minister say if any of these ambulances will be sent to Region 1?

Dr. Ramsaran: We definitely would like to send ambulances to Region 1, but with this, we are dealing with the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation. That question would be best in another discussion.

Mr. Chairman: Correct.

Programme: 461 – Hospital - \$414,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: That concludes our deliberation of Estimates for the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation. I would like to thank the staff who assisted you, Minister, for being able to provide details and answers.

Agency: 47 Ministry of Health

Current Expenditure

Programme: 471 – Ministry Administration - \$850,015,000

Dr. Norton: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees: There is an increase of \$30 million as compared to last year for the contracted employees and an increase of 26 on the Staffing Details. Could the Hon. Minister say what the designations are of these new contracted employees and the wages for just the two top positions?

Dr. Ramsaran: Yes. We definitely can. There is, here, the increase in the budget for 2014 which reflects 26 appointments of three Store Clerks, Clerk I, four Storekeepers, Class I, one Health Economist, four Accountant Clerks, one Research Officer, three Clerks, General, two Bond Clerks, one Analytic Scientific Officer, one Office Assistant, two Admin Assistants, one Confidential Secretary, three Stores Attendants, five Drivers. This includes the 5% increase that was given.

I will try to give you the data now on who gets the most pay...

Dr. Norton: It is just for the two top positions.

Dr. Ramsaran: There is the Permanent Secretary at a cost of \$566,428 per month and some small allowances. Then there is the Inter-Ministerial Sector Coordinator - \$253,575.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, I was only interested in those that are employed now, the newly employed, the increase of the 26 workers – the highest paid for the increased of 26 workers.

Dr. Ramsaran: There is the Health Economist at a cost of \$211,982. We are going to locate for the Member one of the newly... \$167,385 for an Analytical Scientific Officer.

3.02 p.m.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, just for my information, could the Hon. Minister say if this Health Economist is a new specialty?

Dr. Ramsaran: Health Economist is not a new speciality. Unfortunately there is a dearth of Health Economists in Guyana. It is something new here because we are now getting them. As a matter of fact, we are happy to note that there are several new Health Economists in the health sector. Previously, there was only one at Health Sector Development Unit (HSDU). Health Economist is not a new speciality, it has been around. It is just one of the things that we were not getting around to and there are not many.

Mr. Greenidge: Perhaps I could ask the Minister whether he could indicate if the person is actually formally trained in that area or it is an economist who was recruited to fulfil a function.

Dr. Ramsaran: He is an economist with some additional training in international relation. He is fulfilling the functions of the position but as you would appreciate, Mr. Greenidge, there is a dearth of this speciality right across the globe, I suppose.

Dr. Norton: Once again, in staffing details, line item 6111, Administrative, there is an increase of four administrative employees at an increase of \$7 million for wages. Could the Hon. Minister say what are the designation and wages of these four?

Dr. Ramsaran: There is an increase in this budget because it reflects the appointments of two staff, one accountant and an electrician, and a promotion of two, that is, the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) and the Director of Planning and also the 5% increase in salaries for the entire group of four.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister say if there was a CMO before?

Dr. Ramsaran: There was not a CMO before. To be more expansive there was an acting CMO but we just took it by... He was acting out of another position.

Dr. Norton: Line item 6281, Security Services: Could the Hon. Minister explain the \$10 million increase as compared to last year's revised budget?

Dr. Ramsaran: As the Member would know there has been some intervention from the senior level, the Ministry of Labour, indicating the minimum wage regulation must be observed and apparently those regulations are being more vigorously enforced. The Ministry of Health has come to know about it and we have taken remedial action to ensure that these things are done correctly and persistently.

Programme: 471 - Ministry Administration - \$850,015,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 471 – Ministry Administration - \$35,142,000

Dr. Norton: Project 1201700, Ministry of Health - Building: This completion of building is referred to as the completion of the High Dependency Unit (HDU). This High Dependency Unit is at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation. Could the Hon. Minister say to us why this was not catered for under the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation?

Dr. Ramsaran: That is a good question and that is some of the anomalies, probably, in the system, but the Ministry, from time to time... For example, later on the Member would see that the speciality hospital and other things are going to be done which we do not have in the regions. This has been done by the Ministry because of its complexity, the cost, and so on, but the Member's question does beg the answer as to why do we do this. We can look at it, change it, but for this budget that is how it is and that is how we are presenting it.

Dr. Norton: On the same line item, we were told, not so long ago, that arrangements are being made for the extension of the CHI. Here we are asking for money for the completion of the High Dependency Unit. Could the Hon. Minister tell this Assembly if at the completion of the High Dependency Unit if we will be having it in that sector that we are completing?

Mr. Chairman: I recall that question has come up before but proceed.

Dr. Ramsaran: Indeed, this is what it is aimed at. Remember the HSDU is a fairly large area and I told Member that we are taking some of the services out of that said building and taking them to new wing that is being completed on the northern section of the property. This is where

there will be the specialised equipment for the CHI and that is why I spoke of the ICU being there too because there will be expanded services from it which would be basically having access to that space that we are speaking of.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, you said that I asked this question before, quite rightly so. I would have thought that having asked then we would have changed from the designation of that programme. Joe Public out there, when you explain to them, expect to have HDU renovated much more comfortable. Right now where the HDU is at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation it is much more cumbersome than where it was before which is now being renovated. We are being told now that it is no longer going to be the HDU. As a result, could the Minister now say to us why are they continuing with the renovation or extension of the HDU?

Dr. Ramsaran: This is indeed a good observation and it was done last year. How these things are written, because it was the HDU we keep referring to it and so we need to change that. This is going to be given expanded... It just indicates where these activities will be taking part. For example, that part of the building was called HSDU, and still is, although those services are being withdrawn to another part of the compound. We will take note of that and desist or encourage people to desist from referring to it the wrong nomenclature.

Mr. Greenidge: Mr. Chairman, this matter is entirely within the hands of the Minister and the Minister of Finance. I think the discussion last year did suggest to the Minister that it is inappropriate to raise funds for one purpose and use it for something else. In all senses this infringes regulations. If the money is to be used for something other than the High Dependency Unit it has to be requested with an appropriate title and I do not know that we can approve it when it is going to be used for something else.

Dr. Ramsaran: Mr. Greenidge, I will crave your indulgence. It has been the spaces that we are going to do this to and that is improve capacity of the CHI which abuts just about a doorway out of this space. This, again, is probably not taken the adequate note of the comments on this discussion last year but this...

Mr. Greenidge: I am sorry, Mr. Chairman, but the question is not the location, the space in which the money is going to spent. The question is the functional purpose and it is not the High Dependency Unit. Money should not be requested on that basis.

Dr. Norton: Last year the Minister came for an advance from the Contingencies Fund for the period of August to November and he sought Supplementary Provisions for roughly \$31 million for the High Dependency Unit. However, the latest estimate into the end of 2013 was only \$14.7 million. I just want to confirm that the balance from this \$31 million, from the Minister, if it was returned to the treasury.

Dr. Ramsaran: At the end of the year, it is the usual practice and we can confirmatory evidence of that for you.

Dr. Norton: It is just a follow-up. It is just for the Minister to say that the \$31 million still remains the cost for the High Dependency Unit and that it has not changed.

Dr. Ramsaran: As we explained last, with the High Dependency Unit, that it was the space. Again, Mr. Greenidge pointed out correctly that it has been touted or promoted wrongly. It is not the HSDU, it is the space that is being used to expand the CHI which is just a door separating it so that specialised equipment can be put in. The HSDU, for example, will have to be having special walls. That is why it is costing so much money for that relatively small inclusion. I do take the criticism that it should not be referred to as the HSDU, but probably the former HSDU, or just drop it and use the extended CHI or the enhanced CHI.

I think my technical people should also help me note these things because they help to prepare the budget.

Ms. Selman: Project 2404500, Land and Water Transport: Could the Hon. Minister indicate the type of vehicle to be purchased and also indicate where this vehicle will be assigned?

Dr. Ramsaran: This is for the administration wing of the Ministry, in programme one. Mr. Chairman, I was making another mistake. I kept saying HSDU, which is another section of the Ministry. It is HDU.

Ms. Ferguson: Part of my question was asked by Dr. Norton. Let us go back to project 1201700, Ministry of Health - Building. Last year we would have approved \$168 thousand or million. What I would like the Hon. Minister to do is to more or less provide this with an update as to the amount of works completed thus far? Would you be in a position to do that, Sir?

Dr. Ramsaran: Yes. We definitely would be in a position to do that.

Ms. Ferguson: How soon?

Dr. Ramsaran: I will get it as soon as possible, but I do not want to put my foot in my mouth, as it were. Why do not give us until next Tuesday?

Ms. Ferguson: Very well.

Programme: 471 – Ministry Administration - \$35,142,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 472 – Diseases Control - \$995,790,000

Mr. Chairman: Members, while we do so I would just like to say that we are taking notes of Ministers who are giving undertakings to supply information. I know yesterday Minister Ramsammy did give undertakings for information to be supplied today and I will be enquiring from time to time.

Minister of Agriculture [Dr. Ramsammy]: Mr. Chairman...

Mr. Chairman: We understand that your information is on the way. I am just saying that we are taking notes as of yesterday, but I understand that you are in the process of making delivery.

Dr. Ramsammy: I am making 100 copies.

Mr. Chairman: I appreciate that. Dr. Ramsaran is compiling a very large list so I just would like to say that we will be reminding him.

Dr. Ramsaran: Mr. Chairman, I want you to note that these are not information, directly, which would have been required to submit.

Mr. Chairman: Agreed. I appreciate that. It is not that you would have... It is just information solicited after the questions.

Dr. Ramsaran: Mr. Chairman, I could say this: we are open to these requests even outside of this forum.

Mr. Chairman: I continue to encourage that, that in-between budgets Members may approach their subject Ministers, discuss with them and seek information or formerly put questions to the House.

Dr. Norton: Line item 6224, Print and Non-Print Materials: Could the Hon. Minister explain this princely sum of \$50 million that has been increased on print and non-print materials?

Dr. Ramsaran: This is an interesting point and I am happy. Mr. Chairman, indulge me for a minute or two. There are many foreign-funded programmes in the country over the past few years. Now these programmes are closing out in important areas of health, such as tuberculosis (TB), HIV/AIDS and malaria. There is a transmission. We now have to absorb certain cost and a good perusal of this would find similar seemingly anomalies, for example, in staffing. We will have to take over now, in the Government of Guyana (GoG) budget, some of those things which were in projects and international sources, such as Global Fund (GF), for example, antiretroviral, (ARV). This year we are supposed to take over 25% - antiretroviral is expensive - and then next year we will take 50% and then the next year 75% and the following year the foreigners will be gone and we will have to take the burden. Here is where we have to take over all of the educational work, the flyers, the statutory forms to maintain these gains that we have made under certain programmes.

Dr. Norton: Similarly, under line item 6222, Field Materials and Supplies: Could the Hon. Minister explain the increase of \$15 million for field materials and supplies?

Dr. Ramsaran: Dr. Norton, you will notice that in a series of those. For example, from drugs and medical supplies, the one you just asked about and this one, are all connected because many of these programmes are national, such as TB, HIV/AIDS and other programmes and other programmes. In this same page, if you look at line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies, there is a hefty increase, and that is the ARVs, as I mentioned, and rapid test kits which we would have to be taking over if we hope to maintain the level of rollback that we had with such diseases like HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria. You will see those few line items are significantly increased. This will be a repetitive answer in the next coming few budgets.

Dr. Norton: Under Staffing Details, line item 6116, Contracted Employees, there is an increase for \$17 million for wages and \$14 increase in staff. Could the Minister say what is the designation and the wages of the two highest paid employees?

Dr. Ramsaran: This reflects the appointment of 14 Office Assistants, two Stats Clerk, six Field Assistants, medical officers and these include the 5%. The two highest paid would be the two medical officers, both of whom received \$227,946 per month.

Dr. Cummings: Line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships): Hon. Minister I noticed an increased in the allocation to that line item. I would like to know what the nature of the training is and who the beneficiaries of such training are.

Dr. Ramsaran: First, the answer to the last question is that the beneficiaries are persons existing employed in the in-service training, its upgrades. Here, again, it is reflected of the fact that we will have to be taking over more and more some of those training programmes to support the strategies for some of these foreign-funded activities. In other words, the support from certain other budgets is being gradually withdrawn and we have to wake up and smell the coffee and start getting the funds to do these things.

Mr. Trotman: Line item 6111, Administrative: I notice that there are three new positions, presumably new positions, that are being are filled or that will be filled. Could the Minister tell this House what would be the cost for the year for those three new positions that he would have moved to fill?

Dr. Ramsaran: I can tell the Member while we are trying to calculate that that this is for the expenditure over into the year 2014. The appointment of three, that is, are one TB Field Supervisor, one Admin Manager, one Director of Communicable Diseases, including the 5% increases. I did not calculate how much it was but I suppose we can look at the data there, the difference that was entered and we get a rough estimation of what it will cost to pay these three people in the new year.

Dr. Ramayya: Line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricants: Could the Minister inform this Assembly how many new vehicles will be purchased for this year?

Dr. Ramsaran: We will discuss that under capital expenditure for disease control.

Dr. Ramayya: I have seen here, from 2012, that fuel and lubricants had an allocation of \$4.6 million and the increase is approximately \$4.4 million since then. To consume this amount of fuel and lubricants it has to be twice the fleet that is supposed to be there at this time.

Mr. Chairman: Just give an explanation, Hon. Minister, as to the spike in cost of fuel and lubricants.

Dr. Ramsaran: This is programme 412, then there is programme 413 and I am told that also included in the fuel bill is the generator at the National AIDS Planning Secretariat (NAPS) building. That is why it changed from 2012 to 2013 significantly. I think we can look further. I do not have on my records here the increase of the fleet from 2012 to 2013. The Member might be touching on a possible answer that there are additional vehicles but I do not have that information here. That would have been discussed late year.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships): There is an increase of over \$10 million increase. Could the Minister what type of training it is, whether it be nurses, Community Health Worker's (CHW) and how many?

Dr. Ramsaran: CHWs would fall under programme 4, Regional and Clinical Services. This is disease control which has its own category of workers. It would have doctors and other persons who are specific, such as Microscopist, and so on.

Ms. Marcello: I would just ask a further question on drug and medical supplies, line item 6221. I think I understand the Minister to be saying that the Ministry will be taking over the purchase of medical supplies that have to do with ARV, TB and malaria. Is that correct Minister?

Dr. Ramsaran: Yes. I also mentioned that we will be taking over the rapid testing kits (RTK) for three particular diseases.

Ms. Marcello: I just want to ask if these supplies, which are purchased under this item, would be distributed to different locations.

Dr. Ramsaran: Yes. They will be purchased stored in a central pharmaceutical bond and the request will be made.

Ms. Marcello: Is it to the GPHC?

Dr. Ramsaran: No. We are discussing the Ministry of Health. The bond is located in Diamond and it is called the Materials Management Unit and it was launched on the 7th March last year, International Women's Year. It cost \$500 million to prepare and it is a modern facility. You can send your request through your senior officer, it will get check and then it will go to that bond and it will send you back the drugs, medication.

Ms. Marcello: We can now be assured that we would have drugs readily available for distribution upon request. In 2013 and part of 2012 we had been having a lot of shortages with the malaria drugs as well as tuberculosis, since there are increases in the number of these cases. I think I can understand now that there is this money being expended on these drugs we would have the drugs readily available.

Dr. Ramsaran: Yes, but, generally, Hon. Colleague, we would like you to show us the data where there is an increase of those cases that you have just made to substantiate that data, where it is sourced. Definitely to answer the first part of your question, yes, we will try to make the system work better and better as long as the request come through the right channels and at the right time. TB, malaria and HIV/AIDS, usually we do not have stock out.

Ms. Marcello: Minister, what I realised is that with the training that is coming under line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships), people are now being trained to diagnose by rapid test or whatever, and even for tuberculosis and people were dying. Now the people are being diagnosed - there were a couple of people diagnosed already - and the drugs were not available.

Mr. Chairman: Could I suggest that that be a discussion between Members at the suspension?

Dr. Ramsaran: Yes Mr. Chairman.

Mr. B. Williams: Line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could I ask the Hon. Minister in relation to malaria, if his Ministry is addressing the fact that malaria is one of the Millennium Development Goal and in fact it is also one of the...?

Hon. Members (Government): Is it eradication or the elimination?

Mr. B. Williams: It is the elimination of malaria obviously. I do not know if you mean the proliferation of it. Is the Minister aware that it is also one of the sustainable goals for post 2015 also?

What is the situation of the Ministry? Are the votes, which the Minister has put down there, addressing the Millennium Development Goal and post 2015?

Dr. Ramsaran: I think this would put an end to it. I just said that because of the powerful flagship programmes that are now closing with international money. It is because we want to maintain those gains that we are having this sudden increase and there are some flagship things that Ministry did, distribution of 50,000 treated bed nets. This year the Ministry already has three containers in its stockyard of treated bed nets, introduction of Coartem, and so on. Yes, we recognised that and the Global Fund has been working with Guyana, not for one year, not for two years, but for several years as an indication of its commitment to that.

Yes, we are reducing the incidences of malaria. There are challenges because of the open nature of our borders. For example, people come and go as they like, and compliant. That is why the training has to be taken over from the foreign sources to maintain those high levels of success.

3.32 p.m.

Programme: 472 – Diseases Control - \$995,790,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 472 – Diseases Control - \$19,497,000

Dr. Norton: Project code 2501900 – Equipment - Medical: could the Hon. Minister state where the immunology analyser and pulse meter are earmarked for?

Dr. Ramsaran: They are earmarked for the National Public Health Reference Laboratory.

Dr. Norton: Project code 2404500: where is the bus that is supposed to be purchased earmarked for and for what purpose?

Dr. Ramsaran: As I was just intimating, Tuberculosis (TB), HIV/AIDS and malaria fall under this programme. This is specifically for the TB programme to see that the Directly Observed Treatment, Short Course (DOTS) workers get to where they are going and to see that they are supervised in their push for the Stop TB Campaign.

Incidentally, we are going to be opening up in the West Demerara Regional Hospital (WDRH) compound a step down facility where people needing extra help will be housed. The bus will be needed to take them from the clinics to the compound and it will also be needed for other services.

Mr. Morian: Project codes 2501800 and 2501900 – Office Furniture and Equipment and Equipment – Medical: could the Hon. Minister give me a printout of the materials coming to Region 10 and, by extension, the other Regions?

Dr. Ramsaran: We can definitely do that.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Project code 2501900: Hon. Minister, would the purchasing of medical equipment include dengue testing equipment? There are shortages in Moruka and Kwabanna and dengue is rampant, although your Ministry would say it is not rampant. People are dying.

Dr. Ramsaran: That is a good question, especially because dengue is one of the diseases we have to fight against, like malaria, but it does not fall under this section. The special kits fall under Programme 414 – Regional and Clinical Services – for deploying to regions. That is in the current budget. It does not come under the capital budget. That is supplies.

Programme: 472 – Diseases Control - \$19,497,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 473 – Primary Healthcare Services - \$604,250,000

Mr. Chairman: Members, I am going to ask that you confine your questions to line items and specifics as regards the policy of the Ministry so that we can get through.

Dr. Norton: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: there is an increase of three staff but there is a corresponding increase of \$16 million with regards to wages and salaries. Could the Hon. Minister explain this large increase as compared to the increase in the number of staff?

Dr. Ramsaran: That reflects the increase in employment of three dental surgeons and the 5% increase in their salaries.

Dr. Norton: What would be their salaries?

Dr. Ramsaran: Dental surgeons earn \$217,585 as the basic salary with a gratuity, of course, and some vocational allowance, institutional allowance and rent allowance. They are small sums but they do add up. The basic salary is \$217,585.

Dr. Norton: Even if it is \$3 million a year, that cannot bring us to \$17 million total for those three employees, even with allowances.

Dr. Ramsaran: I am relying on my hardworking planning division which we have strengthened recently with a few economists so I would suggest that this is the...

Dr. Norton: We would be happy if the Hon. Minister could send us the figures because one would want to suggest that there is a line item which deals with benefits and allowances.

Dr. Ramsaran: We can do that for you, Hon. Member, but my indication from the two ladies working with me in planning is that the basic calculations revolve around the addition of these three specialists and caters for their allowances and 5% increase on the basic salary as of last year.

Dr. Norton: Line item 6133 – Benefits and Allowances: does the allowance there not cater for...
Line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: there is a \$14 million increase over last year's amount.

Dr. Ramsaran: As you would know, we are offering services in more places now, for example, prophylactic mass interaction. Only over the weekend at the Square of the Revolution, we had the dental bus for two whole days. We also go to other places. We would be having the need for more consumables and that is why, under this line item, you will find more dental supplies being bought because dentistry and oral health fall under this aspect of things.

Dr. Norton: Once again, I would be happy if the Minister could provide the breakdown to account for this \$14 million increase.

Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): could the Hon. Minister say to the Committee what the training entails for this \$18 million increase?

Dr. Ramsaran: This year, as we have been stating more and more in our strategic documents, we are going to be promoting a prophylactic approach to health. We are going to be having review meetings with the regional health officers. Also, we are going to be having workshops to upgrade the skills of all levels of healthcare providers, especially those in the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) programmes, the Expanded Programme for Immunisation (EPI) workshops and for adolescent health. Adolescent health has been a relatively recent addition to the Ministry of Health. We have had it in abeyance for some time. Because of that, we are going to be reaching out to more and more entities, for example schools. Health promotion is going to be emphasised. These are some of the areas in which we will definitely be having more demands, working on drug demands in prisons. Such things will be coming under this increase.

Programme: 473 – Primary Healthcare Services - \$604,250,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 473 – Primary Healthcare Services - \$109,028,000

Dr. Norton: Project code 2501900: could the Hon. Minister say how many dental chairs will be purchased and where they are earmarked for?

Dr. Ramsaran: The dental chairs are earmarked for the Cheddi Jagan Dental Centre and the Mahaica Health Centre.

Programme: 473 – Primary Healthcare Services - \$109,028,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 474 - Regional and Clinical Services - \$5,138,328,000

Dr. Norton: Line item 6117 – Temporary Employees: there is an increase of \$58 million. We have a difficulty with the numbers in the staffing details. Could the Hon. Minister explain this?

Dr. Ramsaran: I am advised that this caters basically for the payment to 147 Cuban doctors and nurses and two temporary employees from the diagnostic centres.

Dr. Norton: Why would 1 be the figure in the staffing details if the Minister is referring to those numbers? Could the Minister explain this to us?

Dr. Ramsaran: Dr. Norton, this definitely is an issue we would need to look at because my document states 1 temporary employee plus the others who are not reflected here because apparently in our classification, the Cuban doctors are classified as temporary workers. They are only here temporarily and not in our system. This should probably be more reflective of that instead of 1 which refers to the Guyanese.

Dr. Norton: Likewise, there is an increase of \$250 million for contracted employees. Could the Hon. Minister explain this amount, especially as compared to last year's?

Dr. Ramsaran: That is another good question. The contracts of the Guyanese who came back from Cuba are more permanent. Therefore, the approximately 280 additional doctors employed by the health centres and their increase of 5% are the main drivers for this. The gratuity and other aspects of their emoluments will fall under this head.

Dr. Norton: Line item 6133 – Benefits and Allowances: there is an increase of \$24 million over last year's amount. Could the Hon. Minister tell us why there is this large increase?

Dr. Ramsaran: As I pointed out to you, there is a larger workforce. We can get more things done now. However, that demands that they are given allowances and other benefits when they go out on outreaches, which are happening more frequently. I had invented the saying, "more services to more people at more times in more places by more personnel" but that also has a cost. In some cases, even if it is not salaried, there are other things that go with it.

Dr. Norton: Line item 6284 – Other: could the Minister explain in written form the expenditure of \$45 million?

Dr. Ramsaran: We definitely will do that, but this, again, goes to the airfares and different things for the Cubans in the diagnostic and treatment centres at Diamond, Leonora, Suddie, Mahaicony and Port Mourant and Cuban nationals in the health sector.

Dr. Norton: Could the Hon. Minister explain if these doctors only came this year or were they there last year and the year before?

Dr. Ramsaran: I am told that they go once a year. There has been a small increase in the number of persons who are here – we can give you those details – but this is for their airfare and accommodation until they are given their permanent location. For example, when they are in Georgetown, we might have to put them up somewhere until we get them to their final destination in the peripheries.

Dr. Ramayya: Line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: there is an increase of \$185 million for this year as compared to last year. As I had indicated earlier, the regional hospitals, from my experience, Berbice, as a whole, had a shortage of drugs last year. I would like to ask the Minister what percentage of this drugs and medical supplies would be given to the regional hospitals in Region 6 so that the people can be facilitated without going to the drugstores with prescriptions.

Dr. Ramsaran: I would not be able to give you a percentage now, but the system is driven by demand. What Berbice or Essequibo requests, according to the explanation I just gave, we would respond to that. There are difficulties sometimes. If I am allowed to be expansive, Berbice, for example, was demanding that we send them down to the end user, whereas we were initially sending them to a centre in New Amsterdam. There are difficulties sometimes in onward mobility. I, too, have been going to Berbice regularly and I have had an indication that things are not as chaotic as you might intimate. There are alternatives that could be used. However, Mr. Chairman, sometimes there are human errors. There are sometimes not the best practices in sending on information, not only in Region 6 but in other regions, but we are addressing that. By and large, there is no shortage of drugs at the national bond. We are looking at how we can get them down more efficiently and more quickly to the end user.

Mr. Ramjattan: Line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: some \$1.6 billion has been budgeted. Are the majority of these supplies being supplied by New GPC and what is the percentage?

Dr. Ramsaran: For this particular item, if it is for this year, I think they would have to go out to the usual tender process. Historic data shows that New GPC gets a significant slice of the pie. As I said before, we can probably try within a reasonable space of time to give you that information. Historically, a few entities such as IDA, Medi Farm, New GPC and others would bid and whoever wins the bid gets the award for the tender.

Mr. Ramjattan: In relation to winning the bid, the National Procurement and Tender Administration Board (NPTAB) had made certain qualifications which are going to ensure that New GPC wins. That is the criteria we saw as the guidelines. Are we going to have any change of those criteria?

Dr. Ramsaran: Those are many questions in one you have asked. I need to probably look at it now in a more expanded light. The tender process for drugs is handled by the NPTAB. What process is there, the Ministry of Health follows it, as any other entity in the public sector. Who wins the bid depends on the evaluation criteria which come out of that process. It could be challenged. There are ways of challenging it. I know in the recent past there have been such challenges. They could be mounted. There is a system and if there is anything untoward, that process could be used to expose it. For example, documents have to be filled correctly and meticulously. If a document is not filled properly, regardless of what other acclaim one thinks one has, the company would not be given a tick in the evaluator's box.

Mr. Ramjattan: Just like you promised for the Public Hospital, could we get a list of the items sold with the prices per unit for the Ministry from New GPC?

Dr. Ramsaran: I suppose that can be done because we have to pay them somehow so there must be some record on it. That can be done. Give us some reasonable time to have that done and you will have it. My Permanent Secretary (PS) is taking notes and he will make sure it happens sooner rather than later.

Dr. Ramayya: Regarding the very information that Mr. Ramjattan requested, could we have the other companies' sources revealed to us in terms of the pricing of the drugs?

Mr. Chairman: Do you mean others who bid or others who won bids?

Dr. Ramayya: Who supply.

Dr. Ramsaran: I suppose it can be a comprehensive package. If it can be done for one, it can be done for all.

Programme: 474 Regional and Clinical Services - \$5,138,328,000 agreed to and other to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 474 Regional and Clinical Services - \$1,351,574,000

Dr. Norton: Project code 2404500: how many ambulances and All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) would be bought and for which locations?

Dr. Ramsaran: The ambulances will be for Suddie, Bartica, West Demerara Regional Hospital, Mabaruma, ATVs for Annai, Kato, Monkey Mountain and motor cycles for Aishalton, Annai, Sand Creek and Karasabai.

Dr. Norton: For those places that ATVs are earmarked, can an ambulance function?

Dr. Ramsaran: Possibly, but ATVs are probably better suited and at the same time a budget has to look at the moneys that are available. Last year, we bought a certain number of ambulances. This year, we are buying some more ambulances and we will continually expand and hope you will support us in this to make the fleet bigger and bigger and we will keep sending the ambulances further and further out. For example, we had sent one to Lethem recently. As soon as the fire destroyed one ambulance, one that was being kept in the Ministry as reserve was sent out. Many other places can say they want ambulances. It is a matter of priority. It is matter of what needs to be done. ATVs might function better in Annai, Kato, and Monkey Mountain and so on, not to say that ambulances cannot go there. Hopefully, we will get them there sooner rather than later.

Dr. Norton: Is the Hon. Minister saying that ATVs are being used instead of ambulances?

Dr. Ramsaran: I never intimated that. ATVs have its use; river ambulances have their use; motor cycles have their use. We take the spirit within which you are asking the question. We need to have ambulances in more and more places. That is the aim. That is why last year we had seven. This year, we are getting 12 and hopefully we get more and more. That is one of the major “beg” items we have. Whenever people intimate that they want to help, we ask for ambulances. We fully recognise the need but an ATV is not being used in the place of an ambulance.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Project code 2501900 – Equipment - Medical: what equipment will be purchased and where will they be placed?

Dr. Ramsaran: What we are basically trying to do is recapitalise a certain important section of health – the surgical aspect. For example, there are surgical instruments. Mabaruma, Suddie, West Demerara Regional Hospital, Bartica, Lethem and Linden are all places with theatres in the hospitals. Suction machines will be purchased for West Demerara Regional Hospital, Diamond, CC Nicholson Hospital and Linden. Sterilisers will be purchased for Agricola, North East La Penitence, Bartica, Kamarang and Kwakwani. Autoclaves will be purchased for Fort Wellington and Kwakwani; and it goes on. There is another list of places that will get spinal boards. Oxygen cylinders will be purchased for Parika, Charity, Annai, Karasabai, and Kato. Examination couches will be purchased for Lodge, Sophia North East, David Rose; blood pressure apparatus for Port Kaituma, Mabaruma, Moruka, Mahdia, Kwakwani, Timehri and so on. We can facilitate you with this list of items and where they will be sent and the numbers they will be going in. Examination lamps will be purchased for Mabaruma, Port Kaituma, Moruka, Mahdia, Kwakwani, Timehri, Agricola, Sophia, *et cetera*. Trolleys will be purchased for Port Kaituma, Kwakwani, Timehri, Agricola, Sophia, *et cetera*. Dressing gowns...

Mr. Chairman: How long is this list?

Dr. Ramsaran: There are several lists. It is a thick document.

4.02 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: Not today.

Dr. Ramsaran: That is what I am saying. We can facilitate this.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you. I appreciate that.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: I just wanted to ask if he can kindly give us the list.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, under project code 1201700, could the Hon. Minister say what the acute care facility at Fort Canje Hospital actually entails?

Dr. Ramsaran: We are going to be completing the nurses' rest room, internal finishes and the access road to the facility. The facility already exists. These are some of the works that would be done to make it better. The nurses comfort would be enhanced with the rest room and certain internal finishes will be done and the access road to the facility itself.

Dr. Norton: Similarly, could the Hon. Minister say what area is earmarked for the upgrading of the Linden Hospital Complex?

Dr. Ramsaran: Basically, there are three areas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell you this: the Linden Hospital is probably one of the best run hospitals that we have.

Mr. Chairman: You said so before and we appreciate that.

Dr. Ramsaran: We have a Linden Hospital upgrade. There is an old hospital building that is still well preserved, relatively. We hope to do certain renovations there to make apartments for the new doctors. There are many new doctors there. We want to make two self-contained two-bedroom rooms for the doctors on call, so beside apartments, where they can stay as residents, we want to have two on-call rooms so that they can permanently be near the site of work. For the canteen, we want to upgrade a section of the same old building to house a proper staff canteen and, interestingly, ophthalmology. As I just mentioned, we have already specialised one young lady as an eye specialist. She worked along with Dr. Norton on some training after she came back. She is a full-fledged eye surgeon but we have an eye surgeon without an ophthalmology theatre at Linden so we are going to change that by upgrading a section of the said old building to house dedicated areas for a theatre for the eye, a recovery room, a sterile area, a scrub room area, a preparation area and the other things necessary.

Ms. Ally: Mr. Chairman, in keeping with the decision that we had at a special subcommittee looking at matters of a questionable nature, I want to indicate, first of all, that it is the intension of the Opposition not to support this item in the Estimates. However, we are open to any discussion that the Government may want to have before you put the question to see whether a consensus can be arrived at. If the Government is not interested, we are only too willing to go ahead with the vote on this identified item.

Mr. Chairman: Under Programme 474, Capital, beginning on page 443 and continuing, we have Ministry of Health buildings, doctors' quarters, specialty hospital project, land and water transport, office furniture and equipment, medical equipment and other equipment.

Mr. Greenidge: Mr. Chairman, if I might just add to the observation by the Whip, it would be to say that our preference would be that you take the items under the head individually but if you cannot...

Mr. Chairman: I have to put the entire programme to the vote.

Mr. Greenidge: Okay, well let me just signal to you, as she has, that as regards the speciality hospital, we are not desirous, specifically, of supporting that and any consensus would have to be built around that understanding but to the extent that you are taking them all together, that has implications.

Mr. Chairman: I believe that the Government...

Mr. Ramjattan: [*Inaudible*] the position of the Alliance For Change, if I be allowed, Mr. Chairman. We had thought that the procedure would be, just like we had one yesterday, where we could probably come to a compromise to delink that because we did not want to deny doctors quarters and all of that but because there is absolutely not going to be any discussion like we had in relation to GuySuCo, we might have to go the way of disapproving the whole head.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, as Chairman of the Committee of Supply, I will have to proceed and put the vote if there is no counter to the proposal and the request made by Ms. Amna Ally, Chief Whip, and supported by Mr. Greenidge and by Mr. Ramjattan.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, just in terms of procedure, the issue was that we agreed yesterday that by nine o'clock every morning, we, on the Government's side, would be informed as to the items to be considered in the subcommittee, whether it was a reduction, *et cetera*. As of this morning, you and I were in communication. We were not getting anything and, therefore, the meeting was cancelled. We subsequently got an e-mail from Ms. Ally about the four items that the Opposition wishes to give non-approval to so I do not know what negotiations one has when it is non-approval. Therefore, the four items - speciality hospital, Amerindian Development Fund, community policing, institutional strengthening of labour... By the note of the Opposition, written by Ms. Ally, it gives no idea of a reduction. It is a question of non-approval and, on that basis, we have acted.

Question put.

Members: Division.

Division bell rang.

Mr. Chairman: Members are reminded to use their microphones when indicating their voting preference.

Committee of Supply divided: Ayes 32, Noes 33, as follows:

Noes

Mr. T. Williams

Ms. Marcello

Dr. Ramayya

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe

Mrs. Hughes

Mr. Nagamootoo

Mr. Ramjattan

Ms. Ferguson

Ms. Williams

Mr. Morian

Mr. Jones

Mr. Adams

Mrs. Baveghems

Mr. Kissoon

Mr. Elliot

Mr. Bond

Mr. Trotman

Ms. Selman

Mr. Allicock

Ms. Wade

Dr. Cummings

Mr. Felix

Ms. Hastings

Mr. Scott

Mr. Bulkan

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon

Mr. Greenidge

Dr. Norton

Mrs. Lawrence

Mr. B. Williams

Ms. Ally

Dr. Roopnarine

Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger

Ayes

Mr. Jaffarally

Mr. Damon

Dr. Persaud

Rev. Dr. Gilbert

Dr. Mahadeo

Mr. Seeraj

Mr. Neendkumar

Mr. Lumumba

Mr. Chand

Mr. G. Persaud

Ms. Shadick

Mrs. Chandarpal

Mr. Nadir

Ms. Teixeira

Bishop Edghill

Mr. Whittaker

Mr. Baksh

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai

Ms. Webster

Ms. Manickchand

Mr. Benn

Dr. Anthony

Mr. Ali

Dr. Ramsaran

Dr. Westford

Mr. R. Persaud

Dr. Singh

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett

Mr. Nandlall

Dr. Ramsammy

Mr. Rohee

Mr. Hinds

Motion negatived.

Programme: 474 Regional and Clinical Services - \$1,351,574,000 - was not agreed to.

Mr. Chairman: Bear in mind, as I have said before, that these are proposals because when we sit in plenary then we will make the final decision about the approvals or non-approvals but, as it is, the proposal is that these sums do not form part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 475 – Health Sciences Education – \$478,357,000

Dr. Norton: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Under line item 6112 - Senior Technical - we had an increase in staff of one but an increase in salary of \$3 million. Could the Hon. Minister say what the designation and wages are?

Dr. Ramsaran: We have here one Nursing Tutor, category 1, who was employed by the Ministry of Health and this includes the 5% increase as a factor. The salary is, for Nursing Tutor 1, \$139,253.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, under line item 6281 - Security Services - there is an increase of \$10 million. Could the Hon. Minister tell this House what changes took place within the security service to account for this \$10 million?

Dr. Ramsaran: Beside the 5% increase, there has been an adjustment to bring these wages in line with the legal minimum wage requirements and that has been the major part of the calculation, especially for this line item.

Dr. Norton: I waited until the Programme Health Sciences Education because I want to ask the same question that I asked the Georgetown Public Hospital. For the general practitioners who are desirous of doing post graduate studies, a scholarship, per se, might not be available and they are prepared to go and do post graduate services probably on their own with leave with pay, would the Ministry of Health accommodate such efforts by these general practitioners?

Mr. Chairman: Is that under a particular line item or is that a general question?

Dr. Norton: Yes, this is under training. I was looking for a line item to ask this point.

Dr. Ramsaran: I know. It is not coming directly out of the line item, but I think that we can accommodate it. It is a good question. The Ministry of Health is a learning organisation. If we want to train, we train. But I think better advice would be had from the Minister of Public Service on this because it concerns contracts, it concerns creating custom and precedence and so on. But definitely, as I explained, persons on our contract have had their employment held in abeyance while they get paid then they pay back for those years when they come back, like the

four ophthalmologist that we trained recently. We are so generous that we would even create a theatre for them when they come back if it does not exist.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, very good.

Dr. Ramsaran: I think it is better addressed to the Public Service Minister but we can explore it. I was not prepared for that question to this extent here now.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you. Hon. Members, I would like to say that we have surpassed the two-hour limit placed for the Ministry of Health. We have, in a sense, three programmes to go through so I am going to exercise my authority as Speaker and put aside half of an hour for us to complete these three, so I ask that we move with some haste.

Programme: 475 – Health Sciences Education – \$478,357,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 475 – Health Sciences Education – \$17,712,000

Dr. Cummings: Project code 1201700, profile 208. There is description of project here which entails the payment of retention, completion of the Nursing School in East Street and extension of the New Amsterdam School of Nursing. Could the Hon. Minister state how much has been expended on these individual projects so far and how much will be spent for each project in 2014?

Dr. Ramsaran: As of 31st December, 2013, the School of Nursing had \$4.539 million spent and we hope, as this year's Budget proposes, that there is retention of \$373,000. For the completion of the Nursing School at East Street, \$4,539,339 was spent last year. For the West Demerara Nursing Hostel, we spent \$3,357,878 and that is where the retention is held. I made a mistake a few minutes ago. That is where the retention is held and not for East Street; it is for the West Demerara Hostel. For the New Amsterdam extension of the Nursing School, the estimated cost for this year is \$7.999 million.

Programme: 475 – Health Sciences Education – \$17,712,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 476 – Standards and Technical Services – \$517,247,000

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, once again, under Staffing Details, item 6111, we have an increase in staff for Administrative of one and there is an increase in wages by \$3 million. Could the Hon. Minister say what the wages are and the designation?

Dr. Ramsaran: A Director of Standards was elected and this also reflects the 5% on that employment cost too. The salary is \$260,495, to be exact.

Dr. Norton: Also in staffing details, Contracted Employees, with an increase in staff of three, we have an increase in wages of \$23 million. Could the Hon. Minister tell us the designation of these three staff members and their salaries?

Dr. Ramsaran: This is an indication, too, Dr. Norton, of that transition, that absorption, where we have taken in two Medical Technologists and one Chief Medical Technologist along with the 5% increase and this account for that steep increase in wages.

Dr. Norton: What would be their wages, please?

Dr. Ramsaran: One hundred and sixty-five thousand, three hundred and seventy-five dollars plus the gratuity and other fringe benefits. We can give you all of those.

Dr. Norton: I would love for the Minister to give them because we have to account for \$23 million.

Dr. Ramsaran: There are two Medical Technologists and one Chief Medical Technologist. The Medical Technologist's wage is \$107,485 per month.

Dr. Norton: Could the Hon. Minister explain, under line item 6221 - Drugs and Medical Supplies - the increase of \$100 million as compared to that of last year?

Dr. Ramsaran: This has to do with the said argument that we had and I suggest too, Mr. Chairman, that we look at this Volume; it tells us what each programme does. Programme 6 has a lot to do with testing, keeping standards and so on; there are a lot of reagents and such things, rapid testing kits and so on. They do a certain aspect of that, too, as per profile, as is given here.

This is part of the transition, part of the absorption and, Mr. Chairman, if you would indulge me here, I will forewarn us that the absorption of vaccines, which is to come shortly in the next few years, is going to hit us hard because whereas one might be getting them for a few cents now, the real market price can be \$3.60 and so on so this is just the tip of the iceberg. Lest you think I am trying to divert, this is due to the transferral of these costs to the Government of Guyana (GOG) Budget as opposed to a few in the recent past to special projects budget.

Programme: 476 – Standards and Technical Services – \$517,247,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 476 – Standards and Technical Services – \$18,300,000

Dr. Norton: Under Equipment – Medical, I would just ask the Hon. Minister, concerning the chemistry analyser, where is it earmarked for and, of the \$17 million, what is the cost of that?

Dr. Ramsaran: There are three analysers that we are hoping to procure - one for Suddie, one for Bartica and one for West Demerara Regional Hospital. There are three items of the same nature.

Programme: 476 – Standards and Technical Services – \$18,300,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditures

Programme: 477 – Rehabilitation Services – \$259,667,000

Dr. Norton: Staffing Details, 6116 – Contracted Employees - here again, could the Hon. Minister explain the increase of \$10 million for the two contracted employees, their designations and salaries?

Dr. Ramsaran: This one is for a Cook and an Administrative Assistant. Remember that the 5% goes not only on these salaries but on the salaries of all of the already existing personnel given in Staffing Details so there are 127 persons here who are at different levels so the 5% would have to be calculated on those too so it is the 5% plus these three or four additions.

Dr. Cummings: Line item 6281 - Security Services - under Rehabilitation, there is an increase there. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister to explain which security firm was contracted. Was there a tendering process and what changes took place to arrive at this sum?

Dr. Ramsaran: Very much the same argument holds. This reflects the increase when the payment to these people came in line with the accepted minimum wage and, on top of that, the 5%; that increased the emolument.

Dr. Cummings: Which security firm, through the Chair? Is it RK? Which security firm is it?

Dr. Ramsaran: Strategic Action Company.

Dr. Cummings: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Jones: Comrade Chairman, just for clarification, the Hon. Minister keeps referring to a 5% increase. Is that for this year?

Dr. Ramsaran: That would be for last year, but it has to be rolled over into this year now because that is the salary that they would be expecting. The 5% will have to be not only for the people who are being added, but it would have to be for the entire workforce that is already there so that comes up to a considerable sum.

Programme: 477 – Rehabilitation Services – \$259,667,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

4.32 p.m.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 477 – Rehabilitation Services – \$4,500,000

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, just one question to the Minister on Equipment – Medical: could the Hon. Minister say which centre these three equipment – the ultra sound machine, the auditory brainstem response machine and the audiometer - are earmarked for?

Dr. Ramsaran: Yes, we could give you that information. The ultra sound machine is earmarked for the Physiotherapy Department, Lethem; audiometer for the Audiology Clinic; the echo check

for the Audiology in Georgetown; the auditory brainstem response machine for the Audiology Clinic; wheel chairs are to be distributed across the Regions.

Programme: 477 – Rehabilitation Services – 4,500,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Members, I would like to thank the Hon. Minister. He had over two and a half hours of questioning. I would like to thank his staff as well for assisting the Minister. Please note, Minister, that you did undertake to provide quite a volume of documents. So we will be expecting, in reasonable time, that those documents will be provided. Thank you very much, Hon. Members.

Agency: 16 Ministry of Amerindian Affairs

Current Expenditure

Programme: 161 – Amerindian Development - \$411,941,000

Leader of the Opposition [Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger]: Mr. Chairman, with your permission, this is an important matter and I rise to reiterate the point made by our Whip a little while ago. We did agree on a mechanism, a high level negotiating mechanism, because we were committed to arriving at a budget which could satisfy the needs of our people as we perceive them on all three sides. We are serious about it and feel it was a good move, a good initiative, and would not like that initiative to perish because of a technicality in terms of the timing for the submission of the points.

We are about to embark on another head and we feel that more information could be provided. We feel that discussion could yield consensus, could yield a solution, and we would not like to proceed without giving the mechanism an opportunity to work. So I make a late appeal, asking that this matter be raised here because it was one of the items that were submitted. We feel that if there was some discussion, some negotiation, we do not need to have a collision on the matter. And I anticipate there will be a collision unless there is negotiation. So I appeal to you, on behalf of the Opposition, to consider putting this matter concerning the Amerindian Development Fund back into the high level negotiating mechanism so we can have our questions answered, with due respect.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Sir. Hon. Members, I remain ready, willing and able at all times. In fact, I was going to propose a suspension a few minutes ago but, as I said, I sense that the mood of the House was against that. It is not for me to adjourn the House without the consent of Members. Hon. Members, I am prepared to meet. I wish to hear from the Government side as to its disposition on this matter. Sorry, Mr. Nagamootoo, I recognise you.

Mr. Nagamootoo: Mr. Chairman, like the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, we had indicated, from the Alliance For Change (AFC), whilst we were on the floor during the general debate on the Budget, that there ought to be room for dialogue, consultation and consensus, with regard to some aspects of the Budget. We had indicated on behalf of the Alliance For Change that we are generally in agreement with most of the provisions of the Budget. I think the Hon. Minister of Finance read for us from somewhere that the AFC was in agreement with 90%. But we had also said that in so far as social services are concerned, in a very general way, we are in full support, except for a few items we considered to be controversial. That is why, Your Honour, we were very willing to participate in the high level talks which took place in your Chamber, under your initiative, to be able to work out some compromises. Up to the time I came to the National Assembly today, I was still expecting, perhaps against hopes, that we could arrive at a situation where we could delink the controversial items so that we do not have a scattered bullet approach that will shoot down areas that ought not to be touched. We have seen just now the Speciality Hospital is a controversial project, but Government created new areas so if we were to take a decision on the Speciality Hospital, we would have to cut other areas so they can have an opportunity to do mobilisation against the Opposition.

With regards to the Amerindian Fund, we support the development of the Amerindian people throughout Guyana, and interior residents generally.

An Hon. Member: Why are you delaying the House?

Mr. Nagamootoo: My friend is saying we are delaying the House because they are in a rush. This is an opportunity to mobilise Amerindians to make them feel the Opposition did not have their interest at heart. Because of what Your Honour set out in some guidelines - the Hon. Chief Justice has made a ruling that the Opposition could not cut, we could not amend - we had indicated to the Government that we will indicate some reduction in this Fund, but it is obvious

that the Government does not want to entertain the idea of a sound mechanism to put in place, in a practical way, some allocation that will benefit the Amerindian people. But they are dangling \$1 billion as a propaganda toy, knowing that if we talk to them to reduce, they would say no, cut the whole thing, because, for them, the bigger the damage, the better the chance for electioneering. So we regret that the Government has not indicated any intention to compromise and any heart whatsoever for Amerindian people, but only politics, propaganda and mobilisation. This is, for us, highly unacceptable. *[Interruption]*

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I still need to hear Mr. Nagamootoo, please.

Mr. Nagamootoo: We are still hoping that we can have dialogue; the way to Guyana's future is not confrontation. Yesterday has shown, after we had gone into Your Honour's Chamber for hours on several occasions, we came out unified and we voted for a subsidy to the Guyana Sugar Corporation (GuySuCo) to help to rescue the sugar workers, to help to rescue the sugar industry. And like yesterday, they became so intolerant because they were saying to the people, the sugar workers, that the Opposition wanted ethnic extermination of the Indians working in the sugar industry...

Mr. Chairman: Mr. Nagamootoo, I do not want to get back to that argument.

Mr. Nagamootoo: And we showed them that the propaganda was wicked, mischievous and destructive. And we took a rational vote on the issue and they paid sugar workers to come here to stage a demonstration. *[Interruption]* Sir, this hurts. It hurts because their propaganda ploy cannot work; it will not succeed. *[Interruption]*

Mr. Chairman: I cannot hear a thing. Hon. Members, if this continues, I am going to rise.

Mr. Nagamootoo: Sir, we would like, at this stage, to have dialogue on a possibility that we can work out a compromise with regard to this item. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, at this point in time, having heard the Leader of the Opposition and Mr. Nagamootoo, I am prepared for us to convene the subcommittee. A meeting requires two sides to attend if there is to be dialogue and discussion. I will rise; I will invite the representatives of the two sides to attend. We will expect that both sides will attend. We will take

a break for five minutes. So Members will determine whether they will attend the meeting or not, but I will be in Chambers and I believe we should convene the meeting.

Assembly resumed.

Sitting suspended at 4.44 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 4.53 p.m.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply.

In Committee of Supply.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I had asked for a five-minute suspension so that the request of the Leader of the Opposition and Mr. Nagamootoo, representing, of course, the Members of the Opposition, could be considered but no meeting was held. And so I propose we commence the consideration of the Estimates for the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs.

Agency: 16 Ministry of Amerindian Affairs

Current Expenditure

Programme: 161 – Amerindian Development - \$411,941,000

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Mr. Chairman, line item 6111 – Administrative: I notice there is an increase from five to seven, Hon. Minister. What designations do they occupy and what remuneration per month do they receive?

Minister of Amerindian Affairs [Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai]: Mr. Chairman, before I respond, least the Amerindian students and youths be overlooked, I wish to draw the House's attention to them sitting in the lobby, and I compliment them for being interested in today's session. For too long, people tend to overlook the indigenous people.

Mr. Chairman, the two positions speak to the Principal Assistant Secretary (General) and the Welfare Officer.

Mr. Allicock: Mr. Chairman, line item 6113: could the Hon. Minister state the allocations for the semi-skilled and unskilled separately?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Mr. Chairman., this line item caters for the 5% increase in salary for the position of Welfare Officer.

Mr. Allicock: Could the Hon. Minister say what is the person's remuneration?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Mr. Chairman, it is \$71,858.

Mr. Allicock: Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, line item 6116: could the Hon. Minister say what are the designations for the five new contracted employees and their emoluments?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: They are two Cleaners at \$39,540; one Cook at \$41,083; one Handyman at \$37,657; and one Assistant Cook at \$45,331.

Mr. Allicock: Line item 6255: could the Hon. Minister indicate which other infrastructure is to be maintained?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This line item caters for minor maintenance of infrastructure of the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs' Residence, Princess Street; that is the bridge and rails at its approach, the windows, the leaking roof and painting. If he wants, I can share the amount which is \$310,000. At the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs' Head Office, repainting of the vehicle bay, maintenance of the guard hut and road side car parking area will amount to \$1.04 million.

At the Sophia Exhibition Site, we will be painting the Benab floor at \$550,000. At the student dorm at Liliendaal, we will be installing an additional exit gate at an estimated cost of \$200,000

Mr. Allicock: Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister say whether this sum is adequate to operate or complete the job stipulated?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Mr. Chairman, these are the estimates and I believe that, as an estimate, it will be adequate according to the identified works.

Mr. Allicock: Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, line item 6215: could the Hon. Minister explain what is meant by "Other Transport" and could a breakdown be given on allocations for each item?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Could I get clarity? Is it line item 6215?

Mr. Chairman: What line item is it, Hon. Member?

Mr. Allicock: It is line item 6265.

Mr. Chairman: Other Transport, Travel and Postage. Are you asking what accounts for the increase?

Mr. Allicock: Let me go it over again, Mr. Chairman. Could the Hon. Minister explain what is meant by “Other Transport” and could a breakdown be given on allocations per each item?

Mr. Chairman: What is involved in this?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: It involves flights or air transport, land hires, trucks and boat hires. I am not sure if he needs a breakdown because these are estimates.

Mr. Chairman: What are these estimates based on?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Based on projected and last year’s schedules of work.

Mr. Allicock: Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, line item 6302: could the Hon. Minister indicate the number of persons who will receive training, including scholarship and the nature of training?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Mr. Chairman, this line item speaks to the Hinterland Scholarship Programme.

Mr. Allicock: A follow-up: how many of these children will be from Region 9?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, in granting scholarships, do you have a form of affirmative action programme so that you know a certain number comes from each Region or is it based on qualifications?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Yes, 97 students from Region 9, I am advised.

Mr. Allicock: A follow-up: could the Hon. Minister say whether, in this training, there would be provisions for the training of legal minds within the community?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Mr. Chairman, just for the information of the Hon. Member and the House, scholarship students that the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs are responsible for executing are the National Grade 6 Exam students, children from around 11 years to 15/16 years. I suspect and believe that the Public Service Ministry PSM looks after scholarships for students beyond 16 years.

Mr. Chairman: I recall last year this question was asked and the Minister for Public Service said once it gets to university level, the Ministry takes over. That answer was clearly given last year.

Dr. Ramayya: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Item 6111 goes from five administrative persons to seven, a difference of \$2.8 million in this year's Budget. Could the Minister give us the information as to the salary of one of the employees at the administrative level?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Mr. Chairman, he asked for one of the highest employees and the salary. The Principal Assistant Secretary (General) receives a salary of \$203,035 per month.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, just a follow-up to what the Hon. Mr. Allicock had asked. I would like the Minister to say whether there are any plans ahead for the painting of the students' hostel. The roof is painted but the building outside is not.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Mr. Chairman, that is the design of the building. It is a special way of grubbing the concrete and it does not need painting. That is a special design. It is similar to the building of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Dr. Norton: Could the Hon. Minister say, in line item 6284, what is the number of the fleet of vehicles and how many of those are in the hinterland location?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: I am advised that there are one pickup in Region 9 and six ATVs across the other Regions.

Dr. Norton: Is that the total for the Ministry?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: And one motor cycle, I am advised. Yes, total for the Ministry

Dr. Norton: No, the total number of vehicles owned by the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs...

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: I am advised that there are 18 vehicles.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, under line item 6321, could the Hon. Minister explain why the request for \$12 million for the National Toshaos Council (NTC) is made again when it was made last year, but the revised budget only catered for about \$9 million?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Mr. Chairman, the NTC only spent \$9 million of its budgeted allocation last year. However, the estimated budget submitted speaks to the amount that is recorded here.

Dr. Norton: For the North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDB), what might have prevented them from using that which was provided for them? And if there was a problem, was the problem resolved?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Mr. Chairman, the NRDDB specifically does not receive a subvention from the Ministry. The Ministry, in the capital category or capital budget, provides for the Bina Hill Institute a sum of \$6 million annually as a subvention.

5.09 p.m.

Dr. Norton: What would the \$400,000 refer to in the Estimates?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: That is the credit scheme which is operated in the North Rupununi.

Dr. Norton: It is just to find out. If it is not controlled by the North Rupununi Development Board (NRDB) then it should not be placed under that. Could the Minister explain why it is placed under the North Rupununi Development Board?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: It is managed by a committee and not necessarily the NRDB Board.

Ms. Marcello: Line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister say to this Assembly which building she will be maintaining under this line item?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: There are three buildings – the Amerindian residence in Princess Street, the head office of the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs and students' dormitory at Liliendaal.

Ms. Marcello: Supplementary. I realised that when I visited the male ward of the Amerindian hostel, a couple of days, some parts of it were falling away. Are those parts of the building included in here?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: I am advised that under the capital expenditure that will be catered for.

Ms. Hastings: Line item 6281, Security Services: Could the Hon. Minister kindly say to this Assembly what the names are of the security services and where are they deployed?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: It caters for security services at the Amerindian residence, the students' dormitory at Liliendaal and the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, head office. The name of the security firm at the head office is Federal Management Systems, Inc.; at the Amerindian hostel there is the Integrated Security Services and at the students' dormitory, Federal Management Systems, Inc.

Ms. Hastings: Could the Hon. Minister say what accounts for the increase from \$16.7 million to \$17.5 million under that same line item?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: I am advised that the minimum wage, which was instituted earlier, some months ago, allowed for that increase.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Line item 6272, Electricity Charges: Hon. Minister, I notice there is an increase of almost \$2 million, could you explain this increase please?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: I am advised that it is a brought forward of prepayment sums of moneys in here.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Could the Minister please explain a bit more than that?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: I am advised that the payments of 2012 were prepaid and they therefore reduced the sum in 2013. In layman terms, it means that some of the services were paid in advance.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Line item 6284, Other: Could the Minister kindly explain how \$5,923,000 was used and how it was spent?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: It caters for computerised tomography (CT) scans, ultrasounds, cancer treatments, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) assistance and also burial assistance.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Thank you Hon. Minister. Line item 6291, National and Other Events - \$33,500,000: Could the Minister say how much is earmarked for the Amerindian Heritage Month?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: It is customary that an estimated \$25 million is put for Amerindian Heritage Month activities.

Mr. Ramjattan: Line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships): I notice from her speech she indicated that lots more people wanting training, but the exact sum last year remains the sum budgeted this year. My question, why is there not an increase?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: I have answered this question already, but, maybe, I should go into much more details. This line item, 6302, speaks to the Hinterland Scholarship Programme executed by the Ministry. It is expected to have 430 students in 2014 and it caters for students' pocket allowances, dorm allowances, annual vacation, travelling, students' uniform allowances, examination fees, purchases of special textbooks, assistance for School Based Assessment (SBA) projects and, of course, we also support students at the Guyana Technical Institute and Carnegie School of Home Economics.

Mr. Ramjattan: My question was: Is there going to be an increase this year so that we should have projected some more? Are we going to keep the figure at the \$416,000?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: This speaks to students and not youths who would need specialised training. These are students who are attending secondary schools.

Mr. Chairman: I think what Mr. Ramjattan is asking is why the cost is fixed in 2013 and 2014. Why is it that there is not even a one-dollar adjustment?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Our budget is guided by the year before. I am sure that if there is any additional sum required we can probably come back and seek the House's permission. At this point in time, our estimate, with respect to looking after the 430 students, works out to this amount.

Mr. Chairman: Very well. Mr. Ramjattan, are there any other questions? Your microphone is still on.

Ms. Marcello: Line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies: I realise that there is a slight increase in this allocation. Could the Hon. Minister indicate to this Assembly who benefits from this allocation?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: The students' hostel, head office staff, of course, the Amerindian Affairs residence at Princess Street and the field staff benefit. These are first aid packages.

Ms. Hastings: Let me take the Minister back to line item 6264, Vehicles Spares and Services. According to the Auditor General's report, page 57, as of December, 2012, All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) were to Regions 1, 8 and 9 and to that date they were not registered. My question: Are they registered now, and if so, when were they registered?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: All ATVs procured for villages are registered before they are distributed. If they are not registered they cannot be sent out for their use.

Ms. Hastings: Why I asked is because looking at that report the Auditor General it stated that they were sent, but not registered. My question, are they registered now, and if so, when were they registered?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: I am advised by my technical people that two have been registered and the others are in the process, right now.

Ms. Hastings: Thank you.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: I am advised. I heard someone said it was four.

Programme: 161 – Amerindian Development - \$411,941,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 161 – Amerindian Development - \$1,142,500,000

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to make it clear that I really do not know or have the answer as to why this was not discussed earlier, as...

Mr. Chairman: Mrs. Garrido-Lowe, we now are at the stage of questions.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: May I have just a minute to say something on our behalf?

Mr. Chairman: Very quickly please, we are at the stage of questions.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: I am saying that I do not know why it was not discussed before. I would have liked if it was discussed so that we could have been able to at least let the Minister know or an arrangement be made that only one line item be deleted from this, instead of the whole head. At least something could have been arranged.

Mr. Chairman: Very well thank you.

Ms. Selman: Project 1209600, Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister say what the anticipated timeline is for the completion of the rehabilitation of the Amerindian hostel, and whether this amount here is adequate to complete all the works?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: The \$6 million is earmarked for the Amerindian residence and we expect to expend this sum within the year. That is the time frame.

Mr. T. Williams: My question to the Hon. Minister of Amerindian Affairs is that under project 1400100, Amerindian Development Fund, this House passed and approved a supplemental amount of \$500 million in December and the legend stated, "Provision for projects in Amerindian communities." I would like to ask the Hon. Minister to give to this Assembly a list of references of some of these projects that were done with the \$500 million, and name the regions they were done in.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Last year December, the House approved \$500 million; he is correct. The \$500 million related to a request as submitted at the National Toshaos Council meeting in October between the 21st and 25th of 2013. The priorities, as requested by the Toshaos, were tabulated and that amounted to \$500 million for equipment, support for transportation for schoolchildren, emergencies and such likes. That was debated in full in December.

However, I will now answer the second part of Mr. Trevor Williams' question. The second part of his question speaks to support for the youth Community Service Officers (CSO) programme, economic programmes under the Secure Livelihood Programme, the Presidential Grant for 2014. Under Agriculture, there is the support in agriculture, the purchase of tractors and drip irrigation. There is support for culture which is an important part of the Indigenous Peoples' lives, therefore, we will be supporting cultural expo in the North Pakaraimas, cultural projects in various communities, musical instrument and language revival projects. The other projects will be falling under tourism, tourism and youth projects. Under Education, there is the subvention to Bina Hill Institute and infrastructure projects which will cater for woodworking centres, village offices and multi-purpose centres.

Ms. Marcello: Project 2403100, Land Transport: The same money that my colleague was speaking about, \$500 million, which was allocated, in that list the Hon. Minister stated some of the communities and the boats and engines she will be purchasing, as well as the amounts. Here, again, I realise that it has "Purchase of boats and engines" and "...vehicles and motorcycles". I just wanted to ask the Hon. Minister how many boats, engines and vehicles will be purchasing with this allocation as well as motorcycles.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: I think the Hon. Member is speaking to two heads, Water Transport and Land Transport, so I will provide her with the answers. With respect to land transportation, a 4x4 vehicle will be purchased for the Minister's Secretariat; ATVs will be purchased for Kako and Karasabai and a motorcycle will also be purchased for Karasabai's Community Health Worker (CHW). That is the number of vehicles which will be purchased for land transportation.

For water transportation, a 40-horse power will be purchased for the Mabaruma Community Development Officer (CDO), one boat for the Moruka CDO, an outboard engine and boat for Kokerite Amerindian village, a cargo boat and engine for Santa Rosa islands, a 21-foot boat and a 75-horse power for Akawini, 40-horse power outboard engine and boat for Bethany, a boat and engine for lower Bonasika, 15-horse power boat and engine for Kwebenang, 40-horse power Yamaha engine for Philippi...

Ms. Marcello: Excuse me Minister, to save time, could you please give us a list at your convenience.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: We will give you the list.

Ms. Marcello: Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman: Minister, when will you be in a position to distribute that list?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: We can give her now.

Mr. Chairman: The list will be available now. I recognise Ms. Dawn Hastings. Ms. Hastings, your questions, please.

Ms. Hastings: My question was answered, project 2403000. I will be happy to have the list.

Mr. Chairman: I recognise Ms. Renita Williams.

Ms. Williams: It is back to the \$500 million that was approved in December. I would like to ask the Minister for a breakdown of the projects in each community and if she can lay it over to me, please.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: We are ready to provide that, maybe tomorrow, but it was provided in December to this House.

Mr. Chairman: I think the question now would be the approval in December. How was the money being spent from December coming into April?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: As I alluded to in the December debate, we had most of the documentations prepared in anticipation that it would be approved by the House, and so far we are very well on our way to completing procurement of all the items.

Mr. Allicock: Project 1400100, Amerindian Development Fund: Could the Hon. Minister say what the allocation is for each of the four items mentioned for the \$1.1 billion – the individual allocation?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Under the economic projects, the Secure Livelihood Programme - \$5million, Presidential Grant, 2014 - \$200 million, the Youth Apprenticeship Project - \$796 million; under agriculture, tractors - \$26,400,000, drip irrigation - \$2.5 million; under culture, there is a total of \$21.1 million and the breakdown is cultural expo in the North Pakaraimas - 5

million, cultural project \$8.5 million, musical instruments - \$1.5 million, sport gears - \$22.1 million, the language revival project - \$4 million; for the tourism projects, under the Amerindian Development Fund (ADF), there is \$15 million; for the education subvention, to Bina Hill Institute - \$6 million; for infrastructural support, there will be for the woodworking centres - \$16 million, village offices - \$6 million and multi-purposes centres - \$6 million. That will bring us to the grand sum of \$1.1 billion for Amerindian development.

Mr. Allicock: Follow-up, Mr. Chairman. Could the Hon. Minister say whether there was any assessment done to see if it is in keeping with the needs of the people and building that self-confidence and independence of the Amerindian people within the region?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: I would like to say yes. This Amerindian Development Fund, which we have presented here, came out of the National Toshias' Council meeting in October in which 205 Amerindian leaders sat and discussed their priorities and needs which they wanted the Government to make supportive intervention to. This year captures some of it because the \$500 million did not capture all. We dealt with the priority issues. Here we are bringing the total sum now of what remains, including other requests, which village councils would have gleaned from their community meetings in consultation with their people.

I believe that the empowerment of the Amerindian villagers today is much higher than it was before. I have great confidence in the Amerindian people that they can decide what support they would wish Government to make an intervention for.

Mr. Allicock: Follow-up, Hon. Minister. Are you aware that the support officers are not trained? How can they give support to their village councils when they are not specialised in certain areas? Are you aware that it is bypassing the authority of the village councils?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: I am not aware of any such situation. What I am aware of is the Annai Village Council analysis of the CSOs that are attached to the village council. For us, it states that on village council most of the CSOs, in that district, are females and they are very helpful to the village council. They are engaged in a lot different institutions and activities in the village – tourism, agriculture, education and the village council's office. They are in office every day.

Obviously, if there is something amiss with this report, there are CDOs and project officers who go out in the field. Of course, as Minister, I would wish to validate such a report coming in, so maybe, I will tend to evaluate to see if it is correct.

Mr. Allicock: Hon. Minister, I am not sure you are aware of the true picture, the reality, of what is happening on the ground. There have been a lot of these young people, who because of not knowing exactly what to do to support the communities have absent themselves. Good money is spent, which, if it was done the right way, would have been far better. We have to look at how we account for these moneys.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Mr. Chairman, I did not get what he said, there was knocking...

Mr. Chairman: I think that Mr. Allicock was making the point that you may not be fully *au fait* or aware of what is happening. Perhaps, I do not know whether he is speaking for his own region. I did receive a letter today from the Annai Village Council, by the way. I think that Mr. Allicock is trying to make the point that many of those persons, not being properly trained, absent themselves because they do not know what to do and it is leading to what he sees as a waste of good money. I think that is the point Mr. Allicock was trying to make.

Mr. Allicock: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: I would wish to respond to that. The CSO Programme actually offers a very good opportunity for youths to develop and also for the village council to support youths in developing their human and social capital. The CSOs also contribute to community development. They help and support the village councils in accountability and transparency. They engage also in monitoring projects ... [*Interruption*]

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, could we hear the Minister's response please. I need to hear Minister's response. I am sure Mr. Allicock wishes too so that he could take it back to his region.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Yes Mr. Chairman, I will repeat. The CSO Programme offers a very good opportunity for Amerindian villages to develop their human and social capital and that is the youth. The youths contribute to community development, activities, events and the various sectors within their community. Education, they support as aids to qualified teachers in the school, they support the CHWs and they also support infrastructure, whereby communities that

have received solar power units and need to have monitoring for our elderly pensioners who want something to be done on their houses.

I wish this Assembly would have had an electronic means for me to show. Today on Facebook the Paruima Village Council leader, Mr. Damon, has on the website how wonderful the CSOs are now completing a children's park with slides and swings. He said that this was for our children and even for those elderly who missed out their childhood. In fact, he also produced a DVD which he showed to all the village leaders who were on the National Toshihos Council, all the activities that the CSOs are engaged.

5.39 p.m.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Mr. Allicock would know that in the recent art and music festival how all of the CSOs in the North Rupununi district took on the supporting role of ensuring that that festival was a success. That speaks for itself, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Allicock: On the same project, if we do not get this right we could never go right.

Could the Hon. Minister say if they have done an assessment to verify whether these moneys are properly spent? We talked about accountability. Would these young people be accountable if they are not trained? We believe that the institution, such as technical institutes, institution for agricultural development which would... *[inaudible]*.

Mr. Chairman: Mr. Allicock, is there a specific question you need to put to the Minister? You made a comment about what your beliefs are. Do you have a question for the Minister on what you just said?

Mr. Allicock: The question was whether there was an assessment to verify whether these moneys... *[inaudible]*

Mr. Chairman: Is there some kind of a policy analysis to see whether the targets are being met?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: The project is now in its eighth months and we are in the process of preparing the report. In fact, I was sent, by the technical people, a report from June to December which we are now reviewing. Of course, we will be able to evaluate the successes, the lessons and the experiences that this new and innovative project, which include more than 900

Amerindians youths across the hinterland regions... This will give us a guide to what he is seeking.

Mrs. Hughes: Hon. Minister, project 1400100, Amerindian Development Fund, you mentioned the Secure Livelihood Programme and Youth Entrepreneurship and Apprenticeship Programme (YEAP), could you tell us how many young people are going to be trained and exactly what villages are being targeted?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Under the programme, training will be done, this year, in maintenance of vehicles because that is important with the ATVs and other vehicles going into certain regions, for example, in Region 8, ATVs...

Mrs. Hughes: How many young people?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: For those under infrastructure there will be two each per village. There will be computer training and, of course, that will be preparing each village for the establishment of the computer system.

Mrs. Hughes: Hon. Minister, I am just asking for how many because you said that \$796 million will be spent

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: It will be 187 villages by two persons in each sector.

Mr. Chairman: It is 187 villages with two per in each sector.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: If we are training in computer literacy we will train two so that they will be the trainer of trainers when the One Lap Top Per Family (OLPF) project kicks in.

Mrs. Hughes: Follow-up question. In the offices and the multi-purpose buildings, in which the Minister mentioned, what villages or communities will those be in?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: I am advised that for the construction of the village offices it will be Batavia, Paramakatoi, Karisparu and Kaibarupai.

For the multipurpose buildings it will be Wallaba, Yupukari, Kamana and Krowdar.

Mrs. Hughes: Finally, the drip irrigation, what communities are we talking about there?

Minister, if you have a list that I could have access to that would be fine in the interest of time.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: you will be provided with a list.

Mr. Chairman: Is it today?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: In fact, we will provide it tomorrow.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Project 1400100, Amerindian Development Fund: With regard to the Secure Livelihood Programme, the YEAP, last year this House approved \$200 million for that project. Could the Hon. Minister tell us how many youths were trained and in what sectors for this amount of money for last year and what their remunerations were?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Out of the \$200 million budgeted for last year 198 CSOs were trained in the management of photovoltaic system; there were 198 trained in infrastructure, ICT, management of basic computer hardware; there were 392 trained in governance; there were 102 trained in business development training and, of course, this was done with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Ministry of Amerindian Affairs (MoAA) and Empretec; there were 37 trained in agriculture and in basis report writing, communication, business plan, basic social welfare issues there were 498 trained CSOs.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: In the entrepreneurship area, what were they exposed to exactly, what was the business training?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: They will be exposed to business training. We have already trained 102 and this training was done by Empretec Guyana.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Is that is small business management or food processing or what? I just need examples.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: It was business management training.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Hon. Minister, before I ask my next question, we are getting both positive and negative reports from this programme. Apparently, it has a weakness and it needs to be strengthened. I would like to ask how many of these youths dropped out of last year's programme.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: The dropout rate was very minimal. In fact, there is request for expansion and that is why it will be realised that this year additional sums are devoted for expanding the programme. We will also be expanding it to Regions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Before expanding the programme, does the Minister not think that she should strengthen the weaknesses, run the programme over again and find the weak areas and strengthen them before it is expanded?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: The assessment is in the review stage and it is noted.

Ms. Hastings: On the same programme of the CSOs, have the Minister catered, in this allocation, for ongoing training sessions? Why I asked is because I have some at the school and I would like to know if the Ministry can cater for librarians because we would be happy to have the CSOs but they must be trained with librarian skills. We need someone to operate the computer at the schools. These, I think, are not being done and I would be very happy if you can cater for these training sessions and we can see the real value for money that being spent.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Thank you Ms. Hastings. In this year's budget the Ministry has catered for sums to be allocated for training and this year it will still be focusing on computer training. It will be we will be focusing on maintenance of vehicles and equipment. Further, there will be business development training for those who have not yet accessed this training and of course computer communication for development, and yes, of course, if special areas are requested the Ministry will look at that, for example librarian.

Mr. T. Williams: I would like to ask the Hon. Minister of Amerindian Affairs if the funds, to this fund, have been disbursed so far, and that she is further requesting, will be audited by the Auditor General.

Hon. Members (Government): She?

Mr. Chairman: No. The Hon. Member said, "I would like to ask the Hon. Minister of Amerindian Affairs if the fund that she is disbursing..." That is quite proper.

Go ahead. Mr. T. Williams please ask the question.

Mr. T. Williams: I did.

Mr. Chairman: I did not hear it. Go ahead.

Mr. T. Williams: I would like to ask the Hon. Minister of Amerindian Affairs if the funds, which were previously approved by this House, and subsequently now requested, will be audited by the Auditor General.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Most naturally, any expenditure that is brought before and approved by this honourable House is secured and guaranteed that it will be audited.

Mr. T. Williams: Thank you very much. My second question: Is there is a special unit in the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs that is tasked, coordinated and set up to execute these programmes?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: The Ministry of Amerindian Affairs has a very dynamic and vibrant project unit.

Mr. T. Williams: It is my third question to the Hon. Minister of Amerindian Affairs. She started by saying that this project came out of the consultations of over 200 Amerindian leaders. The Guyana REDD+ Investment Fund (GRIF) from the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) provides for projects for the development of Amerindian communities. I would like to ask the Minister, therefore, if she is running here a parallel programme or if there is some harmonisation and syncing with the GRIF provided for?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Just for clarity, GRIF belongs to Guyana. It is Guyana's money and whatever projects are funded through GRIF we consider it Guyana's money so whatever other project is being funded by the budget here is complementary to that.

Mr. T. Williams: I just want to say that under the GRIF programmes there are mechanisms for intense scrutiny and I am taken aback that after the LCDS, a recent programme, which should have had wide consultation across the Amerindian communities, there is now a proposal that over 200 leaders and some of these same programmes are provided for under GRIF. Hence, I am asking the Hon. Minister of Amerindian Affairs to explain to us how does this programme relate, supplement, to the GRIF programmes to which allocations have been made and some of those projects, I understand, have started.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: May I enlighten this Assembly that fund from the GRIF is allocated for two major projects that seek to support Amerindian development. One has to do with land security and the other has to do with community development plans. The Amerindian Act speaks to community development plans. It also speaks to the village council having the authority to develop these plans. Of course, the Ministry will support and facilitate wherever it is necessary.

The community development plans are devolved from the village level whereby the village council has a role to ensure that the community is consulted. The Ministry of Amerindian Affairs would wish to know whether this has occurred. The CDO, who sometimes come from the very sub region, would be part of some of these consultations to aid. Therefore the project, here, goes through similar process and it was clearly enunciated in the NTC that one of the major issues raised by the NTC leaders or by the community leaders and village leaders, both in the outreach and in the meetings, I speak to community outreaches, and that is an issue of training for indigenous youths in specific area.

I want to assure this Assembly that the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs did not select areas for training. The village council recruited the CSOs and they were asked to indicate what sector they were interested in and of course, when one tabulated the applications it spoke to education, health, computer literacy, governance, leadership and business training. Therefore that is the level of consultation and the confidence that we believe, at the grass roots level, they are capable of indicating to this Government and to the Ministry what level and type of support they require.

Mr. T. Williams: The Hon. Minister highlighted two categories, mainly land titling and demarcation, and then there is a big area called community development plan. The Hon. Minister indicated to us that the national leaders in the Amerindian community are informed by the people on the ground, more or less, I figure the low level of leaders, but we have no definition here for community development plans coming out of the LCDS project as against community development plans coming out of this fund.

Mr. Chairman: Mr. Trevor Williams, I should say that in a sense your questions have to be restricted to what is before you. The Minister is not obliged to answer questions pertaining to LCDS because we are to consider the estimates and the programmes that are before us. I think your observations are noted.

Mr. Nadir: In the last questions that the Hon. Member Trevor Williams asked the Minister answered because I wanted to find out how the CSOs were chosen and the Minister did mention that.

Ms. Williams: It is a follow-up on Mrs. Garrido-Lowe's question on training programmes. After these youths are trained, are there jobs provided for them?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: If one takes the time to understand and, maybe, we need to explain a bit, the CSOs are Community Service Officers who are provided with an opportunity to serve their village. The CSOs are trained in the areas that they requested and they will be able to be empowered. Their capacities and competencies will be lifted and they will become much more marketable. The Government is not in the direct business of creating jobs. We create the environment and we create the human capital. We develop the human capital to meet those challenges and it is our responsibility as the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs to set and build a foundation for our Amerindian youths to be able to face that challenge of being empowered, having skills, competencies and capacity built so that they can reach out and absorb the opportunities that may abound in the community and outside of the community.

Ms. Williams: To the Hon. Minister, could she inform this Assembly, since the programme has started, how many dropouts there were in Region 1, Moruka?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: At this point I do not have the information but we can check and, maybe, tomorrow we can give an answer.

Mr. Jones: Could the Hon. Minister inform this Assembly who the CSOs report to?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: There is a system of reporting. The village council has oversight over the work of the CSOs because they actually work or provide support to village activities. At the local level they report to the village council.

Ms. Williams: I do not want to be offensive to the Hon. Minister but to my knowledge and understanding when we spoke to CSOs on the ground they just do not have regards for the Toshaos. They say they are supposed to be reporting to the Minister.

Question put.

Ms. Teixeira: Division.

Mr. Chairman: We are going to have the bell and we are going to give the opportunity for the technical officers... Could I say to the officers that I would like to thank the Minister and them for providing the answers as best as possible. Please note that some answers are to be provided but I really would like to thank them for their time. I know that they have been waiting since yesterday in fact.

Bell rang.

Committee of Supply divided: Noes 33, Ayes 32, as follows:

Noes

Mr. T. Williams

Ms. Marcello

Dr. Ramayya

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe

Mrs. Hughes

Mr. Nagamootoo

Mr. Ramjattan

Ms. Ferguson

Ms. Williams

Mr. Morian

Mr. Jones

Mr. Adams

Mrs. Baveghems

Ms. Kissoon

Mr. Elliot

Mr. Bond

Mr. Trotman

Ms. Selman

Mr. Allicock

Ms. Wade

Dr. Cummings

Mr. Felix

Ms. Hastings

Mr. Scott

Mr. Bulkan

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon

Mr. Greenidge

Dr. Norton

Mrs. Lawrence

Mr. B. Williams

Ms. Ally

Dr. Roopnarine

Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger

Ayes

Mr. Jafarally

Mr. Damon

Dr. Persaud

Rev. Dr. Gilbert

Dr. Mahadeo

Mr. Seeraj

Mr. Neendkumar

Mr. Lumumba

Mr. Chand

Mr. G. Persaud

Ms. Shadick

Mrs. Chandarpal

Mr. Nadir

Ms. Teixeira

Bishop Edghill

Mr. Whittaker

Mr. Baksh

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai

Ms. Webster

Ms. Manickchand

Mr. Benn

Dr. Anthony

Mr. Ali

Dr. Ramsaran

Dr. Westford

Mr. R. Persaud

Dr. Singh

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett

Mr. Nandlall

Dr. Ramsammy

Mr. Rohee

Mr. Hinds

Motion negatived.

Programme: 161 – Amerindian Development - \$1,142,500,000 - was not agreed to.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we will now take the recess for one hour.

Sitting suspended at 6.06 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 7.02 p.m.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply.

In Committee of Supply

Agency: 45 Ministry of Housing and Water

Current Expenditure

Programme: 451 – Housing and Water - \$516,685,000

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: Before I go into the questioning, I want to confirm that we have two hours for this session.

Mr. Chairman: Assume that we are now starting the day's work, because what we just completed was yesterday's work, while it may appear to be two hours, we have a lot of work ahead of us.

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: I am just trying to get a sense of if we are going to finish at 10.00 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: 10.00 p.m.? We have the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Public Works and the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development to do tonight.

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: I would say we would not finish at 10.00 p.m. If you could keep it to less than two hours, I would appreciate it actually.

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Before we start this particular area, I just want to, first of all, acknowledge that over the last year, I have had several meetings with the Minister of Housing and Water and I think we have had a fairly good relationship which I hope, eventually, will be to the benefit of the Guyanese people.

I would not be very long in questioning the Minister under this programme. I refer to line item 6116 – Contracted Employees. There is a minimum increase of close to \$1 billion and there is no increase in the number of employees in that category. Do you care to explain, Hon. Minister, if this has to do with an increase in salary?

Minister of Housing and Water [Mr. Ali]: First of all, I want to say that I regard the relationship as not fairly good but a very good one and definitely we, in the sector, are inclined to these types of collaboration. The increase is due to the annualising of salaries as a result of the 5% increase.

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: Is this the 5% for last year or are you catering for another 5% this year?

Mr. Ali: It is the 5% that was given last year and annualised this year.

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: You are, in fact, catering for another 5% this year.

Mr. Ali: It is the 5% given last year, Hon. Member.

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: I want to address several areas in relation to this sector as it specifically relates to these housing communities. I do not want to spend too much time on these figures because, by and large, there has been no significant change in the staffing details under this particular Ministry. If any other Member wishes to ask any particular question on that, I will give way and then address the other issues.

Programme: 451 – Housing and Water - \$516,685,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 451 – Housing and Water - \$8,463,717,000

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: Project code 1302000 – Community Infrastructure Improvement Project: an amount of \$484 million is allocated for this item. It is a brand new item. I wish the Minister to give some indication as to how this money is going to be spent and say what would have motivated the Ministry of Finance to allocate this sum of money on a brand new project.

Mr. Ali: During the Budget debate of 2013 and, more particularly, in the questioning during the consideration of the Estimates of 2013, many Members raised the issue of maintenance in the old housing schemes and new housing schemes and the role of local communities and residents in local communities participating in a maintenance programme that would ensure small things are done, for example bridges leading to cemeteries, building of small culverts, maintenance of drains, patching of roads and maintenance of school grounds and fences.

As a result of those consideration in the debate of 2013 and the questioning which arose during the time of the Estimates, we made a proposal to the Ministry of Finance to have a community infrastructure improvement project in collaboration with the community that would focus on promoting sustainable community in ensuring that we develop a mechanism that would enhance and safeguard the infrastructure and investment that we make in these communities. Also, this

fund would look at the environment in its generality and seek to ensure that the environment, in terms of bridges, access to burial grounds, crematoriums, schools, health facilities and other social infrastructures, is maintained.

It, also, would build off of the very successful Community Roads Improvement Programme (CRIP) which was financed under the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB). Under the CRIP, a community development manual as well as a community infrastructure maintenance manual was output of that Programme. In that Programme, also, there was the Community Participation Mechanism (CPM). As a result of activating the CPM, we are now in this process. We have to provide now the financing for the continuation and expansion of this Programme in Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10. The CPM will also ensure that we develop local capacity to protect investments in these communities.

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: Could the Hon. Minister state if this is a one-off project or is it likely to continue in coming years?

Mr. Ali: The Hon. Member has asked a very important question. In discussing this Programme with the Ministry of Finance, we made it clear that we would like to see this as a long-term initiative – one that goes far past the medium term of three years – such as a five-year programme. We were advised by the Ministry of Finance that this is also subject to economic performance and the ability of the Government to provide financing for the continuation of such projects.

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: Could the Hon. Minister state what involvement, if any, has there been with the National Drainage and Irrigation Authority (NDIA), the drainage and irrigation boards, the Regional Democratic Councils (RDCs) and the Neighbourhood Democratic Councils (NDCs) in the formulation of this project? It would appear to me that these are functions to be properly performed by entities that are already in the local democratic system.

Mr. Ali: Part of the community participation mechanism that I alluded to earlier would have seen the involvement of all of the agencies stated. In addition to that, we had consultation in many communities. In order to strengthen our consultation and ensure that the consultation is not static, but one that is ongoing, we also have built in this project an item called community consultation and design. We want to ensure that the community is really integrally involved.

When I say community, it goes beyond the local community. It speaks to all the players that exist within that community. If, for example, we are going to look at all the burial grounds within a locality, we want everybody who is concerned with the drainage of those grounds and the cleaning of those grounds, such as the churches and NDCs, to come on board with us so that we can build capacity, build partnership and build local ownership for these projects.

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: If you look at the benefits of this project, it speaks to improved drainage and irrigation systems and improved environment. Could the Hon. Minister state specifically in which communities they have identified work to be done on improving drainage and irrigation and in which communities, if any, they have identified for environmental work to be done?

Mr. Ali: The works that would be done, including drainage, irrigation, repairs to bridges, culverts, access to burial grounds and so on, are all geared at enhancing the environment of communities. It covers communities in Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10. I can undertake to list all of the NDCs and communities which would form part of the Programme under each of these Regions but we expect that in some way we can address the small issues, specifically issues that are of a day to day nature, in communities throughout these Regions I have outlined.

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: It sounds like a lot of fluff to me. Could the Minister identify at least two projects in at least three of these communities which he could say are projects which have been identified to work on under this project?

Mr. Ali: One of the priorities of the communities that we have consulted on... For example, in Region 4, we have talked to persons in communities such as Grove, Foulis and Nabaclis areas and the priority for most of these communities is that of the condition of burial grounds. The communities have raised consistently the concern that burial grounds are in serious state of disrepair and so is the drainage to public facilities such as playgrounds and community health centres. Simple things such as having access to a community health centre are things we are going to address.

What I can say is that consultation was completed in all of the NDCs that were listed under the CRIP and we can list all of those NDCs. For example, they are Bath, Woodley Park, Rosignol,

Zeelugt, Unity, Mon Repos, Stewartville, Cornelia Ida, Haslington and Grove. Again, the complete list can be provided.

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: I will accept the list at a later stage. I would imagine that by this time of the year, if the Minister is talking about burial grounds and so on, he would have at least identified some burial grounds. Le Repentir is one that cries out for attention. I do not know whether this \$484 million would deal with an issue like that. I understand the focus on burial grounds but my understanding is that these are community responsibilities and, therefore, rather than taking this money and giving it to a Minister, this money should go to the Neighbourhood Democratic Councils. Which entity would execute these projects?

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, as the House would be aware, we had the CRIP which was funded under the Caribbean Development Bank loan. Now that that loan has come to an end and the Programme was implemented very successfully, this unit would, indeed, take on the responsibility of managing this Programme.

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: I know the Hon. Minister stated that the CRIP has come to an end. What is the allocation under the CRIP this year about?

Mr. Ali: The allocation to the CRIP is for final payments in some instances, retention fees in some instances, and for the completion of one final road under the Programme, which is ongoing at the moment.

Mr. Nagamootoo: This Programme is of particular interest to the Alliance For Change (AFC) and the sum being asked for here under the Ministry of Housing and Water - \$484 million – we are asking if the Minister does not think this is one Programme which should be driven through the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development. Nothing that we have heard so far convinces us that this Programme belongs here. This is a Programme for the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development. Therefore, we believe that this is placing State funds in the wrong area. Whether the CRIP has the experience or not, that institution does not exist; its residue may. I have two questions. Does the Minister wish to propose to his colleague to have this fund transferred to the appropriate Ministry? Was there a job impact study done for this \$484 million in terms of job creation?

Mr. Ali: We, indeed, considered this matter in its totality. It is our view that the Ministry of Housing and Water also has a responsibility for community planning. In our humble view, we do not see any issue with the project being placed at the Ministry. We have the capacity; we have the ability; and we have the experience in working on these projects.

In terms of impact on jobs, it is estimated that this project would create at least 1,500 plus jobs.

Dr. Cummings: My question was partially asked by the Hon. Member, Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon and Hon. Moses Nagamootoo. Is this infrastructure project not redundancy? There already exists in the RDCs and NDCs infrastructure works. Rather than having a top down approach, one would have thought there would have been an approach from the bottom up and the community leaders could be empowered through training so they too can take ownership of the community and its projects.

You said it is creating jobs. One would have thought that jobs could have been created in the community themselves. I just thought you can probably readdress this question.

Mr. Ali: Under the CRIP, we had community training in management and maintenance, and we built capacity in the NDCs in terms of computerisation, computerised accounting system and management of assets within the NDCs. Part of the Programme is indeed to build that capacity and we did this under the CRIP initially and we are going to continue. Part of the output is to ensure we develop these capacities and capabilities within the NDCs. I want to assure you that at all levels, all of the stakeholders would be critically involved. It is envisaged also that the jobs the Hon. Member asked about would be created in the communities themselves.

Dr. Cummings: We talk about inter-sectoral cooperation. Why not work with the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development to have this addressed?

Mr. Ali: Because the Ministry of Housing and Water is such a cross cutting ministry, we have within the Ministry an inter-agency coordinating unit in which stakeholders from across the sector meet in order to have synergy of plans and action of the Ministry of Housing and Water as against the macro development agenda of all of the stakeholders.

Mr. Morian: I just want to know who the focal person for this project is. Is there a special unit? What are the prerequisites for accessing this funding? What are the different ceilings for somebody to access this Programme?

Mr. Ali: As I said earlier, this Programme would be handled under the same unit that worked under CRIP. There is no ceiling. This unit will continue its consultation and the community projects will be developed with the involvement of the communities. For example, in Linden where there are environmental groups, we will definitely be meeting with all these stakeholders to discuss the priorities in these areas.

Dr. Ramayya: Project code 2800900 – Coastal Water Supply: Recently, I found that in Berbice the water is in a very deplorable condition. In Mr. Nagamootoo's speech last Monday, he showed us the condition of the water in Ithaca and No. 3 Village. In my area, also, the water is very, very bad. I just want to ask the Minister if the money allocated in the Budget will allow us to get treated water. I assume that Rose Hall gets treated water but it is very terrible to consume and it is causing a lot of health problems at this time. What amount of money would be allocated to the Region 6 area? I am getting a lot of complaints about the condition of the water.

Mr. Ali: In terms of water treatment plants, they come under a different head. In the particular area of Rose Hall, I am advised that the treatment facility is functioning but some amount of upgrade would occur this year. We have some plans for water treatment plants. In Region 6, we are hoping that we can bring the area stretching from Cumberland to Williamsburg under water treatment facilities. That programme is under design at the moment.

In relation to the specific areas that the Hon. Member mentioned, we are pleased to have those areas submitted to us so that the technical personnel can check to see what is occurring.

Dr. Ramayya: Could the Minister indicate how early that would be? There are so many complaints coming to me. Not too many people can afford to buy drinking water and that is a necessity. I would like the Minister to tell me so that on my programme, I can indicate to the people of Berbice how early they can get the water to drink.

Mr. Ali: Which programme is this in relation to?

Dr. Ramayya: Ithaca, No. 3 Village, lower Corentyne and the West Coast. Where I am living also, the water is in very bad condition.

Mr. Ali: What I can do is outline the areas under the coastal water programmes we would be addressing this year and state exactly what we would be doing in those areas. I think that would be very helpful in terms of the different areas 2014 would address.

In relation to the water treatment plant which I alluded to, this would be coming under a new loan programme. As we speak now, we are in the process of designing that facility.

Ms. Ferguson: Project code 1402500: Earlier, the Minister explained that the CRIP has come to an end and some moneys are to be paid on retention fees. But looking at the profile number 172, the description shows completion and rehabilitation of community roads amongst others. I do not see any mention of retention fees. The Minister needs to clarify that. Under project description 1, it talks about construction and rehabilitation community roads. Would the Minister be kind enough to outline to this Committee which roads are to be rehabilitated?

7.32 p.m.

Mr. Ali: Indeed the retention fee is an output of the contract and it depends on completion, firstly, and it also depends on the defects liability period for those amounts to be paid so some contracts would be completed before others; some will be completed this year. In relation to the work programme, we have roads in Anna Catherina, Windsor Forest, Sophia, Enmore, Enterprise, Good Hope, Bush Lot, 64 Village, Grass Field, Anchorville, No. 28, Profit, Rising Sun, at the NDC sub-roads between Mon Repos, between Buxton, Foulis... These are all roads that are covered in this area.

Ms. Ferguson: Follow-up: Hon. Member, you outlined a few areas but looking at profile 173, some of the areas you alluded to earlier, like Sophia, Enmore, Buxton, Foulis, amongst others, are listed under profile number 173. Perhaps you will need to explain. The other thing is whether you are willing to lay the list over to us, please.

Mr. Ali: I have no objection in indeed laying that list.

Ms. Ferguson: Would you be able to give a commitment, Sir?

Mr. Ali: Most definitely before the end of the week.

Ms. Ferguson: Okay.

Mr. B. Williams: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that Hon. Member Ms. Ferguson was alluding to a problem that has beset this Parliament from day one. This is not the first time that we are doing this and we are asking for lists, *et cetera*. The problem is that even though we are given assurances that certain roads or bridges would be done... For example in Region 4, the Regional Chairman has complained bitterly that he has not seen anything that we are talking about in this Parliament reaching him. Apparently, the REO develops his own list which they work with but this problem...

Mr. Chairman: Mr. Williams, we need a question.

Mr. B. Williams: I am preambing. There was a lot of preambing before. I am just following the precedent. What has happened is that CRIP has crept over the people's head and this is a core matter because communities are suffering. They have bad roads; they have bad drains and their lives are pure misery so all this nice talk we are not going to take again for the third year. I am going to be specific and I am proposing that, for the Parliament itself, there is a list that must be agreed to, not just a hairy fairy - we are handing you a list. We want to determine in here a list of the roads that will be done and we will execute that list in this Parliament; otherwise...

Mr. Chairman: Mr. Williams, that is not a question.

Mr. B. Williams: I am putting it now, for example, Mr. Speaker... I am putting my questions now, having preambled. Could the Hon. Minister...? Let us deal with the bridges first, which is item 1302000. This nice talk and fancy talk...

An Hon. Member: Question.

Mr. B. Williams: Rabbi, could you wait?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we were doing very well. This is getting out of hand now. There is no reason, Mr. Williams, for you to speak to anybody like that. Please.

Mr. B. Williams: Mr. Chairman, he is interrupting me.

Mr. Chairman: But, Mr. Williams, let us not get...

Mr. B. Williams: I need your protection.

Mr. Chairman: I am trying to give you protection but if you go out on a limb to speak to another Member like that, there is nothing I could do.

Mr. B. Williams: Could the Hon. Member indicate whether the bridge at Mocha, on Burnham Boulevard, is on his list?

Mr. Chairman: Project code, please.

Mr. B. Williams: I have indicated a project code. You all must listen instead of heckling.

Mr. Ali: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was just waiting for the Hon. Member to sit before I stand up, in respect of your Chair. First of all, let me say that you, Mr. Chairman, would bear witness that all of the commitments I made in 2013 in relation to documents being laid to this National Assembly were laid within two days of those commitments. As a matter of fact, I can remember you complimenting me for that.

The second thing is that I can assure this honourable House – and Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon is here – that all of the roads that we gave a commitment to in this honourable House were completed. The Mocha road, for example, was raised in 2013 and the entire Mocha stretch has been completed, including the main bridge on that road and all of the culverts. I want to assure this honourable House that I speak here with my integrity and the integrity of my staff and we commit ourselves to that integrity that we serve our people with. Thank you.

Mr. B. Williams: Mr. Chairman, my question is always clear and very pellucid. My question to the Minister related to a bridge. I have not spoken to him about any road as yet. That is the question I wish for him to answer; that relates to the bridge at Mocha at Burnham Boulevard.

Mr. Ali: In relation to any specific bridge in Mocha, we do not have any specific bridge in Mocha in this programme. The main bridge on the main road was done last year. Thank you.

Mr. B. Williams: Might I respectfully enquire from the Hon. Minister whether the bridge at Dublin Street, Victoria, is on his list?

Mr. Ali: I am not aware of that bridge.

Mr. B. Williams: Might I respectfully enquire whether the Minister has the footpath bridge for Samantha Point to Grove New Scheme on his list.

Mr. Ali: I respectfully submit that at this point that that bridge is also not on this list.

Mr. B. Williams: A mere cursory examination... Let us go to roads. Might I respectfully refer the Hon. Minister to project code 1402500 - Community Roads Improvement Project? I heard a lot of communities were mentioned but might I respectfully enquire whether on the list of the Hon. Minister there is the Prince William Street to Graham Street?

Mr. Ali: I have committed to hand over the list of what we will be doing to the Hon. Members. May I respectfully ask the Hon. Member to submit his list of what he would like to see so that we can have that list and I can advise him?

Mr. B. Williams: This is the point I was making when I preambled. We did this for two straight years and the people are still wondering whenever it drizzles... They do not have roads. There are cavernous holes in their roads and that includes most of the communities on the East Coast that did not support the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) at the last Elections. We are saying that we cannot keep voting billions of dollars... Look at the communities that the Minister just read out. These are the communities the Minister just read out: Charity, Lust-en-Rust, Windsor Forest, Zeelugt, Tuschen, Meten-Meer-Zorg, Zeeburg, De William, Leonora, Anna Catherina, to name the list. This is bear discrimination. If we do not address adequately the needs of all of the people of this country... I do not have to be a nice boy. It is not a love fest.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we will take a five-minute recess.

Sitting suspended at 7.42 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 7.49 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Members. The Sitting has resumed. We will resume please.

Assembly resolved into Committee of Supply.

In Committee of Supply

Mr. B. Williams: Mr. Chairman, might I respectfully continue?

Mr. Chairman: Please.

Mr. B. Williams: Could I inform the Hon. Minister that some of the illustrations that I have just posed to him came from this list, the current list of the RDC for Region 4? Are you aware of this Hon. Minister, the RDC's list for roads and bridges that they wish to be attended to?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, I think it would serve if you can say what roads and bridges, if any, your Ministry of Housing takes care of.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, respectfully, last year, I submitted the entire list of all the roads that we would have done under all the programmes. All the roads that we committed to do were done and, in addition to those roads, we even had savings which incorporated additional roads. Again, I have committed to the House that all of the roads that we are going to do under the Ministry of Housing programme will be circulated to the Hon. Members and they are free to supervise, to go check and to verify whether these roads are done.

Thirdly, I do not have a line item that speaks to RDC list but, as far as I am aware, the RDC falls under the Ministry of Local Government which comes up later tonight.

Mr. B. Williams: Mr. Chairman, I will like to categorically say that the roads that we had identified in this honourable Committee were not done and if they were done it was tantamount to spraying some black substance on sand. It never lasted any time. My intention in this year's Parliament is to ensure that what has happened in the past two years would not happen again.

Ms. Teixeira: Name the roads.

Mr. B. Williams: I have named roads.

Mr. Chairman: With respect, we are going to have Mr. Williams question the Minister of Housing and that is what Mr. Williams is doing and we will proceed with that.

Mr. B. Williams: Could the Hon. Minister now say, one, whether he would accept the RDC's list as a list that he will incorporate? If he does not want the list, could we then deal with the

road, *simplicita*? Could the Hon. Minister agree to accept these roads that I have listed to be done within the ambit, if we approve it, of this project under this head?

Mr. Chairman: I do not see how that would be possible because there is the Ministry of Works... Hon. Minister, you may wish to answer.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, you are perfectly correct. The roads that I would share with this honourable House are the roads that have been budgeted for and the roads that would have been requested for by the Ministry of Finance which provided the necessary resources to cover the roads that are in this programme. Thank you very much.

Mr. B. Williams: Could the Hon. Member, therefore, say, since he has been given a list which, as I said earlier, includes Nonpareil, Hope, Bath, Experiment, Cumberland, Bloomfield, Diamond, Grove, Eccles, Enmore, Anna Catherina, *et cetera*, that he has no interest in repairing any other roads in any other communities?

Mr. Ali: I think that the honourable House and everyone else would have heard me clearly as to what I have said and I can speak for the sector I represent; the interest of every Guyanese is of paramount importance to the Ministry.

Mr. Chairman: Mr. Williams, I am moving on.

Ms. Kissoon: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Project code 1302000: If I correctly heard the Minister, he said that we would be having some 1,500 jobs created under this head. Could he give us examples of the types of jobs and how many of the 1,500 are earmarked for Region 10, since I note 2,000 was promised, if we are getting the 1,500? Thank you very much.

Mr. Ali: As I said, approximately 1,500 plus jobs would be an output of this programme and this is in varied skills - unskilled workers, labourers, skilled carpentry workers and so on; they will be in those levels and categories. Thank you.

Ms. Kissoon: Are there any for Region 10, Sir? Could you say at this moment?

Mr. Ali: Region 10 is indeed included in the programme but I cannot give you a specific number.

Ms. Kissoon: How soon will we be able to know? Could you provide that for me in the week to come?

Mr. Ali: As the programme is operationalised, I would definitely provide that list to the Hon. Member.

Ms. Kissoon: Thank you very much.

Ms. Ferguson: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Just picking up on a point that the Hon. Member, Mr. Basil Williams, alluded to earlier, I know for a fact that the Minister of Housing would have given an undertaking to have some roads done in Sophia but my question to the Hon. Minister is: Can you say which roads were done and with what types of materials?

Mr. Ali: Section D Sophia is in progress and it is asphaltic concrete, and for Sections A, B and C, main roads are the ones that would be captured in this programme - asphaltic concrete.

Mr. Nagamootoo: Perhaps the proverbial political horse has already left the paddock but if you would permit me in the vein of what I have said earlier that one could see a red flag being waved in this programme, I would ask the question if you would permit me to make an observation first. None of these items here carry with them any assurance of employment. In the legend, it has the employment impact of the project and it has the number of skilled workers to be employed in 2014. So there is no scientific basis on which the Minister could come to this House and guarantee that there would be 1,500 employees because these things are to be contracted out.

Mr. Chairman: Question.

Mr. Nagamootoo: I need to point that out. I asked a question so I was making a follow-up. The question is whether in view of the fact that in all of these items in the programme, about \$8 billion or more, the Minister is prepared to make an assurance to the House that in the next budget, consideration would be made to have some of these heads transferred to Ministry of Works or Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development because this is not building capacity. This really is not the politics of decentralisation and devolution, which is healthy for democracy...

Mr. Chairman: Minister, please respond.

Mr. Nagamootoo: ...and that is the assurance we are seeking because we have to vote to approve or not to approve.

Mr. Ali: Thank you very much, Cde. Chairman. I think that the Hon. Member was reading from the Estimates of the Current Expenditure in relation to contract workers and permanent workers. I just want to say this: In this capital programme here, in the design, it is expected to create more than 1,500 jobs and I can assure you that at the end of this programme, Hon. Member, the output of the programme would be the judge for itself. In presenting this presenting this programme to the Ministry of Finance...

Mr. Nagamootoo: One does not plan programmes like that in hope to find...

Mr. Ali: No. I am confident. If the confidence of the Ministry is being questioned, then the results should be what measures that question. In relation to the medium and long term, as I said earlier, when we developed this programme, it was done with more of a long-term projection under the Ministry of Housing.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, through you, I am not off of project code 1302000 - Community Infrastructure Improvement Project. The Minister said that there had been stakeholder involvement in this Project just as there was stakeholder involvement in the Community Road Improvement Project and I just wanted to, even before we got to where we are now, have referred the Minister to a letter written to him on the 24th March, 2014, by the Regional Chairman, Region 4, where, among other things, he complained:

“As the Regional Chairman of the Administrative Region 4, I herein register my disapproval to your Ministry’s apparent selective approach to Community Road Projects...”

And so he went on. Could the Hon. Minister state whether in fact the Regional Chairman for Region 4 and his Council had been consulted in the preparation of the Estimates for this Community Improvement Project the \$484 million that you have identified there?

Mr. Ali: This \$484 million programme, as I said, came about as an offshoot of the CRIP, during those community consultations. In the design of the CRIP and throughout the implementation of the CRIP, there had been and continues to be engagement at the level of the RDC, NDC, in areas

where there are Community Development Groups, Community Development Council (CDC) and other local stakeholders. The advice by the technical officer is that even in the development of the CRIP, which I am also very familiar with, these stakeholders were also involved. The development of the CRIP even predates Mr. Corlett.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, I have some other questions please, not necessarily on that subject, but on project code 2801700 - Georgetown Sanitation Improvement Programme and that is at profile reference number 179 and the project description includes rehabilitation of sewage system, distribution of drugs, reduced prevalence in water related disease, procurement of energy efficient equipment, institutional strengthening. Mr. Chairman, we have all been inconvenienced in a major way by the works that have been going on in relation to this project. I would wish for the Minister to give us a clear indication as to what the status of this project is and when it is likely to be completed.

Mr. Ali: I am advised that the works would be completed at the end of June this year and I do not mind sharing the implementation schedule to the end of June. Thank you.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Like I said, we live in Georgetown, most of us that is, and we understand the serious inconvenience which this project has been causing. Roads have been dug up without any indication that there is going to be some kind of traffic problem and I think that it is important for us all to understand what is happening. If, in fact, the Minister could in fact share that information with us, it would be important. Not only that; I believe that the public should know upfront that these are the streets that they will be working on and that there is going to be some amount of disruption of traffic.

Mr. Ali: Definitely, I will give the undertaking but I just want to say that in relation to this programme, there is a specific component that deals with public awareness and, indeed, advertisements are placed in the newspapers, on the radio and on television. So that is indeed a critical component of the project. Thank you.

Programme: 451 – Housing and Water - \$8,463,717,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I would like to thank both the Minister and his technical staff for their assistance in getting us through the consideration of these Estimates. The Minister has undertaken to submit additional information which we will be reminding him about.

Members, while we prepare for the next agency, which is the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security, I ask that you start to go to pages 196 and 197. Permission has been granted to Minister Webster for her to sit in her old seat so that she could be next to the Minister of Labour to be able to field the questions together. Ministers, please indicate when you would be in a position to proceed. Hon. Members, the Ministers have indicated that they are ready.

Agency: 48 – Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security

Current Expenditure

Programme: 481 – Strategic Planning, Administration and Human Services – 214,020,000

Mrs. Baveghems: Thank you, Cde. Chairman. Line item 6113: Are social workers paid from this line item? If yes, how many of the 43 in the staffing details are social workers?

Minister of Human Services and Social Security [Ms. Webster]: Mr. Chairman, the answer to the question is no. Social Workers are not paid from line item 6116.

Mr. Chairman: Mrs. Baveghems, the answer is no.

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, if I may, we do not have any questions to ask on this page.

*Programme: 481 – Strategic Planning, Administration and Human Services – 214,020,000
agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 481 – Strategic Planning, Administration and Human Services – 49,000,000

8.09 p.m.

Mr. Ramjattan: Project code 4401900 under Labour Administration: \$31 million is allocated for provision for support to Central Recruitment and Manpower Agency. Could the Minister...

Mr. Chairman: Mr. Ramjattan, we are not there as yet. We are at Programme 481, page 446.

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, project code 1206800 – Buildings: Could the Minister indicate when the building in Lamaha Street is expected to be completed and when the Ministry intends to move over? What is the time frame she is working with?

Ms. Webster: Mr. Chairman, we hope that the building would be completed so we can move over by the end of May this year. We have some additional works to be done. We had to get approval for the variation sums. The sums are included in the amounts stated here.

Mrs. Lawrence: A follow-up question, Mr. Chairman: Could the Minister indicate to the House what measures have been put in place to ensure that persons with disabilities can get up to the offices?

Ms. Webster: Mr. Chairman, we intend to put a ramp. All the services that are provided where we have to interact with members of the public will be put on the ground floor, and for persons with disabilities in wheelchairs, we will have a ramp so they can access.

Programme: 481 – Strategic Planning, Administration and Human Services - \$49,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 482 – Social Services – \$8,678,976,000

Mrs. Baveghems: Line item 6113: Are social workers paid from this line item and, if yes, how many of the 43 in Staffing Details are social workers? Can you give a breakdown by Region?

Ms. Webster: Mr. Chairman, the answer is yes; social services officers are paid from line item 6113. We have 39 social workers who are paid under this head.

Mrs. Lawrence: Mrs. Baveghems asked for it by regions.

Ms. Webster: Mr. Chairman, I will provide that in writing tomorrow.

Mr. Chairman: Is that good enough, Mrs. Baveghems?

Mrs. Baveghems: Thank you, Cde. Minister.

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, through you to the Minister, line item 6111 – Administrative: I note, Mdm. Minister, that there is a decrease of some \$2 million but when I look in Staffing Details, there is no change in terms of staffing. You had two last year and are proposing to have two this year. Could you kindly indicate to the House why the decrease of the \$2 million?

Ms. Webster: Mr. Chairman, the decrease catered for three employees from the Child Care and Protection Agency who are now under Programme 484. That accounts for the difference.

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, through you, Mdm. Minister is indicating that the Staffing Details for 2013 is incorrect. It says two here and she is saying three were transferred.

Ms. Webster: Is it line item 6112?

Mrs. Lawrence: No, line item 6113.

Ms. Webster: That is it and we have the 5% increase.

Mrs. Lawrence: Mdm. Minister, through the Chair, I have indicated that the amount went down. The revised amount was \$6.1 million and for the 2014 Budget, we have an amount of \$4.019 million budgeted, some \$2 million less.

Ms. Webster: The positions under line 6113 are two Assistant Chief Probation and Social Services Officers with a salary of \$166,797 per month.

Mrs. Lawrence: Mdm. Minister, did the two Probation Officers hold this position in 2013? I am just trying to ascertain why the salaries went down? Are they the same two persons?

Ms. Webster: I am told yes; those two officers were there in 2013.

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr Chairman, if Mdm. Minister does not have the details with regards to this, I would appreciate if she can share it with me next week at least.

Ms. Webster: Mr. Chairman, I undertake to have this clarified and to provide the response in writing to the Hon. Member.

Mrs. Lawrence: Thank you, Mdm. Minister. Through the Chair, line items 6113 and 6114: Could the Minister indicate whether the pension section is now fully staffed?

Ms. Webster: I am advised, Mr. Chairman, that we do have our full staff complement now.

Mrs. Lawrence: Thank you, Mdm. Minister. Line item 6115: Mdm. Minister, I note there is a decrease in the staffing details of 12 persons and when I look at the amount allocated for 2014, it is just a few hundred thousand dollars less from that of 2013. I know that despite you would have added the 5% increase, one would expect if 12 persons were taken from the Staffing Details, the amount would be less. Could you kindly indicate why such a small decrease?

Ms. Webster: In 2013, we had the dismissal of five Patient Care Assistants (PCAs), one Maid and one Porter. One Office Assistant, one Assistant Chief Probation Officer and two PCAs retired. In addition to that, we now have, under that line item, the complement of 50 PCAs, three Porters, three Hospital Attendants, three Cooks, and eight Ward Maids; the 5% is included.

Ms. Ferguson: Mr. Chairman, under line item 6302 – Training – my question to the Hon. Minister is: Would training of probation officers for domestic violence be done under this particular line item?

Ms. Webster: We will have training for probation officers, as we do on an annual basis. It is ongoing; it is on the job training in the laws that we have enacted. We also have training ongoing under this head for the PCAs of the Palms Geriatric Institution because it is important that we improve the quality of care that we provide to the elderly in that Institution. So the answer is yes.

Mrs. Baveghems: Line item 6261: Are social workers paid transportation allowance from this head? If yes, how is payment calculated?

Ms. Webster: Mr. Chairman, they get subsistence if they go out of town because many of our officers are placed within the Regions where they work. However, social workers receive travelling and their travelling allowance is paid under line item 6133 as a benefit and allowance.

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, line item 6242: Could the Minister kindly indicate how many buildings she intends to do maintenance work on for 2014?

Ms. Webster: Mr. Chairman, we plan to paint the internal and external surfaces of the Mahaica Hospital at an approximate cost of \$7.4 million and execute repairs to the buildings in that compound.

For the Night Shelter, we plan to repair the roof; we have a sum of \$450,000 budgeted; carpentry works to the female dormitory of the Night Shelter at \$340,000; repairs to windows there at \$241,000; repairs to lights (fixing the electrical) at \$245,000; servicing of equipment at \$155,000 (more so external lights).

The Guyana Women Leadership Institute building: We plan to do work to the roof and a sum of \$3 million has been budgeted for that; replace gutter to the building at Cove and John at \$400,000; repairs to washrooms in the dormitory at \$500,000; and we plan to install some carpets at \$90,000.

The Palms Geriatric Institution: we plan to undertake general carpentry, plumbing and electrical repairs to Blocks A, B and C at \$10 million; repairs to the floor and sanitation area at \$4 million; to paint the interior walls and floors at \$8 million; electrical and plumbing for the newly constructed shelter at \$2 million.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Line item 6281 – Security: There is an \$8 million increase. Hon. Minister, could you please explain this? Thank you.

Ms. Webster: Mr. Chairman, towards the end of last year, the Ministry went to public tender and we now have a new security provider for some of our locations, which is RK's Security. There is a new rate of \$370 per hour for out of town locations. We have had to include the shelter for the homeless at Onverwagt, for the provision of security there, and hence the increase.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: How many locations in all does this provision provide for?

Ms. Webster: Under this programme, there is the Mahaica Hospital, the Mahaica Children's Home, and the Shelter for the Homeless at Onverwagt. We also pay for the home where we keep our women.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Thank you. Line item 6283 – Other: there is a \$9 million increase. Could the Hon. Minister please give some details on this? Thank you.

Ms. Webster: The increases, Mr. Chairman, will be as a result of the shelter at Onverwagt becoming operational by the first half of this year, and also because we have increased the way

we keep our facilities in terms of cleanliness and the amount of persons that visit our locations on a daily basis.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Which shelter are you talking about, please?

Ms. Webster: The shelter at Onverwagt. Also under this head is the Night Shelter which has more than 220 persons everyday.

Mrs. Baveghems: Cde. Chairman, line item 6292: Is the increase of \$18 million due to more persons catered for or is it because of cost of living?

Ms. Webster: Under this line item, we are catering for the Palms Geriatric Institution, the Night Shelter, and the Onverwagt facility, when it becomes operational. And we do have increased numbers of persons within all those institutions – the Palms Geriatric Institution and the Night Shelter.

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister give a breakdown of line item 6343?

Ms. Webster: Mr. Chairman, we have 9,500 beneficiaries under the Public Assistance Programme and that will cost us \$560,500,000 for the year 2014. Then we have approximately 42,500 pensioners and that will cost us some \$6.6 billion. In addition, the electricity subsidy is also met here, and if we were to use the figure as at the end of last year, that will be another \$150 million.

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, through you, Mdm. Minister is it right for me to suggest that the water subsidy is also included in this amount?

Ms. Webster: Yes, you are correct.

Mrs. Lawrence: Mdm. Minister, I note that in 2013 a budget of \$7.4 billion was allocated but, in your response to my question with regard to the number of persons who would have accessed the electricity programme, your answer revealed that only some 16% of the money allocated, which was \$590 million in last year's Budget... But when I look at the amount of moneys used in this line item for 2013, I note \$7.3 billion. So if only 16% of the moneys allocated for the electricity programme was allocated, how come almost all of the moneys were spent?

Ms. Webster: Mr. Chairman, I undertake to provide that explanation in writing by tomorrow.

Mrs. Lawrence: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Hon. Minister, I am looking under social services at the Salvation Army and seeing the Women's Home only. There used to be a rehabilitation programme for drug addicts and the Ministry used to support that programme. Can you say why it is not here? Thank you.

Ms. Webster: That programme is still supported by the Government of Guyana, Hon. Member. It is not there because towards the end of last year, the Hon. Minister of Finance – if he would permit me – did provide an allocation through the Ministry of Finance to support the continued work of the programme managed by the Salvation Army for drug rehabilitation.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Can you say how much was provided?

Mr. Chairman: No. That is something that is not under this Ministry. You may speak to the Minister of Finance later in the evening if you wish.

Ms. Kissoon: Just one question: Hon. Minister, line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Is the Legal Aid under this line item? And if it is, could you give a breakdown for Regions?

Ms. Webster: Legal Aid is under this line item. This year, the sum of \$44.08 million is budgeted. The breakdown I can provide you because coming out of this allocation, we have to allocate a sum for Region 10. I can provide that to you in writing.

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, just one more question: I do not need an answer now but the Minister can add it to the list. How much is allocated to the Difficult Circumstances Unit?

Programme: 482 – Social Services - \$8,678,976,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 482 – Social Services - \$34,800,000

Mrs. Lawrence: Mdm. Minister, could you kindly indicate for project code 1206800 – Buildings – how much moneys will be allocated to the Whim building and how much will go to the Hugo Chavez Centre?

Ms. Webster: The Whim building was completed in 2013. However, we do have a sum which was rolled over for some minor works to be done - an enclosure - for \$1.299 million. For the Hugo Chavez Centre, we have \$6.7 million.

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, could Mdm. Minister kindly indicate what we are spending the \$6 plus million for.

Ms. Webster: Mr. Chairman, we have to install a stove hood and vents which is \$875,000. We have to do some concrete drains around the perimeter of that compound for \$1.3 million; security grills for the maintenance and training room at \$1.25 million. We have to purchase a pump for the fish pond for \$375,000. We are going to have a fish pond, Mr. Chairman. There will be the construction of chicken pens - because we would like them to be self sustainable - at \$1.550 million. We are going to erect a chain link fence to separate the agriculture plots and the recreational areas at \$650,000.

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, could the Minister kindly indicate to the Committee when the Centre will be ready for habitation.

Ms. Webster: Mr. Chairman, we would like to have the residents who we identified to move over along with the staff by June. We are currently doing the selection process for the support staff who will be there, and we also plan to have in place a management board to oversee the operations.

Mrs. Lawrence: Just two more questions, but I will put both. Project code 2402800 - Land Transport: Could you kindly say which department or entity this vehicle will be for? With regards to the equipment, which department will these go to?

Ms. Webster: We plan to purchase a minibus for the shelter for the homeless, and the equipment are for the Director of Social Services, the Microcredit Department, Women of Worth (WOW) Programme, the Women's Affairs Bureau, the Men's Affairs Bureau, the Mahaica Hospital, the

Night Shelter and the Guyana Women's Leadership Institute. Those are the departments for which moneys are budgeted here. Also there is the Palms Geriatric Institution.

Mrs. Lawrence: Could you kindly provide me with a list of the breakdown of the allocation of the \$15.3 million please?

Ms. Webster: I can do that.

Programme: 482 – Social Services - \$34,800,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 483 – Labour Administration - \$383,159,000

Mr. B. Williams: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister of Labour say what are the designations of the eight new employees attracting the total sum of \$3.7 million and what is the highest and lowest salary?

8.39 p.m.

Minister of Labour [Dr. Gopaul]: Six new Labour Officers and two Cane Scale Supervisors have been appointed. The highest salary for the Labour Occupational Health and Safety Officers would be \$76,291 and the lowest salary for the Cane Scales Supervisors would be \$44,408.

Mr. B. Williams: Could the Hon. Minister say, in relation to line item 6116, what the designations are of the seven new contracted employees, earning an additional sum of \$11,786,000, the highest and lowest salary?

Dr. Gopaul: Line item 6116 would be pertaining to the Cane Scales Supervisor, Community Economic Development Officers, Confidential Secretaries, Driver, Labour Occupational Health and Safety Officers and Office Assistants. The Chief Statistical Officer is the highest paid officer there and the salary range is from \$204,750 to \$44,408.

Mr. B. Williams: Line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: The Labour Market Information System Commission, could the Hon. Minister say what is that and what is the composition?

Dr. Gopaul: There are two staff in the labour market section and they get their subsidies from this vote of \$1 million. They undertake research and collective bargaining agreements and other pertinent matters with respect to the labour market and goods and services.

Mr. B. Williams: Follow-up. If they produce reports, could the Hon. Minister say what happens with those reports? Are they available to the public? What is the situation with them?

Dr. Gopaul: It is for internal assistance to the Industrial Relations Department, but what they do provide is a quarterly news bulletin and we can have that available. That is being circulated to Ministries.

Mr. B. Williams: I would be grateful Hon. Minister, if you wish, I can give you my email address.

Dr. Gopaul: Sure, that would be helpful because we do it electronically.

Mr. B. Williams: Line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, Board of Industrial Training: In relation to the vote of \$225,800,000 last year, the Ministry only spent \$214,723,000, this year there is a reduction to that amount. Could the Minister say what the reason is for the reduction?

Dr. Gopaul: In my budget presentation I did indicate at the end, in dealing with this issue, that the Ministry bought two bobcats with all the implements to enhance the training of the heavy-duty equipment operator. This year it will not buy that and that sum has been reduced as a result.

Mr. B. Williams: Line item 6322, Subsidies and Contribution to Intl. Organisations: Could the Hon. Minister say, in relations to the amount of \$2 million, if that is in relations to the contribution to the International Labour Organization (ILO)?

Dr. Gopaul: Yes Mr. Chairman. There are three organisations that will benefit from the vote, the ILO and two British organisations - the British Safety Council and the National Safety Council.

Mr. B. Williams: Follow-up. Could the Hon. Minister say whether Guyana still sends an annual delegation to the ILO Conference in Geneva?

Dr. Gopaul: It is not annual, Sir. We go every alternate year.

Mr. B. Williams: Follow-up. Could the Hon. Minister say what the composition is of that team?

Dr. Gopaul: The composition would be two Government representatives, the Minister and a Labour Officer, a representative of Consultative Association of Guyanese Industry (CAGI) and a representative from the labour movement.

Mr. B. Williams: Follow-up. Could the Hon. Minister say who the representative is of that delegation and if it is from Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Guyana (FITUG) or the Guyana Trades Union Congress (GTUC)?

Dr. Gopaul: The labour delegation, which will be going this year, will be from FITUG. I invited both FITUG and the TUC to submit nominations. I only received the nomination from FITUG, not from the TUC.

Mr. B. Williams: Interesting. That is enough for me on this, Mr. Chairman.

Programme: 483 – Labour Administration - \$383,159,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 483 – Labour Administration - \$46,816,000

Mr. B. Williams: Might I respectfully refer the Hon. Minister to project 4401900, Institutional Strengthening, the sum is \$31,761,000, “Provision for support to Central Recruitment and Manpower Agency.” Could the Hon. Minister say what the nature of that support is?

Dr. Gopaul: I did again, in my presentation, indicate that we are hoping to regionalise the activities of the Central Recruitment and Manpower Agency, where we will be using information technology to its fullest.

Last year the sum of \$52 million was approved. Twenty-one million dollars have been spent and that went to the awarding of a contract to a local company for the provision of software services. The remainder was returned to the treasury and that sum was returned as a rollover. The \$31 million will be spent on developing the hardware and other facilities within the regions. All the regions have been identified so that we can network effectively and efficiently.

The software programme is about 99% complete. Testing is being done right now. We are hoping that once that is finished we can move to have the hardware programme. This money was approved last year and the \$31 million is the rollover sum for the second phase of the activity.

Mr. Ramjattan: What were the regions?

Mr. Chairman: What was the question, Mr. Ramjattan?

Mr. Ramjattan: I did not hear if it will be all the regions, I just wanted that to be emphasised. Will all the regions have this software the Minister is talking about?

Dr. Gopaul: Yes Sir, wherever. There will be a few areas that do not have the internet service, but with the fibre-optic cables coming through, those areas will be serviced. It is intended for all the areas. By the end of the year, all 10 regions will be equipped with officers from the Central Recruitment and Manpower Agency being placed with proper office accommodations, staffing and everything. That is what this sum is for.

Mr. Ramjattan: What is the employment impact here? How many people the Minister feels, by the end of the year, will be employed, regionally?

Dr. Gopaul: Well, the Ministry we will be employing about six additional persons. There are already staff in Berbice and other regions, for example, Regions 3, 4 and 10, but the Region 10 offices will be upgraded and fitted properly with additional staff there and the other regions in the interior. In Essequibo, there are already employees, but the Ministry will have to make provision for proper accommodation to deal with the computerisation of the department.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: A follow-up on this same line item. Forgive me, Hon. Minister, but can you tell me what all these employees in these regions do really?

Dr. Gopaul: I did not hear the question.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: The employees in the various regions...

Dr. Gopaul: I did mention that last year nearly 3,000 persons were placed in jobs throughout the country. Despite the networking is not there, there were about 4,000 applications and 3,000 have been successful. I have highlighted the number of areas. These persons will be there to process

applications to help people. With the networking, they will be able to direct where vacancies are. The Ministry will be liaising with employers', organisations and other bodies, even other employment agencies. I have already been speaking to some of them for the higher qualified persons, those with university training, who will go to those agencies to target them also.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: They are job placement officers. In each region, how many jobs does Minister expect that these officers will be able to place, for them to earn money?

Dr. Gopaul: It depends on how many persons. The applications come in...

Mr. Chairman: It is functioned on the number of applications that come in.

Dr. Gopaul: Over the last five years there was a success story in placing over 80% of persons who approached the agencies. We have placed on an average of 80%.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: A follow-up on that. I know that in Georgetown it is easy to place; there are a lot of businesses here and employees can be placed in different businesses. Let us say in Regions 1, 7 and 8, because the Minister did say all the regions, how many jobs does he anticipate the placement officers will be able to place?

Dr. Gopaul: As these regions develop and new investors come in, we will be able because new investors are already consulting with the agency for jobs throughout the hinterland areas, Bai Shan Lin, for example. A number of other companies, moving into these areas, will come and register and express an interest. As people come in there, we will be able to refer them to the employers working in these regions, so that there can be an efficient system of placement.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Under the same project, I know the hinterland is huge and if agency is placed within a village, so to speak, how will the other villagers contact this village when they are 40 or 50 hundred miles away?

Mr. Chairman: Minister, could you meet with Mrs. Garrido-Lowe, after, to discuss the modalities of placement of officers.

Dr. Gopaul: Yes. I will.

Programme: 483 – Labour Administration - \$46,816,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 484 - Child Care and Protection - \$364,511,000

Mrs. Lawrence: To the Madam Minister, line item 6113, Other Technical and Craft Skilled: Here again, as in programme 482, there is a decrease of six personnel in the Staffing Details for 2014, yet I note that there is an increase, in terms of the amount allocated, of some \$3 million. Could the Minister kindly explain why there is this substantial increase?

Ms. Webster: Mr. Chairman, during 2013 there were some staff members, prior to the passage of the budget, who were catered for under programme 482, Social Services, and who have not been placed under this line item. In addition, there was the 5% also incorporated here. There are also now here, under this subhead, five officers, Senior Probation and Social Services Officers, Senior Social Service persons. Also, under this line item there are four Social Services Assistants.

Mrs. Lawrence: Madam Minister, have you indicated to me that there were some transfers of persons back to programme 482?

Ms. Webster: No. There was a transfer of some officers who were paid for the first four months, prior to the passage of the budget, under the Social Services programme, and were transferred, and it was corrected to programme 484, Child Care and Protection.

Mrs. Lawrence: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees: I note an increase of 12 employees to the complement of 85, which there was in 2013, but I also note that the amount budgeted went up by some \$63 million. Could the Minister kindly tell the Assembly what the \$63 million represents?

Ms. Webster: The additional costs include the 12 new persons for the staff complement, one Cleaner, one Household Supervisor, one Maid, five Probation and Social Services Officers, four Caregivers and it also includes the costs of their gratuity, their vacation allowance and the 5% revision of salaries.

Mrs. Lawrence: It is just a follow-up for clarification. Is the Minister saying that line item 6116 now takes into consideration the added payments as gratuity and other allowances for all 97 persons?

Ms. Webster: Yes.

Mrs. Lawrence: It is just one general question. I would just like to know whether this amount allocated here, and the number of staff, is adequate to deal with the Child Care and Protection Services throughout the length and breadth of this country, in all 10 administrative regions, or whether there are some regions that are not catered for here as yet.

Ms. Webster: The Hon. Member is correct. If we are to get addition staff, we have to seek the permission to first recruit staff members. She is correct that there are still some regions where we have to place officers and we have to first have that permission granted by the Public Service Ministry, prior to any recruitment process.

Programme: 484 – Child Care and Protection - \$364,511,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 484 – Child Care and Protection - \$18,000,000

Mrs. Lawrence: Project 1206800, Buildings: Could the Minister kindly indicate to the Assembly how much money will be spent on the building at New Amsterdam and when are these works expected to be completed?

Ms. Webster: For the building at New Amsterdam, the Ministry plans to spend \$3.5 million under this project. We hope to, by the end of August, have these works completed, because it is long overdue, this particular project.

Mrs. Lawrence: Could the Madam Minister kindly indicate to the Assembly what percentage of work will done with this money on this building because this building is really in need of a lot of work? I do not think this amount allocated is adequate enough.

Ms. Webster: The Ministry started, towards the end of last year, to have the toilet facilities rehabilitated. I think the remaining sum budgeted here should be adequate, I am advised.

Programme: 484 – Child Care and Protection - \$18,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, that concludes our review and consideration of the Estimates for the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security. I would like to thank the Ministers and, of course, their technical officers who have been so good in providing information. Some information have been promised and so we look forward to receiving that.

Members, we turn next to a very large agency, that is, the Ministry of Home Affairs. I will allow for some time for the staff of the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security to withdraw. I do not know if the Minister alone is handling the Ministry of Home Affairs or whether he has support. I do not see anyone coming on his behalf.

Agency: 51 Ministry of Home Affairs

Current Expenditure

Programme: 511 – Secretariat Services - \$570,099,000

Programme: 511 – Secretariat Services - \$570,099,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 511 – Secretariat Services - \$938,343,000

Programme: 511 – Secretariat Services - \$938,343,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 512 – Guyana Police Force - \$6,719,463,000

Programme: 512 – Guyana Police Force - \$6,719,463,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 512 – Guyana Police Force - \$721,000,000

Programme: 512 – Guyana Police Force - \$721,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 513 – Guyana Prison Service - \$1,164,112,000

Programme: 513 – Guyana Prison Service - \$1,164,112,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 513 – Guyana Prison Service - \$298,000,000

Programme: 513 – Guyana Prison Service - \$298,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 514 – Police Complaints Authority - \$10,803,000

Mr. Chairman: I take the opportunity to recognise the distinguished guest, Justice Kennard. Welcome Sir. Sorry to have you out at this late hour.

Programme: 514 – Police Complaints Authority - \$10,803,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 514 – Police Complaints Authority - \$930,000

Programme: 514 – Police Complaints Authority - \$930,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

9.09 p.m.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 515 – Guyana Fire Service - \$676,081,000

Programme: 515 – Guyana Fire Service - \$676,081,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 515 – Guyana Fire Service - \$410,364,000

Programme: 515 – Guyana Fire Service - \$410,364,000 agreed - to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 516 – General Register Offices - \$180,055,000

Programme: 516 – General Register Offices - \$180,055,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 516 – General Register Offices - \$6,000,000

Programme: 516 – General Register Offices - \$6,000,000 agreed - to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 517 – Customs Anti Narcotics Unit - \$76,987,000

Programme: 517 – Customs Anti Narcotics Unit - \$76,987,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 517 – Customs Anti Narcotics Unit - \$16,000,000

Programme: 517 – Customs Anti Narcotics Unit - \$16,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to strand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I would like to say that we have considered that the Estimates both current and capital expenditures for the Ministry of Home Affairs in record time. I would like to thank the Minister, his staff and the array of officers, both men and women, and, of course, Justice Kennard for coming out. We welcome you. We know that you have a very busy and arduous job out there and so we know that you need to get back to your task. Thank you very much ladies and gentlemen for coming out.

It is just to know that you have the full support, financially, to do your job so you cannot lay complaint that you do not have the resources.

Agency: 31 Ministry of Public Works

Current Expenditure

Programme: 311 – Ministry Administration - \$619,415,000

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Line item 6281, Security Services: Could the Hon. Minister explain the security service to be provided there, the name of the company and the amount of security guards that are employed in this programme?

Minister of Public Works [Mr. Benn]: The Special Constabulary and the Strategic Security Services are the two agencies. We do not have the details of the amount of guards at the moment but we can provide that.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, at \$400,000,000: This is a contribution to Transport and Harbours Department.

Mr. Benn: That is correct.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Could the Hon. Minister state what specifically this subvention is for and who are the persons or entities to benefit from it?

Mr. Benn: It is largely for fuel. We had advised before that the fuel consumption is much higher and the two new vessels, the Kanawan and Sabanto....We have to also support salaries and wages from time to time.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: In view of this regular annual subvention which has to be made to the Transport and Harbours Department, and the fact that the two new Chinese vessels seem to be consuming quite a large amount of fuel, whether it has made an analysis or an assessment of if it is economical for us to continue using these two vessels on the water as it is.

Mr. Benn: Yes. The Transport and Harbours Department has always been a subsidised agency. That is a fact. The question of the use of the vessels and the support to the communities, which has resulted in making the efficiency of the services on the Essequibo passage better, redounds to the economy at large out of this service. Indeed, it is a direct benefit to the society and businesses and to the economy at large. We are working on ways to make more efficient, the operation and to increase the utilisation of this service.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The actual consumption of fuel on these two vessels, my understanding here is that even before these two vessels came into operation subventions were being made to Transport and Harbours Department, but, now, these two vessels are, almost, utilising the entire subvention, is this proper use of state's funds?

Mr. Benn: The subvention for fuel is for all of the Transport and Harbours Department assets, all of the vessels.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Yes, but I am suggesting to the Hon. Minister is that the two Chinese vessels, the Kanawan and the Sabanto, are almost consuming the entire subvention that is given to Transport and Harbours Department, is it not so?

Mr. Benn: No Mr. Chairman. The Kanawan and Sabanto, as I said, are two assets which are using more fuel than the vessels which they replaced but the fact is that they are carrying nearly three times as much, in terms of trucks and passengers, on their routes as compared to the vessels they replaced.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I know this might just be an ancillary question but we are aware that there was an incident which occurred last night or yesterday on that vessel. I do not know

whether the Minister would care... That is why I am asking whether an assessment was done of these two vessels, whether it is, in fact..., because they have to wait on the high tides actually to move and offload and on-load in the dark.

Mr. Benn: No Mr. Chairman and Hon. Member. The operations on the Essequibo River occur both day and night in the best of conditions. That is the first issue.

Secondly, the facilities are lighted and the boats are lighted. In fact, the new vessels have much superior lighting than the vessels which they have replaced.

The incident of last night related to - we are not very clear as yet - appeared to be improper mooring and or negligence relating to early leaving of the vessel before it was securely moored. It has nothing to do with the Supenaam facility itself. It is an operational issue which we have to address.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Line item 616, Contracted Employees: There is an increase of 13 employees under this head and concomitantly there is an increase of almost \$150 million. Could the Hon. Minister explain the reason for the increase and what categories of employees are now employed under this contracted employees status?

Mr. Benn: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees, indicates that in 2013 there were 19 employees and there are, in 2014, 23. There is the increase of four persons and that is represented by one General Clerk, two Typist Clerk and one Cleaner. That is the information we have here.

Ms. Ferguson: Line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships): I have noticed a significant increase for training for 2014. Could the Hon. Minister say what caused the increase and who are likely to be the beneficiaries?

Mr. Benn: Line item 6302 includes training, in relation to the training plan of the work services group. There will be fulfilment of the training design plan under the tenth European Development Fund (EDF) and training of employees to bridge, what is called, competency gaps.

Specifically, at line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships), under the programme Ministry Administration, there is the training of six employees in computer software usage and also four contractors in respect to building codes under the Electrical Department and that would

take care of five other contractors in seminars and other public awareness issues in terms of electrical codes.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Follow-up on line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, going back to Transport and Harbours Department. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister whether the beacon at the Light House is under the responsibility of the Transport and Harbours Department.

Mr. Benn: No. sorry the Light House is under the administration of the Maritime Administration Department.

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: All right so I will take it there.

Programme: 311 – Ministry Administration - \$619,415,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 311 – Ministry Administration - \$27,860,000

Mr. Trotman: Project 1201800, Rehabilitation of Buildings: Could the Minister say where these buildings are located?

Mr. Benn: The rehabilitation of the stores, which is in the main Ministry's compound, on Fort Street, Kingston, is slated for \$5 million rehabilitation, and improvements of the area. The workshop offices also, for \$5 million relates to the maintenance workshop, and so on, the embankment road, just north of Lamaha and Main Streets.

Mr. Trotman: Project 2405100, Land Transport, "Purchase of vehicles": Could the Minister say what type of vehicles are to be purchased, for what purpose and where will they be assigned?

Mr. Benn: This figure relates to the purchase of two land cruisers for the Work Services Group activities required for work to be done in off-road conditions, including interior conditions.

Programme: 311 – Ministry Administration - \$27,860,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 312 – Public Works - \$1,816,412,000

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees: There is an increase of close to \$135 million and there is an increase in the number of contacted employees 13. Could the Hon. Minister give some explanations for this increase and what skill do these contracted employees bring to the administration?

Mr. Benn: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees, relates to lower levels appointments. Thirteen persons were appointed – one Accounts Clerk, one vehicle Driver, four Security Guards and seven Labourers.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: What, might I ask, would be the salaries of the top two persons in that category?

Mr. Benn: The Accounts Clerk salary is \$49,985; the vehicle driver salary is \$43,137; security guards at \$39,540 each and the seven Labourers at \$39,540.

Mrs. Lawrence: Line item 6251, Maintenance of Roads: Mr. Minister, again, for the third year I am asking you whether St. Stephen Street, Adelaide Street, Garnett Street and Gilhuys Square are included on your list for repairs.

Mr. Benn: I want to refer to, under this programme, roads which are for maintenance. The roads, which we are speaking of in the amount of \$605 million, are Vlissengen Road and Irving Street, Sheriff Street, Duncan Street, JB Singh Road, Water Street, UG Road, Camp Road, Barrack Street, Young Street, Thomas Road, Mandela Avenue, the Seawall Road, Homestretch Avenue, Irving Street, Kitty, Carifesta Avenue, Railway Embankment, East Bank Demerara, East Coast Demerara. I can continue - the Soesdyke Linden Highway, the West Bank Demerara Road, the Mahaica Hospital portion....

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, I am asking about some specific streets that I have been asking for three years in this Assembly of the Minister - specific streets.

Mr. Chairman: I think what the Minister is really going through is his list to see whether those names would have come.

Mr. Benn: I am calling the list of roads under this head which relates to declared public roads. The roads, which the Hon. Member is referring to, are not declared public roads.

As we go along, and there are savings, we will attempt, as we always do, almost on a daily basis, to catch up on roads in the city which are critical to improve the efficiency of the network, but the programme for which we have immediate and specific responsibility, as is financed, and which is the Ministry's direct responsibility, is the declared public roads.

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, I would ask the Minister if he can make a note, or any of his staff, of these roads, which I am listing here, and if that any savings remaining in 2014 that he seeks to address these roads because they are in a deplorable state. I am speaking about St. Stephen Street, Adelaide Street, Garnett Street, Albouystown and Gilhuys Square, West Ruimveldt.

Mr. Benn: I believe that we are speaking about roads under the current expenditure and not capital.

We are discussing a specific item. I do not know that we can be anywhere at the moment. When we get to the capital programmes we will take a look at the listing and see, but we have noted the roads that you have mentioned.

Mr. Trotman: I want to ask the Minister to go back to line item 6116, Contracted Employees. I note the increase in the amount of money requested for this year is \$133 million, roughly, because the Minister said that the number of contracted employees has increased by 13 and they are, in actual fact, low level employees. Could the Minister then justify the amount of money as against the persons and the positions that they hold?

Mr. Benn: The amount relates to the moving of the Work Services Group staff from a PEU, which was under capital programme, to a recurrent expenditure. That amount of money reflects the movement of those employees.

Ms. Ferguson: It is just to go back to line item 6251, Maintenance of Road, Hon. Minister. Perhaps I can make this suggestion because I heard you, when the Hon. Member Lawrence asked the question about which roads have been slated there, made mention of Homestretch Avenue and Mandela Avenue and, as far as my memory serves me correct, I think those two areas are in

reasonable conditions. You could relook at what you have catered for under those two roads, and the other areas, and these moneys can be spent somewhere else.

Mr. Benn: I would just like to repeat that these funds are, with respect to current expenditure, for declared public roads. The moneys, which we have identified, are reflection of the engineering response or assessment of the conditions of these roads. We would always try... It is not necessarily true to say that Homestretch Avenue is in good condition, and so on. There are issues out there which we have to attend to but we always try to optimise without doing injury to the main issue we have at hand.

Programme: 312 – Public Works - \$1,816,412,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 312 – Public Works - \$13,063,080,000

Mr. Nagamootoo: On this head, I wish to state that it is unfortunate that the inter-party dialogue, which you have initiated, Mr. Chairman, was scuttled. Though we have reservation on project 1402900, the “Amaila Access Road, under this agency, the project code, we are in a dilemma because this has been bundled with the Demerara Harbour Bridge infrastructural development, the West Demerara four-lane road and the dredging of rivers have been bundled with urban roads and drainage, the Lethem road, the East Bank road and the Corentyne River Bridge, *et cetera*.

9.39 p.m.

The bunching in programme 312 seems to be a child’s play to politicise matters like these. Therefore, we would have wished that the consultation and negotiations would have proceeded in keeping with the Chief Justice’s ruling that the Government would initiate reduction and/or amendment to the head. We, in the Alliance For Change (AFC), want to indicate to this Committee that we support the programme under Public Works, except the \$1.3 billion for the Amaila access road. We are left with the Solomon dilemma of whether to cut the baby in two or to let the baby live.

Out of a sense of responsibility and a sense of commitment to this nation, genuinely so, we wish to indicate that when the time comes to vote, we will vote in accordance with our own national commitment.

Mr. Benn: I would just like to point out that the so-called bundling the Hon. Member is referring to...all of the capital programmes are always put together in this manner. There is no bundling, shuffling or hiding. I think the reference to bundling is unfortunate. The Hon. Member did talk about the question of a *Solomon-esque* judgment with respect to the Amaila access road. All I would like to say on this matter, again, is that without the Amaila road to the Amaila Falls dam site and the creation of a hydropower dam, Guyana would suffer, the ordinary people of Guyana would suffer and Guyana's development would suffer. There could be no person in this House, I would want to believe, who would want to see Guyanese in this generation or the next suffer.

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: Project code 1100100 – Demerara Harbour Bridge: There is a sum of \$338 million set aside for that Bridge. Could the Hon. Minister state whether that is the amount that is required to ensure that this Bridge is properly maintained for 2014? If not, would any funds be taken from the daily operation of the Bridge to be utilised for this purpose?

Mr. Benn: The funds for the daily operation of the Bridge take care of routine ongoing maintenance with respect to the Bridge. These items under Programme 312 for the Harbour Bridge are fairly large capital items. I would say that the Bridge is very well maintained and is in fairly good condition. There is always some amount of risk with respect to these engineering elements of these large structures. There is the question of fatigue at certain parts of the Bridge, which we are even now assessing with respect to panels and junction posts. We are looking at it right now and the engineers are coming up with a remedy for us. There is always the unusual event, admittedly rare but unfortunate event, where a vessel will run into the Bridge and create problems for us. These are the funds which the engineers have identified. There are some times when we are able to make adjustments as we go along. Except for the risk which I identified just now, this would be adequate for us to maintain the Bridge over this year.

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: Under this project code, I see no mention of the provision for the design and construction of these floating ramps for the speedboats that traverse the rivers of

Guyana. Could the Hon. Minister state if any amount is set aside for that purpose? If it is set aside, where is it set aside for that purpose?

Mr. Benn: The floating ramps, which are indeed delayed, will be financed out of recurring moneys from the Maritime Administration Department (MARAD). The sums involved are fairly modest.

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: Is the Hon. Minister in a position to state what the modest cost of one of those ramps is?

Mr. Benn: The two numbers with the designs we have range from \$1.7 to \$2.4 million. Those are the designs we are working up even now.

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: Hon. Minister, you spoke about public roads when the Hon. Member, Volda Lawrence, made an enquiry about certain roads. Could you state if there are interior roads for which the Ministry also is responsible?

Mr. Benn: The declared public roads extend into the interior and these relate to the Linden/Lethem road, the road from Linden to Kwakwani, the Bartica/Potaro road and other road sections for which there is an allocation of \$1 billion for this year.

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: Minister, I would like to refer you to the Report of the Auditor General ended 31st December, 2012, page 77. It states that there is a certain amount of money totalling \$1.16 billion which was received from National Industrial & Commercial Investment Ltd. (NICIL) for repairs of interior roads. These amounts were deposited into a fund and, based on an analysis report, generated by the Integrated Financial Management and Accounting System (IFMAS), totalling \$745,700,000. The Report goes on to state that there was a balance of \$421 million which was not accounted for. Has that money been accounted for now? Secondly, what is the process by which NICIL provides funding for roads to be built in the hinterland?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, with respect, you need to curtail your questions to a project code and I do not think either question arises out of a project code.

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: There is a project code 1403600 – Hinterland Roads - and there is an amount of \$1 billion set aside for that.

Mr. Chairman: You may ask questions of the amount that is set aside.

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: This is under the heading Hinterland Roads as well. I am asking whether NICIL supplements the amount that is provided for by the Government and what has happened to the last supplement that was provided by NICIL.

Mr. Benn: I want to allay any fears with respect to the accounting of the sums which were received in 2012, which the Hon. Member referred to as being in the Report of the Auditor General. We can provide the details of the sums received and expenditure to date with respect to those sums.

Secondly, with respect to the role or the funding received via NICIL for hinterland roads, the \$1 billion we have now is a direct allocation from the Consolidated Fund. The previous sums the Hon. Member mentioned passed through NICIL. It was not passed directly from the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC), from which the funds originated, but it was passed through NICIL as the oversight and accounting unit in respect of those sums at the time to the Ministry of Public Works to get the hinterland roads funded at that time in those amounts.

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: Is it a normal procedure for NICIL to be funding interior roads? It is a very important matter and I do not think we should sweep it under the carpet.

Mr. Benn: I did not say NICIL funded the roads. I did carefully say that the funds originated from the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission. NICIL acted as a post box and oversight for the allocation. The funding was from the GGMC. We reported to NICIL at times on the use of the funding.

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: Project code 1403500 – Corentyne River Bridge Access Road: There is a sum of \$240 million allocated and it speaks to several things to be done – provision for cadastral engineering, topographic surveys, construction of roads, bridges and culverts, construction of terminal building and car park and design and supervision. Is there a contract for the design and construction of this Bridge and is the Minister in a position to lay that document over to the National Assembly?

Mr. Benn: The Government of Suriname is the authority which is financing the Corentyne River Bridge. Guyana's responsibility is to build a road of some 3.9 kilometres and create a new area

for the handling of people as they come over the Bridge and into Guyana. A similar facility will be on the Surinamese side. We have to build the road and the facility for the handling of people, parking and so on and I think there is some business about some abutment works on our side.

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: Is the Minister saying we do not have a contract? Is he saying that we are providing services on Guyana's side of the Corentyne River in which a foreign state is building a bridge and we do not have a contract? Is that what the Minister is saying? I am referring to a contract for the complete Bridge, that is to say the terminal on the other side, Suriname, the bridge itself over the Corentyne River and the terminal on the Guyana side.

Mr. Benn: For the sum of \$240 million, contracts will be let or where the Ministry itself does design works, the Ministry will do design or surveying works in those amounts. Where appropriate, contracts will be let for the major parts.

With respect to the Bridge itself, it is an issue for Suriname to build the bridge via contracts through its own operations. The Bridge is not on Guyana's territory. The Bridge, in its greatest extent across the Corentyne River, is not crossing Guyana's territory. As far as I am aware, it is their responsibility to fund and build the Bridge.

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: I am offended by the manner in which we are dealing with a matter of national sovereignty. I believe the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs had made it clear that the Corentyne River... We have always held that it is the *talway*...

Mr. Chairman: No. No.

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: Sir, please. At some point, it was said that it is the high water mark on the Guyana side. Irrespective of how you look at it, Mr. Chairman, a bridge that is going to run onto Guyana's land is now being built. How could there not be a contract?

Mr. Chairman: That is true. The Minister of Foreign Affairs has indicated her willingness to speak to this matter.

Minister of Foreign Affairs [Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett]: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to be clear and repeat what I said in my budget presentation, on the issue of the Corentyne River, there

was a draft treaty which was never signed and this is why we have a joint border commission working.

On the issue of the Bridge and the allocations, the Government of Suriname is presently in negotiations on the construction of the Bridge. In other words, we would not be contributing to the cost of constructing the Bridge, but, on our side, we have to do the approaches. We are not going to start doing that unless there is a contract for the Bridge. In other words, we are not going to do the approaches right away but we thought we should include it in the budget so that if the contract is concluded during the year, we can commence the work, rather than come for a supplementary later. That is what we have done.

Mr. Greenidge: Let me just remind Members that we had negotiated with the European Union (EU) moneys for the establishment and organisation of a ferry between Guyana and Suriname. Whilst 90% of the negotiations were conducted by Guyana, the arrangement, having been concluded and the agreement signed, Suriname, it seems, has almost exclusive control of that operation.

The scenario explained to us by the two Ministers is even more alarming because as a layman - I do not claim to have any special insights on geography - the arrangements that have been accepted in the past within CARICOM, when I had been present, and in the European Union and international forums when these matters arose, had, at least used as a working point of reference, the question of the mean high water mark. The point is this: there is no way a bridge can be built from one country into another without both of those countries having a say about the arrangements in total. It seems to me rather remarkable that moneys would be sought to put in place an access road and announce that the contract and all the arrangements for the contract are to be concluded only by one side. They have notified us apparently – that is what I remember the Minister saying – but we have no say, it appears, even in the design or where the people will land when they come on this side. Once they land on this side, they are our obligation. An international company cannot build a bridge which lands on Guyana's territory on behalf of Suriname and Guyana has no say in it. This, to me, is inconceivable. I hope that I understand it wrongly. This seems to fly in the face of almost any of the international agreements I am familiar with and the travels I have done across countries.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 10(1)

Mr. Chairman: Thank you sir. Hon. Prime Minister may I invite you to move the requisite motion for us to continue beyond 10.00 p.m.

Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs [Mr. Hinds]: I move that we waive Standing Order No. 10 so that we may conclude the business on the Ministry of Public Works.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

Mr. Chairman: I will allow one last intervention from the Minister of Foreign Affairs on the jurisdictional issue and then we will move on.

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett: I would just like to indicate that in terms of the issues Mr. Greenidge has raised – and he has raised some very important points – the country that the Surinamese are negotiating with, Guyana had to be consulted first and actually give permission. There had to be agreement between us that they can go ahead and have those negotiations. Guyana would certainly be involved in the negotiations and operations just as we did with the Brazilians and the bridge. I do not want to get into details on some of the issues on the River, but we are working on them. We are integrally involved and, at the appropriate time, we would be happy to inform the House on this.

Mr. Benn: I really do not want to add to it but I would like to say we have been in negotiations with *[inaudible]* and other arrangements with Suriname and others on this issue.

Mr. Morian: I would like to list the information I want the Minister to lay over in this House. I am looking at project code 1201900. It speaks of completion of street lighting. In Region 10, where would those lights be? Does he have any idea when those lights would be completed? Project code 1401700 – Bridges - speaks of completion and rehabilitation of bridges. Again, I am seeking that information as it relates to Region 10. Project code 1401900 speaks about urban roads and drainage. Again, I would like that information to be submitted. Project code 1403600 – Hinterland Roads: I am seeking that information also. Finally, I am seeking that information for

project code 1500402 – Emergency Works. I would appreciate if the Hon. Minister can give me a proposed time when I will receive this information.

Mr. Benn: We could give all of the information by next Wednesday. I am not sure the level of details. I would just like to remind the Hon. Gentleman that I did say in this House when I made my presentation that the Highway lighting in Linden would have been turned on the next Saturday. I believe the lights are now on from the minibus park up to the top at Amelias Ward. This is work which was just completed.

Ms. Ferguson: Project code 1401800: I know that last year December a Supplementary Paper was laid and the sum of \$1 billion was approved for miscellaneous roads. Could the Hon. Minister provide the House with an update as to the number of roads this money covered and the number of roads the Ministry intends to do in 2014?

Mr. Benn: We did supply this information before; we are prepared to supply it again. We will also provide a listing of the roads we intend to do this year.

Ms. Ferguson: Just to follow up on that, I know for a fact that this information was supplied to the House, but I think it was furnished to the House sometime before when we approved \$1.738 billion. My question is in relation to the \$1 billion that was approved in December, 2013. Which roads did the \$1 billion take care of?

Mr. Benn: I will repeat that I think we did supply this information but I am prepared to supply it again.

Mr. Nagamootoo: I see that the West Demerara four-lane road has been carded in the Estimates. It is project code 1207800 – West Demerara/Four Lane Road. I say carded because there is no vote being sought. Some \$5.5 billion has been spent for some kind of preparatory works for bridges and design in West Demerara. Has that been part of this project? There is no vote here being sought. I just need an explanation in terms of what has been spent before.

Mr. Benn: Three weeks ago, we signed the initiative for West Demerara/Four Lane Road for 30.7 kilometres. We had the senior officials from the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB). We initiated the project. We had stakeholders from the police and everybody there. I did speak of it when I made my budget presentation. It involves civil works for the road, road safety awareness.

It is under project code 1403200 – West Demerara Highway - under profile 117. We are actively pursuing the consultancy design, the public awareness and so on to have this road done.

Mr. Nagamootoo: The clarification I am seeking is whether or not the West Demerara/Four Lane Road is the same as the West Demerara Highway. I understood in the Minister of Finance's presentation that he referred to works in West Demerara, but I understood him not to mean a four-lane road. It was to be a highway or rehabilitation of the existing road by broadening the parapets and all of that and the Hon. Minister doing some more sledge hammering to clear the access so that the road can be unhindered by structures on the sides. Is there a four-lane highway carded for West Demerara?

Mr. Benn: We had previously done the West Demerara road under a third road project from the Harbour Bridge going to Parika and upgrade in the road as structures. That work is completed. What we are doing now is building a four-lane road from Parika to Hydronie. Instead of one going and one coming, it will be two going and two coming with the necessary structures, road signage and barriers to have a better road and that is supported by the Caribbean Development Bank.

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: Project code 1402900 – Amaila Access Road: Why is the Minister requesting a sum of \$1.3 billion for a road when he does not have a signed project called the Amaila Falls Hydro Project? Why do you ask for this money? In fact, I want to join with the position that the AFC has taken, and it is basically our position too, and say we object to this particular project code for the expenditure of \$1.3 billion on a road that goes to no project.

10.09 p.m.

Mr. Benn: I am aware that Guyana has a national project for the construction of a hydropower dam facility at the Amaila Falls on the Kuribrong River in the amount of 160 megawatts of cheap, reliable, sustainable, renewable power. We initiated this project. We had several changes along the way. The Hon. Gentleman and I, along with Hon. Member Roopnarine, flew out to this project and the Hon. Member, Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon, expressed his delight with the road as he found it and he expressed even more delight that there were young Guyanese technicians, engineers and other workers working on this road. There were issues arising, I believe, out of the contretemps in the Parliament and so on and I believe that Sithe Global showed some...

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: They left.

Mr. Benn: We should never celebrate the issue of them leaving. The point is that we cannot delay and finish the construction of a road and hope to get it in time for the things we need to do. Guyana intends to build the hydropower damn at Amaila Falls on the Kuribrong River and there is a road that mostly Guyanese are building to achieve this result for all Guyanese and I want to invite, again, the Hon. Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon and any other person from this honourable House to visit with me and to see this road and to see the extraordinary effort that is being carried out by Guyanese young people and contractors to achieve this important national project.

Question put.

An Hon. Member: Division.

Division Bell rang.

Committee of Supply divided: Ayes 32, Noes 26, Abstention 7 as follows:

Abstain

Mr. T. Williams

Ms. Marcello

Dr. Ramayya

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe

Mrs. Hughes

Mr. Nagamootoo

Mr. Ramjattan

Noes

Ms. Ferguson

Ms. Williams

Mr. Morian

Mr. Jones

Mr. Adams

Ms. Baveghems

Ms. Kissoon

Mr. Elliot

Mr. Bond

Mr. Trotman

Ms. Selman

Mr. Allicock

Ms. Wade

Dr. Cummings

Mr. Felix

Ms. Hastings

Mr. Scott

Mr. Bulkan

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon

Mr. Greenidge

Dr. Norton

Mrs. Lawrence

Mr. B. Williams

Ms. Ally

Dr. Roopnarine

Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger

Ayes

Mr. Jaffarally

Mr. Damon

Dr. Persaud

Rev. Dr. Gilbert

Dr. Mahadeo

Mr. Seeraj

Mr. Neendkumar

Mr. Lumumba

Mr. Chand

Mr. G. Persaud

Ms. Shadick

Mrs. Chandarpal

Mr. Nadir

Ms. Teixeira

Bishop Edghill

Mr. Whittaker

Mr. Baksh

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai

Ms. Webster

Ms. Manickchand

Mr. Benn

Dr. Anthony

Mr. Ali

Dr. Ramsaran

Dr. Westford

Mr. R. Persaud

Dr. Singh

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett

Mr. Nandlall

Dr. Ramsammy

Mr. Rohee

Mr. Hinds

Motion carried.

Programme 312: Public Works – \$13,063,080,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 313 – Transport - \$66,818,000

Mr. Chairman: We will give the technical officers some time to regroup. As soon as you are ready, Minister, you may indicate.

Mr. Benn: We are ready.

Mr. Trotman: Line item 6255: Could the Minister say what other infrastructure are catered for under this head?

Mr. Benn: The other infrastructure, Mr. Chairman and Hon. Members, refer to the maintenance of 46 aerodromes in the various Regions.

Mr. Nagamootoo: Line item 6116: I see that they have here temporary employees. Where are these temporary employees located? The contracted employees in Transport, are these on ships?

Mr. Benn: This item refers to the aviation inspector in respect of these aerodromes. It is one contracted person.

Programme: 313 – Transport - \$66,818,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 313 – Transport - \$6,785,000,000

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Could the Hon. Minister state under project code 1600300, Legend “Provision for institutional strengthening”, whether in fact the \$50 million allocated here caters to the work that has to be done at the Civil Aviation Department? In fact, the institutional strengthening of the inspectorate, the safety and security arrangements which the Chairman of the Guyana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) only recently lamented...that we had a serious problem with inspection and security of the aircraft operations.

Mr. Benn: Yes, Mr. Chairman and Hon. Members. This refers to the institutional strengthening and training for the GCAA air safety and management group personnel.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Would we be employing an aviation inspector under this heading here during the year 2014?

Mr. Benn: No. This is specifically for the training of the persons we have here. The issues relating to the Aviation Inspector will come out of the recurrent funds of the Civil Aviation Authority.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Are we employing one during the course of 2014, Minister?

Mr. Benn: We have been actively trying to secure the services of a Resident Aviation Inspector or Flight Operations Inspector. We have been relying on support out of the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) system from Jamaica in the meantime.

Mr. T. Williams: Project code 1600400 – Stellings: could the Minister say which stellings will be rehabilitated?

Mr. Chairman: Sorry, we are now at Programme 313 - Transport. We have passed that way a long time ago.

Mr. Nagamootoo: I want to say before I ask the question that the Alliance For Change fully supports allocation for hinterland and costal airstrips and last year when this vote came up, we took a certain decision on the vote because of the way the matter was... Of course, I cannot deal with the way the Estimates are structured; it is the Government's Estimates. These things are bundled with the Cheddi Jagan international Airport (CJIA) modernisation and though we had indicated our support for the extension of the runway at the CJIA, we have expressed our disapproval of a new airport. So here again the absence of dialogue which you initiated, Your Honour, has created a dilemma in relation to unbundling these heads and so it would leave us no choice but to be consistent with the position we had taken previously in regards to this project code.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much.

Ms. Ferguson: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Under the very project code, 1600200, I know that in 2013, the supplementary paper requested and the House approved some \$21 billion to have the airstrips done. Could the Hon. Minister provide a progress report on the airstrips done so far as of 31st December and which airstrips will be done with this new provision sum? Thank you.

Mr. Benn: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Hon. Member. I would just say in relation to the Hon. Member Nagamootoo's expressions on the CJIA project that in 2012, the National Assembly did approve the project and again to repeat that the projects are presented to the Assembly as per normal.

In respect of the airstrips which were done last year - Matthews Ridge, Port Kaituma, Kamarang and Imbaimadai - those projects were completed. Just let me repeat that the Matthews Ridge, Port Kaituma, Kamarang and Imbaimadai would be done this year and the projects for last year were completed and we will provide the report.

Mr. Greenidge: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to take the Minister back to the item 1600300 in which he explained that the services of an Aviation Inspector has been acquired. Could the Minister explain to us why or whether there are no aviators locally who could provide this service?

Mr. Benn: The specialist skills in this field are very scarce, regionally, for our type of aircraft and we did have Flight Operation Inspectors, Aviation Inspectors. They left after we had given them some training some years ago. We had one national who was trained or was still in the finals of the training as a complete Flight Operation Inspector for all of our aircraft types. He left after some issues with the industry. We relied on the CASA system to provide us regularly with Flight Operation Inspectors, as needed. When we have a need for the Flight Operation Inspector on a particular aircraft or the bringing in of new aircrafts, CASA's Flight Operation Inspectors would come to Guyana and do the inspections and check on the records and so on. We have been relying, fairly successfully, on the CASA system and we are signatory to that. We are a member of that system so we benefit from that arrangement. What we want to have, because we have a large number of domestic aircrafts, is an Online National Flight Operations Inspector and that is what we are working on. We hope to be successful this year in actually getting one. I think we are fairly hopeful this year in getting that resolved.

Mr. Greenidge: Mr. Chairman, I wish to thank the Minister for the explanation but can he tell me what nationality the Inspector provided by the CASA system is?

Mr. Benn: It depends at various times but indeed one is a Guyanese and he is headquartered in Jamaica in the CASA system.

Mr. Greenidge: Is this the one that had a difficulty with the industry?

Mr. Benn: No. This is an older and more experienced...

Mr. Greenidge: Why could we not recruit him directly?

Mr. Benn: He is working in the CASA system and he is not available just now. He has not been available for quite a while. We are open to him working any day of the week, but he comes and he works with us.

Mr. Greenidge: Minister I hear you, but am I mistaken then in thinking that he had applied for that position from Guyana and was unable to get that job?

Mr. Benn: Not at all.

Mr. Greenidge: I am not wrong. I am not mistaken.

Mr. Benn: I am saying that he never applied for the position. The position is open to him any day of the week that he wants to come and do the job here.

Mr. Greenidge: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wish to thank the Minister for that and I will come back to him on it because my information differs from that which he has provided. Thank you.

Question put.

An Hon. Member: Division.

Division bell rang.

Committee of Supply divided: Ayes 32, Noes 33, as follows:

Noes

Mr. T. Williams

Ms. Marcello

Dr. Ramayya

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe

Mrs. Hughes

Mr. Nagamootoo

Mr. Ramjattan

Ms. Ferguson

Ms. Williams

Mr. Morian

Mr. Jones

Mr. Adams

Ms. Baveghems

Ms. Kissoon

Mr. Elliot

Mr. Bond

Mr. Trotman

Ms. Selman

Mr. Allicock

Ms. Wade

Dr. Cummings

Mr. Felix

Ms. Hastings

Mr. Scott

Mr. Bulkan

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon

Mr. Greenidge

Dr. Norton

Mrs. Lawrence

Mr. B. Williams

Ms. Ally

Dr. Roopnarine

Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger

Ayes

Mr. Jaffarally

Mr. Damon

Dr. Persaud

Rev. Dr. Gilbert

Dr. Mahadeo

Mr. Seeraj

Mr. Neendkumar

Mr. Lumumba

Mr. Chand

Mr. G. Persaud

Ms. Shadick

Mrs. Chandarpal

Mr. Nadir

Ms. Teixeira

Bishop Edghill

Mr. Whittaker

Mr. Baksh

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai

Ms. Webster

Ms. Manickchand

Mr. Benn

Dr. Anthony

Mr. Ali

Dr. Ramsaran

Dr. Westford

Mr. R. Persaud

Dr. Singh

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett

Mr. Nandlall

Dr. Ramsammy

Mr. Rohee

Mr. Hinds

Motion negatived.

Programme: 313 – Transport - \$6,785,000,000 - was not agreed to.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I think that this is an appropriate time for us to conclude our business for today. We did recover some ground.

Tomorrow we will commence with the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development so Minister please be prepared.

We will resume into Assembly and then immediately thereafter the Hon. Prime Minister will move the motion for our adjournment.

Assembly resumed.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Hinds: Mr. Speaker, I move that the House be adjourned to tomorrow at 2.00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, we stand adjourned until tomorrow, 11th April, 2014, at 2.00 p.m.

Adjourned accordingly at 10.36 p.m.