

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORT

[Volume 7]

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

81st Sitting

2 p.m.

Wednesday, 3rd December, 1975

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

Cde.SaseNarain, J.P., Speaker

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

Prime Minister (1)

Cde. L.F.S. Burnham, O.E., S.C.,
Prime Minister

Deputy Prime Minister (1)

Cde. P.A, Reid,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development

Senior Ministers (9)

Cde.H.D. Hoyte, S.C.,
Minister of Economic Development

* Cde. H. Greene,
Minister of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation

***Non-elected Minister**

- * Cde. H.O. Jack, **(Absent)**
Minister of Energy and Natural Resources
- * F.E. Hope,
Minister of Finance
- * Cde. S.S. Naraine, A.A.,
Minister of Works and Housing
- * Cde. G.A. King, **(Absent – on leave)**
Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection
- * Cde. G.B. Kennard, C.C.H., **(Absent – on leave)**
Minister of Agriculture
- * Cde. C.L. Baird, **(Absent)**
Minister of Education and Social Development
- * Cde. F.R. Willis S.C., **(Absent)**
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice

Ministers (5)

- Cde. W.G. Carrington, **(Absent)**
Minister of Labour
- Cde. S.M. Field-Ridley, **(Absent – on leave)**
Minister of Information and Culture
- Cde. B. Ramsaroop,
Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and leader of the House
- * Cde. O.M.R. Harper, **(Absent)**
Minister of Health
- * Cde. C.V. Mingo,
Minister of Home Affairs

Ministers of State (9)

- Cde. M. Kasim, A.A.,
Minister of State for Agriculture

***Non-elected Ministers**

Cde. O.E. Clarke,
Minister of State – Regional
(East Berbice/Corentyne)

Cde. P. Duncan, J.P.,
Minister of State – Regional (Rupununi)

Cde. C.A. Nascimento,
Minister of State,
Office of the Prime Minister

Cde. M. Zaheeruddeen, J.P.,
Minister of State – Regional
(Essequibo Coast/West Demerara)

(Absent)

Cde. K.B. Bancroft,
Minister of State - Regional
(Mazaruni/Potaro)

* Cde. W. Haynes,
Minister of State for Consumer Protection

(Absent – on leave)

* Cde. A. Salim,
Minister of State – Regional
(East Demerara/West Coast Berbice)

(Absent)

* Cde. F.U.A. Carmichael,
Minister of State – Regional (North West)

Parliamentary Secretaries (8)

Cde. J.R. Thomas,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of National Development

(Absent)

Cde. C.E. Wrights, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Works and Housing

Cde. M.M. Ackman,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Office of the Prime Minister and Government Chief Whip

(Absent – on leave)

***Non-elected Ministers**

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

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

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

(Absent – on leave)

Cde. R.H.O. Corbin,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Office of the Prime Minister

Cde. M. Corrica,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Works and Housing

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. R.C. Van Sluytman, Deputy Speaker

Other Members (16)

Cde. J.N. Aaron

Cde. L.M. Branco

Cde. E.H.A. Fowler

Cde. J. Gill

Cde. W. Hussain

Cde. S. Jaiserrisingh

Cde. K.M.E. Jonas

Cde. M. Nissar

Cde. L.E. Ramsahoye

Cde. J.G. Ramson

Cde. P.A. Rayman

Cde. E.M. Stoby, J.P.

Cde. S.H. Sukhu, M.S., J.P.

Cde. C. Sukul, J.P.

Cde. H.A. Taylor

Cde. L.E. Willems

(Absent – on leave)

(Absent – on leave)

(Absent)

Members of the Opposition – Liberator Party (2)

Mr. M.F. Singh, Leader of the Opposition

Mrs. E. DaSilva

Officers

Clerk of the National Assembly – F.A. Narain

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

3.12.75
2. p.m.

National Assembly

2. -2.10 p.m.

PRAYERS

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Leave to Members

The Speaker: Leave has been granted to Cde. Kennard for today's sitting. It is a pleasure to welcome back the Cde. Deputy Prime Minister who, I am told, has not been so well. I see him looking hail and hearty and we look forward to his further continued sterling performance.

I also wish to announce that the sitting will be suspended at 5 o'clock today instead of 4 o'clock. And I am informed that there will be much more substantial refreshments provided. We will resume at 5.30 o'clock and will sit until 9 o'clock or until the items on the list are completed.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE 1976 BUDGET DEBATE

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply to resume consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 1976, totalling \$552,203,022.

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: Page 16.

HEAD 1 – OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Question proposed that the sum of \$132,140 for Head 1, Office of the President, stand part of the Estimates.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Singh): Mr. Chairman, just a small point in respect of subheads 8 and 13. They are both listed as Entertainment Allowance and one wonders why they could not have been coupled together instead of being separated.

The Chairman: Subheads 8 and 13?

Mr. Singh: Subheads 8 and 13. 13 is a new one. It has been put in for the first time so that there appears to be a duplication there. Of course, there are two separate amounts involved.

The Chairman: Cde. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister (Cde. Burnham): Cde. Chairman, subhead 8 represents the Entertainment Allowance to the President. Subhead 13 is referable to the Allowance to the Secretary to the Office of the President which has been upgraded to the level of Permanent Secretary and Permanent Secretaries all carry or receive an entertainment allowance of this amount.

Head 1, Office of the President - \$132,140 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 17.

DIVISION I, OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Question proposed that the sum of \$29,000 for Division 1, Office of the President, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Singh: There is only one item on this page – Purchase of Equipment, \$29,000. The Office of the President has been in the Estimates since 1970 and every year we seem to ask for something additional. I wonder whether the hon. Minister would tell us what is going to be purchased with this \$29,000 being asked for.

The Chairman: Cde. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: Cde. Chairman it is, I understand, for the purchase of a new piano and a new station wagon.

Division 1, Office of the President - \$29,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 27.

HEAD 7, PUBLIC AND POLICE SERVICE COMMISSIONS

Question proposed that the sum of \$779,607 for Head 7, Public and Police Service Commissions, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Singh: I will speak on subhead 1, items (6), (7) and (12). And subhead 11, items (6) and (7). Sir we are dealing with Administrative Assistants (In-Training) Administrative Cadets.

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In 1973 the actual expenditure was \$25,229. In 1974 it was \$49,617. In 1975 the Approved Estimate was \$92,217 but the Revised Estimate was only \$44,049 showing thereby a significant proposed underspending in this vote. With training being very essential and as the hon. Minister of Economic Development spoke yesterday about the difficulty in respect of trained personnel I would have expected that this vote would have been used up to the hilt in order to provide the very necessary training. It has not been. We are asking for the sum of \$91,243 for 1976. I sincerely hope there are plans to utilise that money in 1976 for training and I wonder why there was such underspending in 1975.

If we look at item 7 we will see in the legend "Offices vacant" and we are dealing with

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Personnel Officer I. There are supposed to be 6 Personnel Officers. The legend says that the offices are vacant and, as a result, though the sum of \$28,794 was approved for the 1975 Estimates, the revised amount for that year was only \$12,752. We are asking again for \$23,616 for 1976. Perhaps the money underspent on item (6) could have been used to train personnel officers to fill these vacancies.

In respect of item (12), Acting Allowances, we have always been told that acting allowance is such an uncertain thing that a nominal amount is usually put down and I may say *en passant* that the nominal amount seems to vary. Sometimes it is \$1, something \$20, or \$100. I wish the Ministry would settle on one figure for what it terms a nominal amount. The point I want to make is if we look at expenditure over the past years we will see that in 1973 \$5,490 was spent; in 1974, \$6,626; in 1975 the sum of \$100 was put down in the Approved Estimate column but we expect to spend \$7,438. In 1976 we go back to the old accounting position of putting \$100. I think the time has come when we should change this. Let us be more realistic about it. It may be a small amount but we cannot have proper estimates if we keep on putting nominal

amounts when, from the performance over the past years, it is quite clear that the expenditure would be much more than the nominal amount.

And as I am talking on this let us look at page 16; that has a more realistic amount. There is a more realistic amount listed against Acting Allowances on page 16 under Office of the President. The sum of \$1,800 was put down for 1976. If on page 16 we can \$1,800 why can we not put a more realistic figure here for Acting Allowances when it appears that the average expenditure over a three-year period is in the vicinity of \$6,000. We keep putting down \$100. I know we have done it all the time in the past but I think the time has come to change it.

Subhead 11, Civil Service Examinations. The sum of \$100 was approved in the 1975 Estimates. I see nothing reflected for the 1975 Revised Estimate, but we merely put down \$100 for the 1976 Estimates. What is the position? It was intended that \$100 should be spent on Civil Service Examinations, but it appears that there will be no expenditure for 1975. There must be some reason for this. Could we have the reason, please? What are the plans for 1976?

The Prime Minister: Cde. Chairman, with respect the subhead 1, item (6) it is hoped that during the course of 1976 we will be about to recruit more persons to train for what we describe as middle management in the Public Service. Unfortunately, we were not able to do so during this year to extent which we would have wanted.

At item (7), you will notice that we do not have any Class I Clerks in the Public Service and Police Service Commissions Offices. The officer who would normally be described as Class I officers in another Ministry or Department is described here as Personnel Officer. It is not so much that personnel was not fully appointed to Class I. I understand that that has recently been remedied after representations were made by the Public Service Commission to the Minister responsible for the Public Service Ministry.

There is no alternative but to agree with my hon. and learned Friend in respect of item (12), Acting Allowances. Certainly experience has show that a token amount of \$100 is unrealistic. I am going to suggest to the relevant officers and authority that there be no repetition of this sort of token allocation when it is clear over the years that the acting allowances normally run into thousands of dollars.

Subhead 11. It was proposed to introduce Civil Service Examinations. The whole scheme is being worked by the Public Service Ministry. Consequently, there was no expenditure in 1975 though it is expected that we should be able to introduce the scheme in 1976. In this case we are not in a position to estimate the amount that would be necessary. In the circumstances I submit that a token allocation of \$100 in this particular instance is defensible.

Head 7, Public and Police Service Commission, \$779,422, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 31 to 33.

HEAD 10 – OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,161,193 for Head 10, Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Singh: I propose speaking on item (6), Assistant Secretaries (General) and generally on item (23), Director, Guyana Youth Corps, which has a token provision of \$1. Also on subheads, 3,13,15,17,18 and 20.

Subhead 1, item (6) on page 31. We are dealing here with two posts of Assistant Secretaries. The Approved Estimates listed the sum of \$14,720, the Revised Estimate is \$24,696 which is very much more than was approved and the 1976 Estimates. In 1976 the estimate is

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\$15,444, approximately what was approved in 1975. I see no note here that there has been any regrading of these two posts of Assistant Secretaries and therefore I am wondering why this significant amount of \$24,696, as shown in the Revised Estimates for 1975, is necessary for these two posts. It is more than \$12,000 a year for each of these two people. There must be some reason for that terrific increase in the Revised Estimates.

In respect of the Guyana Youth Corps only a token provision of \$1 has been set down against each item. I know that all these posts are being kept open since we have token provisions here. I take it that they are still in existence but, as I understand it, they now form part of the National Service personnel and since it now appears that the National Service will be with us for some considerable time or, according to the Prime Minister, as long as his Government remains in office, then may I ask whether we can look forward to having details of the National Service expenditure as we had details of the Guyana Youth Corps' expenditure? Can we have a breakdown similar to what we used to have for the Guyana Youth Corps? This is the same

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pattern and it would be good for the nation as a whole to know what kind of salaries are being paid under the National Service scheme. It is right for Parliament also, the highest forum of the land, to know what kind of salaries are being paid here. It is right for other public servants to know what salaries are being paid by the National Service people.

The details of the expenditure for National Service are very necessary. Let us understand that this is taxpayers' money that we are using. The taxes that we get from the people are being used to finance National Service and it is right that we should have details on this. No details have been forthcoming so far. All we have had – emulating the example of the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, Dr. Reid – is a bulk amount so far. We want details.

Turning to page 32, subhead 3, Miscellaneous, may I take this opportunity to compliment the hon. Prime Minister for having reduced his estimate for 1976 significantly. The approved expenditure under this Head for 1975 was \$18,500. For reasons best known to this particular department, that was revised to \$41,300 but, thankfully, the estimate for 1976 is only \$20,000. This is good; it is setting a very good example to the other Ministries to cut down their expenditure in the miscellaneous vote.

What I would like is some indication as to whether there might be applications for supplementary provisions next year. I hope that this laudable example will in fact continue and that there would not be any application for a supplementary provision under this vote. I think it is right that the Prime Minister's Office should set an example to the other Ministries.

In respect of subhead 13, Remuneration of Ministerial Private Secretaries, the expenditure has been going up and up all the time. In 1973 it was \$40,800; in 1974 \$86,700; in 1975, \$96,435; 1975 revised expenditure \$114,435; in 1976, the estimated expenditure is \$120,000. How many of these Ministerial Private Secretaries are there? We have no details; we do not know how many there are; we do not know what salaries they get; what scales they are on. We know nothing at all except that this bulk amount is being asked for and keeps rising progressively. Would the hon. Prime Minister give us some details as to the salary scales and the amount of projects covered by this particular allocation?

In respect of subhead 15, Electricity, I am sure that all the Members in this House know how much we have talked in the past about this subhead. Electricity, and how necessary it is for the Government to pay its bills to the Electricity Corporation and the Telecommunication Corporation promptly in order that they can have liquid cash to use and not have to resort to borrowing from the bank. It is wrong for Government to keep them waiting for their money and then pay it years afterwards after having come to this honourable House for approval to pay the backlog of dues owing to these Corporations.

In this case, the sum which was approved in 1975 was \$135,000. In the Revised Estimates it is still \$135,000 but for 1976 we are asking for only \$80,000. The legend says "Overprovided in 1975." If it was overprovided in 1975, why are we still anticipating that we would need the total amount of \$135,000 for 1975? There is nothing in the legend which states that part of this \$135,000 was in respect of arrears owing. Maybe the legend should have stated that. It does not. If this is the case well then we do have the explanation but it merely said "Overprovided in 1975" and we are asking for only \$80,000 in 1976.

The next subhead is subhead 17, Grants to Voluntary Youth Organisations. The sum requested here for 1976 is \$15,000, the sum for 1975 is \$12,000, an increase of \$3,000. The legend states "Increase in the number of Youth Organisations." Could the hon. Prime Minister, if it is possible, please give us a breakdown of these youth organisations which are benefiting from this amount of \$15,000?

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Subhead 18 deals with Promotion of Youth Work and this time the request is for \$250,000 in 1976. It is the same level which was asked for in 1975.

In 1974 it was \$180,200. Could we have some details as to what kind of youth work this quarter million dollars is being used for? We have, in other parts of these Estimates, money devoted to youth, sport and such like. This is a quarter million dollars and we would like to know some details as to how the money is to be spent.

With respect to subhead 20, Contribution to the International Committee of the Red Cross, I note that the revised figure for 1975 is \$6,000 but for 1976 the sum being asked for is only \$3,000. I do not think there could have been arrears paid in 1975 because we note that the actual amount spent in 1973 and in 1974 was \$3,000. The 1975 approved figure was \$3,000 but the revised figure was \$6,000. We seem to have doubled our contribution in 1975 but we are going back to \$3,000 in 1976. I am all in favour of giving the Red Cross \$6,000. I am very happy

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for them to receive the same level in 1976 as they received in 1975. I wonder whether the hon. Prime Minister would tell us why we are not giving them the same amount as in 1975.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, I would like clarification under subheads 17 and 18, Voluntary Youth Organisations and Promotion of Youth Work, on which the Leader of the Opposition just spoke. Could the hon. Prime Minister tell us whether Youth Organisations and Youth Work will eventually come under the aegis of the National Service? It is proposed that this will be so and, if so, how soon will it be? If you are asking for money for it next year I presume they will still carry on as they are in 1976.

The Chairman: Cde. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: Cde. Chairman, subhead 1, item (6). One Assistant Secretary was in a situ at the beginning of 1975 and another one was appointed retroactively, hence the increase. The Revised Estimate of \$24,696 includes back pay with respect to the retroactive appointment.

The Guyana Youth Corps is retained so as to preserve the pension ability of the offices which were held by certain persons most of whom are in the National Service. It is hoped, as soon as there is the opportunity, to introduce legislation for the National Service, instituting it as a Corporation, that provision can then be made to preserve the pension rights of persons who go over to the National Service. Our draftsmen have been under pressure and, therefore National Service operates at the moment as a department of Office of the Prime Minister. This is merely to preserve the pension rights of the persons who help those posts.

Subhead 3, Miscellaneous. I am grateful for the observation of my hon. and learned Friend but I do not guarantee that \$20,000 will be enough. The Permanent Secretary of the Office of the Prime Minister has had strict instructions to seek to curtail expenditure as far as is

practicable and wise. Consequently, he will seek to have the Ministry keep within the ambit of \$20,000 for Miscellaneous but I can give no guarantees.

The remuneration of Ministerial Private Secretaries, subhead 13, covers not only the remuneration of individuals who are designated, but the whole of the staff which includes Office Assistants, typist, etc. I cannot offhand say how large the staff is nor can I say exactly who are Ministerial Private Secretaries or properly so called. I know of three and I would require notice because my particular interest is efficiency and not in names.

Remarks were made on the Voluntary Youth Organisations. It is hoped that eventually all youth mobilisation and organisation, on which government expends money, will come within the National Service, but one has to be realistic. There are organisations like Y.M.C.A., the Agricola Boys Brigade, the organisers of which are doing a good job and it is only right that while they continue to do such a job, in consonance with the national thrust and ideology, that some assistance should be lent to them. No money will come out of this vote, however, to subversive organisations.

Promotion of Youth Work, subhead 18. Cde. Chairman, this takes all types of forms. Sometimes you find in a village young people want to get together for a project which may not properly come under the Ministry of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation. We find that sometimes, for instance, young school children from Primary and Secondary Schools want to go to Matthew Ridge or are encouraged to go to Matthew Ridge or Orinduik or Tumatumari or sometimes to Kimbia or Papaya. This is the vote that is used for that and also for various things like unforeseen expenses with respect to various camps like those at Mainstay and Den Amstel.

With respect to Electricity, subhead 15, the legend is wrong, Cde. Chairman. It was not over-provided in 1975. It was that in 1975 we paid certain arrears after accounts were reconciled. I must apologise to the House for that error.

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Subhead 20, Contribution to the International Red Cross. We did not pay in 1974

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Head 10, Office of the Prime Minister, \$1,616,193 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 34.

HEAD 11, GUYANA DEFENCE FORCE

Question proposed that the sum of \$19,833,100 for Head 11, Guyana Defence Force, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Singh: This is the Head that deals with the 'People's Grandiose Army' the Guyana Defence Force. In respect of subhead 2, Other Expenditure, let us examine the figures. In 1973, the actual expenditure was \$3,452,900. In 1974, the actual expenditure reflected here is \$6,684,714 down to the last dollar. I take it this is actually. There is a flexibility there because it does give it down to the last dollar. I would hope that there is not too much flexibility in this; we never know what is the position when we have to deal with so much flexibility. The 1975 Approved Estimate was \$5,016,400. The 1975 Revised Estimate is not \$5 million but \$14,656,400. We have spent approximately \$9 million more than we had asked for originally in 1975. Very encouragingly we are asking for much less in 1976; only \$6,810,800. So from \$14,656,400 in 1975 we come down to \$6,810,800 in 1976. This is very commendable indeed. But, again, I hope that we will not have applications for Supplementary Provisions in respect of this 'Other Expenditure'.

If we look at the top of the page we will see that Personal Emoluments have gone up from an estimated Revised Estimate of \$10,184,300 in 1975 to \$13,472,300 in 1976. So this /increase...increase is over \$3 million. Hence if Personal Emoluments are over \$3 million, one presumes – and it may not be correct presumption – that ‘Other Expenditure’ should bear some relations with ‘Personal Emoluments’ then one wonders how it is that even though Personal Emoluments have gone up by over \$3 million, ‘Other Expenditure’ has dropped by approximately \$8 million.

I am happy to see a drop in expenditure of \$8 million but I wonder how realistic it is and whether there may not be an application for Supplementary Provision sometime next year.

While I am on the subject of the Guyana Defence Force, the Office of the Leader of the Opposition recently received a complaint that soldiers have to pay for meals from their wages. But it does not stop there. It is alleged that even when they go on leave and do not take meals in the G.D.F. Headquarters, money is still deducted from their salaries for the meals which they did not take. If that is so it does seem to be unfair. I wonder whether the hon. Prime Minister would issue instructions to put an end to that practice.

The Chairman: Cde. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: Cde. Chairman as Minister of Defence all I can say is that in 1975 it was considered necessary to expend \$14,656,400 on the Guyana Defence Force. That is all.

With respect to the question of payment of meals when away on leave I can look into that but it seems very strange to me because, as I understand it, the other ranks are given a ration allowance and unmarried soldiers who live in barracks have a deduction from that ration allowance for the meals supplied to them. If they are on leave, I suppose they are not entitled to a ration allowance. But I can look into it. It seems a petty matter which can easily be remedied.

Head 11, Guyana Defence Force - \$19,833,100 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 35.

DIVISION V – PRIME MINISTER

Question proposed that the sum of \$33,965,000 for Division V, Prime Minister, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Singh: Sir I am glad for that correction. It is approximately \$34 million. I propose speaking on subheads 1, 3 and 6. Subhead 1, Purchase of Equipment. In the Approved Estimated for 1975 the sum asked for was \$1,400,000. The Revised Estimate is \$12,448,000, approximately \$11,000,000 more and for 1976 the sum requested is \$12,500,000. So we are asking for the same level of expenditure which obtained in 1975.

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One would have thought that since the Guyana Defence Force has been in existence for several years and equipment has been bought over the years, they would have all the equipment they needed or, if they did not have, at least this year they would have it with this kind of expenditure, \$12,448,000. Yet we still want another \$12.4 million for 1976 and the legend states: "To provide for the purchase of miscellaneous equipment." I am afraid that I shall be frustrated in that I am going to be told it is a matter of national security and no details will be forthcoming. This is very frustrating, but it is taxpayers' money involved and I think I have a duty to ask the question every thought I anticipate what the answer will be. Why do we have to spend so much money, \$25 million approximately, in two years in respect of equipment? The nation is entitled to some explanation for this level of equipment for this grandiose army.

In respect of subhead 3, Purchase of Equipment, the sum being asked for, \$80,000, is very much different from expenditure for the Guyana Defence Force, but again it is to provide for the purchase of miscellaneous equipment according to the legend. I do not know whether this is national security equipment also but, if it is not, at least we should be told what this small sum, relatively speaking, will be spent on. This is taxpayers' money so let us have some details on it.

Subhead 6, Commonwealth Youth Programme seems to be a new subhead, and the sum asked for is \$435,000. I cannot recollect if this subhead ever appeared any where before but the legend states: "To provide for the continuation of the Commonwealth Youth Programme." We are not told if any other head was carrying this expenditure before. But I wonder whether the hon. Prime Minister would tell us something about this Commonwealth Programme.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, the hon. Prime Minister would be indeed disappointed if we did not bring up National Service which is listed under subhead 4, but we are not here to bandy words or to amuse the Prime Minister, or the House for that matter, however, we would just like to use this opportunity to let the taxpayers know what is being done with their money, because, after all, they are finding the money to meet the expenditure next year.

I really am going to take up some words the Prime Minister used a few years ago when he was talking about National Service. I ask him, by way of explanation, to tell the nation of his intentions. I think yesterday the hon. Minister, Desmond Hoyte, the other Ministers, referred to the hidden benefits in all the other Ministries. I think he was talking in terms of health. I said that the amount being allocated was small in comparison with the other departments. I notice there is a new way of putting down money for National Service and it is only when you come to consider the Estimates that you see the separation. On page 50 of the Budget Speech the hon. Minister told us that capital expenditure for Education including National Service was \$30 million. When we get down to the nitty-gritty we discover that out of the \$30 million, \$20 million is going to National Service.

We have always said we want the money spent where the greatest number of people will benefit. If vast numbers of people are in National Service where, as the Prime Minister has told us, they will get education, we would not split hairs. The hon. Prime Minister said yesterday that at each intake they can only take 1,000 persons and approximately 4,000 persons are turned down at each intake; they just do not have enough room to absorb these 4,000 people.

In view of that statement, could the hon. Prime Minister explain? There is a great deal of fear existing among our Guyanese people of all groups and sexes because of the statement made earlier in the year that National Service is to be compulsory.

First of all, I should like to know if we will adhere to our Constitution of which states we have freedom of association. For one reason or the other someone may not wish to join any one particular group, be it National Services, the Boys Scouts, the Girl Guides. Surely people should be free to join. People are afraid and a lot of people, whatever their reason do not want to be forced to join National Service. Some people have even sent their children abroad which is very unfortunate for Guyana. The Prime Minister has said that at each intake there are 5,000 people applying and they can only take 1,000 and 4,000 are left with no where to put them, so if there is need for National Service to be made compulsory, could the hon. Prime Minister say how soon we will have to make it compulsory?

The other point is just a humble suggestion for your consideration. It is in connection with the National Service for your consideration. Students were told of the contract they had to sign. We are not talking about that because they can read and understand clearly what is in the contract. I have said this before and I know that the Prime Minister is not altogether in agreement with it; he might be ready to jump down my throat but probably he might this time reply in different words. Students have to do National Service, fair enough, that is part of their contract, but we have stated before that to send them off to National Service for two years before they go to U.G. is not a good thing and in the best interest of the education of the students and ultimately of the nation. Secondly, if I understand the Prime Minister correctly, the question of convenient

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time to enter U.G. will be discussed. Is it not possible that the students could do National Service during their holidays, again, not breaking into the classes. I would appreciate it if the Prime Minister would give us his thoughts and some explanation on this matter.

The Chairman: Cde. Prime Minister.

3 p.m.

The Prime Minister: Cde. Chairman, subhead 1, Purchase of Equipment. This includes additions to our rotor flight, our fixed winged flight and to the number of patrol boats which we have. It is therefore not an unreasonable sum. Subhead 3, Purchase of Equipment, that is for the Office of the Prime Minister proper. It includes things like typewriters and duplicating machines which do not last forever, a Mini Bus for Youth Division. It is a small item.

If you will permit me, Cde. Chairman, I would like to deal with the comrade who spoke on Commonwealth Youth Programme before going back to the National Service which is more controversial. A decision was taken at the Heads of Commonwealth meeting, not this year but in 1973, in Canada, that three Commonwealth Youth Training centres should be set up, one in Zambia for Africa, one in India for the eastern Pacific and one in Guyana for what we can perhaps call the western hemisphere and the host country in each case is responsible for the capital expenditure on buildings. The running of the course or courses is a liability of the Commonwealth Secretariat but the construction of the building is to the account of the host country. It did not appear before because it is only now that we are moving onto putting up the extra buildings. The courses have started but being carried on temporarily in the buildings at Kuru Kuru College and some buildings on the campus of the University of Guyana. These arrangements are no longer sufficient or suitable.

Now, Cde. Chairman, I find it a little difficult to understand what is this fear that is being expressed about National Service and to hear that some people are sending their children abroad because they fear National Service. When these same ladies and gentlemen went to the United

States and there was the draft, they were not afraid that they would be drafted. Many of them have been drafted. They come back here appearing in their monkey suits with little flashy cameras all around the place. Is there any fear sir? They just have an inferiority complex in their own country. Let them all go if people are going to be so unpatriotic as to go to countries where, as a condition of entry to schools of learning, they accept their liability to the draft and cannot accept compulsory National Service in Guyana – and we are not fighting any war, we would not be sending them to Vietnam, we would not be sending them to Korea or Thailand or Laos, we are sending them to fight the hinterland, to build the country. So it is absolutely nonsense. I have absolutely no sympathy for that sort of person. People are fearful but they will go to the United States where they can be drafted. And then when the Press was privately owned you would see a picture on Sundays of young so and so, Captain in the American Army, Lieutenant, Flight Sergeant. **[Interruption]** I am quite serious about this matter.

Now, when will it be made compulsory? Cde. Chairman, I said when the Party Congress passed a Resolution calling on Government, to make National Service compulsory that, speaker as the Head of Government, I accepted the dictates, so to speak, of the Party because the Party is paramount but I explained to my comrades then that we are not yet in a position to provide all the facilities if it is to be made compulsory immediately.

The Government is looking at how it can be implemented and it does not seem to me that we will be in a position for another three or four years to take in all who would be eligible or all to whom it would refer. Of course, there is an alternative way of doing it which Tanzania has employed and that is by selection. In Tanzania it is compulsory. It is then left to the Government to select anyone who is eligible in the same way as the soldiers used to be recruited when there was the draft in the United States of America. It does not seem to me, as I said before, that we would have the facilities to accommodate all the young people. And, I do not know that those facilities would be available for another three, four, five years.

With no offence to you, Cde. Chairman, I am a University graduate twice over and I believe that I am in a better position to speak about a break between leaving secondary school and going to University. I mean no offence but I speak “not as one of the Pharisees and Scribes” and I also rely on my conversations with educators of renown in the west and in the socialist countries that normally an exposure to life during a break between secondary stage and the university stage makes for a better person and if you sent a young person straight from one school to another without exposing him to certain experiences. So, with the greatest humility, and I would want to stimulate the humility in my hon. Friend, I would say: “shoemaker, stick to your lasts.” It is the most uninspiring and uninspired observation to have made that the break was bad. People from the West, People from the East say no.

Now, to suggest that the National Service to be done by University undergraduates should be only in the holidays is something that is unacceptable to Government. There can be and will be such cases but to say that all university students or undergraduates will only do their National Service during their holidays is to say something that we will not accept. From case to case you will find instances where that will suffice. You will find other instances where they will have to do one continuous year and then go back to the University if they have served satisfactorily in the National Service because National Service is part of their training and part of their education. If we had had the system of National Service before we would not have had the people who are running outside to be drafted.

They would have learnt to love Guyana, to understand Guyana; they would have known where Konawaruk was, they would have seen the beautiful rapids of Kurupung or Kamarao; they would

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have fished in the waterways of the Mazaruni and Potaro; they would have learnt about the Lukunani rather than the salmon; they would have been exposed to Guyana.

But we did not have that. I would ask the Opposition to be sensible and to give up this sill tactic against National Service. Let me say this: The alternative Government to this Government accepts National Service and with all due respect and humility the Opposition is not the alternative Government. Let us accept the facts.

Division V, Office of the Prime Minister - \$33,965,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 13 – MINISTRY OF PUBLIC CORPORATIONS

The Chairman: Page 38.

Question proposed that the sum of \$17,530 for Head 13, Ministry of Public Corporation, stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 14 – PUBLIC SERVICE MINISTRY

The Chairman: Pages 40 and 41.

Question proposed that the sum of \$765,905 for Head 14, Public Services Ministry, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Singh: Cde. Chairman, I propose speaking on subhead 1, items (7) and (8) generally on the Data Processing Division, items (14) and (20). On page 41, I would have talked on item (43) but the hon. Prime Minister has dealt with that in respect of more realistic figures. I will then go on to speak on subhead 6.

Item (7), deals with Administrative Assistant (Personnel). There are eight of them and the Approved Estimates for 1975 provided the sum of \$40,380 but the Revised Estimates reflect only \$28,113 while in the Estimates for 1976 the sum is pushed up to \$46,392. There appears to be vacancies in this particular item. There are supposed to be eight persons and one wonders how many posts are filled in view of this underspending.

I allude to this because the Public Service Ministry is a very important Ministry. It does deal with staffing and other matters in the entire Civil Service. We would want to know that this particular Ministry is efficient and fully staffed so that other Ministries in the Government do not become less efficient by virtue of any short-staffing in this Ministry

The same thing would apply to item (8), Research Officer. The sum of \$6,384 was reflected in the Approved Estimates but the Revised Estimates reflects only \$1,596 whereas the 1976 Estimates will provide \$6,384. There is only one post of Research officer but I would expect that this is also a very important post. There has been underspending in 1975. Either the post has not been filled or it has only recently been filled. I wonder whether the hon. Prime Minister would enlighten us in respect of this post of Research Officer. The underspending does seem to reflect something wrong somewhere.

In connection with the Data Processing Division, items (14) and (20), we did hear from the hon. Minister of Economic Development that it was the intention of Government to have the Public Service Ministry service the other Ministries with respect to Data Processing. I take it is the intention that this new division here, Data Processing Division, would come to the assistance of Government departments generally. It is a new division, there are new posts listed for the first time except for the post of System Analyst and I wonder whether the hon. Prime Minister could tell us how we are getting on in this direction. We do know that this division does call for skilled personnel, personnel that one would expect would be difficult to obtain. I would like to know whether we have been able to fully staff this division and whether it is operational at the present

moment. Can we really rely on it to service the other Ministries if we have been able to fill all the posts in this division.

The point I would have made on the Acting Allowances vote has been made by the hon. Prime Minister already. Subhead 6, Restructuring of the Public Service. This subhead has been appearing in the Estimates for some time now and the amount being asked for in 1976 is \$30,000. Let us take a look at the figures reflected here in these Estimates. In 1973 we spent \$37,912; in 1974 we spent \$14,640; in 1975 the Approved Estimates column has \$30,000 and the Revised Estimates column also has \$30,000.

This business of restructuring of the Public Service has been going on for a long time, as far back as these Estimates go, that is, 1973. We remember also that there was a big Job Evaluation Exercise which took several years. As a result of that exercise, civil servants were granted increases in salaries. In fact, there were appeals and I think most of the appeals have been dealt with. A hard look has been taken of the entire Public Service by the Job Evaluation team.

One wonders whether this Restructuring of the Public Service would be a continuing operation. I would have thought that there was not much need to continue spending money to this extent. I wonder whether the hon. Prime Minister can give us some indication as to whether it will continue, or whether there would come a time when the level of expenditure would either go down or disappear entirely.

The Chairman: Cde. Prime Minister.

2.20 p.m.

The Prime Minister: Cde. Chairman, the hon. Leader of the Opposition spoke well on subhead 1 item (7), Administrative Assistant. It is hoped that during the course of next year the situation will be corrected.

Further, I am grateful to him, Cde. Chairman, for dealing with item (8) of subhead 1, Research Officer. We had advertised for a Research Officer but none has been employed and the post is being re-advertised. Therefore, I hope my Comrade, the Minister of Finance is hearing me. The sum of \$1,596 is a mistake. No money was spent under that Head during 1975 and I am most grateful to my hon. and learned Friend for giving me an opportunity to correct these Estimates. I must congratulate him upon his diligence, if not pertinacity, in discovering these faults.

The Data Processing Division, as the Leader of the Opposition observed, is intended to be a central service for the whole of the Public Service. We have already appointed a qualified Manager and we have a number of programmers but more staff is yet to be recruited. We do not think we will have any great difficulty in recruiting the remaining staff.

Subhead 6, Cde. Chairman, Restructuring of the Public Service. In previous years it was used as the vote out of which we paid for the Job Evaluation Exercise but that is one exercise. There is still another exercise going on, especially with respect to superannuation and other fringe benefits. That is the exercise of having a unified service instead of having Fixed and Unfixed, Open Vote and things like that. Government has undertaken, and the relevant Unions representing the various categories of employees have agreed, to bring all of our employees in the Public Service under the Widows and Orphans Fund Act. To do that it has been necessary to employ on contract terms, Actuaries. They are paid out of this vote. As a matter of fact it was /anticipated...anticipated that in 1975 the expenditure would have been \$30,000 and it is anticipated in 1976 it would be \$30,000. Job Evaluation was just one aspect of the Restructuring of the Service. The unification of the Service, gives other people Widows and Orphans' Fund benefits especially women so that if a woman dies leaving an Orphan or a Widower that Orphan or Widower can benefit. Policemen have to be brought in; Teachers and a number of people are to be brought in. It is a laborious task.

Head 14, Public Service Ministry, \$756,905 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 42.

DIVISION VIII – PUBLIC SERVICE MINISTRY

The Chairman: Page 84.

HEAD 30 – MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Question proposed that the sum of \$10,041,112 for Head 30 – Ministry of National Development – stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Singh: Once again my plea in respect of this Ministry of National Development – I wonder whether the correct name should not be Ministry People's National Congress Development. The problem is that the taxpayers seem to have to pay for this development. This is Ministry of National Development under subhead 2 lists as expenses of National Development \$10,000,000 and there is not a word on the details. They want \$10,000,000 for 1976, apparently, make no apologies for asking for it.

The Government came to Parliament at the end of 1974 and asked for \$2,500,000 for 1975. But during the year supplementary applications came to this Parliament and from an anticipated expenditure of \$2½ million we now have expenditure of \$10,920,000 for 1975. Approximately \$11,000,000 is to be spent in 1975 and there is not a word of detail. I am alarmed at this.

(Mr. Singh continues)

I hope the Director of Audit is listening carefully. This is taxpayers' money which should be accounted for and I would expect every single bill to be audited. I know there are sometimes shortage of staff which precludes the Director of Audit from looking at all the papers but I will ask, in respect of this particular Ministry, that every single bit of expenditure is looked at critically and carefully. The vehicles used by this Ministry are marked "Office of the General Secretary of the People's National Congress" – they are so barefaced that they are telling us that and ...

The building is marked "Office of the People's National Congress and Ministry of National Development." [Cde. Nascimento: "Don't we finance your office too?"] That is a constitutional post written into the Constitution. This was agreed by all, but we never in London – and I was at the Independence Conference – agreed to use taxpayers' money to run party activities and party headquarters under the guise of a Government Ministry. The hon. Minister last year gave us a long lecture that this Ministry has just started, that it was dealing with people, it was in the formulative stage and could not settle salaries and salary scales. I say that the other public servants are entitled to know what salaries are paid here. This is taxpayers' money. Public servants must know how this \$10 mn. is being used, what kind of salaries, whether fancy or otherwise are being paid out by this Department. Why should this Department be so sacristan? Every other Ministry including the Prime Minister's Ministry has to give details. Why should the Deputy Prime Minister's Ministry not be made to give details also? One wonders whether this is not a deliberate plan to hide taxpayers' money which is spent on party activities.

This is why I should certainly like to see the Director of Audit's Report in respect of this Ministry since it has started spending money. Again I appeal to him to look at every document. When will the hon. Minister give us details? He is not giving us details for next year so when will he start giving us details? He has been running this Ministry for two years now. [Interruption] Previously there was a vote for National Development under the Prime /Minister's...

Minister's Head. After one year the Minister should know how the money is being spent. He is using the money, he is paying out, he must have bodies to pay out this \$10 mn. Let us have details about these people and their salaries.

The Chairman: Cde. Deputy Prime Minister.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development (Cde. Reid):

Cde. Chairman, I wish, first of all, to thank you for your good wishes and kind remarks on behalf of the Members of the House. I wish to assure you that people also join you in your kind sentiments.

I am very glad that my hon. Friend has raised the question about details of expenditure because from the very beginning when this Ministry was established I made a point that it was not a routine kind of Ministry. I wish to refer to the very second paragraph of the Budget Speech so ably presented by my Cde. Minister of Finance. It clearly sets out what the programme has to be if the kind of development we want is to take place. I quote a part of that paragraph:

“The task of transforming the society into a Socialist one is to increase its momentum. The effort will involve emphasis on certain ideals – maximising production; producing for the people first and foremost;...”

Then he made this other point –

“...creating the conditions through education and training that would lay the foundations for equality of opportunity for all Guyanese;...”

Once you have understood that then it is necessary to understand further that if we are to do this transformation there must be some non-capitalist method. I think my hon. Friend's sole concern is that he cannot see any development taking place outside the routine capitalist line when you need to set down everything in detail so that during the year when there is need for flexibility you find yourself hedged in so strongly that development slows down. You need to have the momentum for development. Hence, if development is to take place we have to be concerned

with all the people, not some of the people; and to reach all the people you need to have funds that can be used in such a way that the smallest person in the community would be reach by development.

If you use the traditional method then may such people would be left out. For instance, if we take traditional training methods where people apply formally through that system they will be required to have certain basic educational qualifications and things of that kind, and it will be difficult to recruit them. As we proceed to find people to help them along the way it is not possible to have a roster of permanent staff because as you move into some areas people who can function in the urban area may not be able to function in the rural area. You may therefore employ a man for a month or two months to carry out a special task in a special environment so that the people in that community can benefit. For us, if development does not touch everybody, then real development is not taking place.

We have introduced in this programme a new method of education where public servants and interested people in the community are given the exposure to work with people in the community as well as to live with people in the communities. And so a large portion of this sum is used for development education, where we have courses for developers, where we have training, staff conferences and some research work done. To stimulate people in the community a cultural programme is needed. All these are methods used by teaching, methods that cannot be used by the routine community because we go out to people in their own communities who would not come where institutional methods and not fit in and we must do that kind of work.

To enable us to move into the communities, a large sum is spent on Transport and Travelling as well as on maintaining vehicles. Transport is not dealing with land transport but we have to deal with all kinds of transport including land and water and sometimes air as well. Some people are in the far-off reaches of the rivers and it is our business to reach them. So we need water transport as well. For this item alone nearly \$¾ million is used.

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In some areas we need to have rehabilitation of certain important features in the community. For instance, we need to pay attention to a place like Magdalenburg, which is

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important in the history of this country, so that it should not be lost to the young generation. Rehabilitation is going on there now. Some emphasis is placed on Aishalton, which can give us lessons in helping to develop some of our people, so that we can train people there and they can go out and train others in the vast Rupununi Savannahs. A place like Kaieteur that has been left unattended for many, many years is now being taken care of so that it can be of greater use to the community. We look for things like that, hence, it is a little difficult to itemise them because one you have stated them in the Estimates, then you have to follow that line. During the year as you visit places something of great importance might present itself. In such circumstances you must be in a position to assist. We therefore do all this work to mobilise people and inspire them.

In many communities, notwithstanding the larger development project, one will meet little things that need to be done. It might be a dam or a “koker” or a little canal. With a little help people can be inspired and stimulated to maximise their production. We therefore look for things like that. You cannot really record those in a document before the expenditure is made. The auditor will take every care to ensure that this money is usefully spent and I am certain he will find no difficulty in carrying out that kind of task. We will welcome that. We look forward to that kind of examination because I am certain that all the people will be satisfied that the money is properly spent to mobilise and inspire people to do things that have to be done.

This year was very unusual. Fortunately, we had this block vote that we could use. We had an unusual number of Heads of Government visiting this country and we had to make sure that these visits were productive to our side by the way we treated these visitors and they way we welcomed them. We are seeing results from some of the efforts made by this Ministry.

We are seeing results in our young people too. Many of them would not get into the normal stream of youth work at Camps at Mainstay and Madewini so one will have to meet them in smaller groups in less-known areas of work along with them. None of the Ministries can pick out all of these people who need this kind of help. As we try to do this work in some areas, we need to have accommodation and the facilities. We make sure that we get some of these facilities either by rental or by purchase so that we can function properly.

Much of the emphasis is put on the rural areas because there is the tendency as all of us know, for people to want to migrate to the city. In this exercise, we try to brighten the rural areas to make people find useful activities to do. We try to provide some of them, in some areas, with entertainment, to give them a chance to create things in their cultural expressions and in their dramatic work and thus give them involvement in their community. It is a difficult task for some of these Ministries to do this kind of work. We need people who would be able to deal with these people, who would be able to understand them, who would talk in a language that they will understand. This is a very important part of what we do. Some of these expenses are on communication: how we communicate with them, not only by visits but by publications of all kinds, booklets, periodicals and things of that kind in order that they may have some simple reading material that can be used in the community.

We are, therefore, proceeding on this new type of development by getting people involved for, notwithstanding what we do, no matter how many millions are spent, unless we can mobilise the energy of the people, then the work would not be done properly. Over the past year we have seen every indication of reward for this kind of work not only with the people in their areas but through bringing other people who have to deal with them closer to them. In this way, men and women who work in offices and in factories can understand what happens in the field and we are hoping in time that this understanding would develop and deepen and that some of the problems we have, due to misunderstanding, would not occur.

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If this new system, which is a non-capitalist method of development, is to succeed then the foundation requirements are education and training, the type of education and training that is relevant to development. We are endeavouring to do just that. We bring people together for large and small conferences so that their voices can be heard in planning and in making decisions. This too will cost us a tidy sum. We now have nine regions to deal with and we have conferences and

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several meetings, all tending towards the same objective – training and teaching people. To plan in detail for this in a Budget is not a practical thing to do because once we start planning like that then we are restricted from doing this very important work.

I wish my honourable friend on the other side would make sure that some of his friends, some of his followers, take the opportunity in the rural areas to participate in some of these programmes so that they can talk to him from their own experiences of the usefulness of these exercises. In this way, some of the misunderstandings that we get about National Service would not occur in future and people would unite better to do the work that has to be done. I think, when I detail some of the things we hope to do during next year, my friend will begin to understand what is happening. We did not put these down in the Estimates because, as I repeat, when we name them in the Estimates we are tied to those activities and the time for making changes might be too long to help the people whom we want to help, people who are out of the regular stream of assistance. For us it is more important to help them swiftly so that they will be inspired and motivated than to tie these items down to the Budget and then fail to help the people who need help most.

One feels that some of the successes were due to this fact that we were not tied to any itemised budget. Help is needed, especially when you are dealing with people on the farms. Most of them are farmers and we must understand that it is from the land in our several communities that most of these farmers make their living and if we are going to help them we must give prompt assistance. A day might be too late. The crop, as the Minister of Agriculture has said, is

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always the master and no matter how carefully you plan, when you get into these areas, there is something that will happen that will throw that plan out and they need prompt assistance. We are there to be called upon to fill this breach for the time being so that our people in the communities can maximise their efforts as the Minister of Finance would wish to happen during this year.

There is just one last word, and that is to do some research which I think is very important because too often we try to deal with communities without taking any opportunity to study the communities with our live-in exercises, to use that kind of information to proceed with further research so that we can understand some of the communities with which we have to deal. This is very important work because very often people know to handle machines and technical equipment but they do not know anything about dealing with people. For us, outside of regular calls, the best method is to go out there, live with them, talk with them, work with them and then learn about them. If we are to develop this country you must not only know its physical features but also the people of this country. Some money is spent in this kind of exercise. I hope I have said enough on this item. Much of this I have repeated because I have said it two or three times in this House. The Opposition is bound to learn and I do not mind repeating myself because I am still confident that in time my friend will understand what it means to pursue non-capitalist development plan.

Head 30, Ministry of National Development - \$10,041,112 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

DIVISION XVIII – MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Chairman: Page 85.

Question proposed that the sum of \$500,000 for Division XVIII, Ministry of National Development, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Singh: There is only one item here, Development Works. As the hon. Minister of Economic Development rightly pointed out yesterday, when we see a subhead in any particular Ministry it does not mean that that is the only expenditure in respect of that kind of work. This is very true and in this case we have the legend stating: “To provide for minor development works.” The sum of \$500,000 is anticipated for next year and the sum of \$500,000 is listed to be spent for this year also. But we do know that the Ministry of Economic Development has moneys to be spent for minor development works. The Regional Ministers have money. Almost every Ministry seems to have money to be spent for development works. It does seem that there must be duplication among the various Ministries in respect of development works.

I wonder whether each one of these Ministries has a team of workers, of equipment and machinery which it is using all within its own particular Ministry. I think the time has come for these development works to be coordinated. If we have Regional Ministers, let each Regional Minister look after these minor development works in his particular area. We have Regional Ministers being in charge of minor development works; we have the Ministry of Economic Development being in charge of it; we have the Ministry of National Development and we have so many other Ministries. There must be duplications. Will the Deputy Prime Minister tell us what amount of development work will be done here that cannot be done by other Ministries?

Cde. Reid: Cde. Chairman, a little earlier I spoke about that in the legend but there is no conflict as far as duplication is concerned. In all the Ministries, as you have already noted, the items are listed. There has been consultation in the areas and we have decided on certain projects. All that is theory. The planning itself is theory. In practice, differences might occur. Things that you have planned for might not come out as you planned them. As we move round these areas small things are necessary. It might be a few garden tools for a group of people; it might be a koker for a little community which nobody took cognisance of; it might be something that has gone wrong during the year that nobody anticipated. Things like that we help to do so that we can keep the spirit of the people uplifted so that we can continue to inspire them and mobilise them to do these things. That small item alone might be vital to the bigger development

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project. As we pass by, if there are more things without dates, we will make sure that you get that date. It might be new garden tools and things of that kind. So this small amount is made available.

Division XVIII, Ministry of National Development - \$500,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

4 p.m.

HEAD 35 – MINISTRY OF WORKS AND HOUSING (WORKS)

The Chairman: Pages 100 to 112.

Question proposed that the sum of \$36,008,243 for Head 35, Ministry of Works and Housing (Works), stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: That does not mean many questions.

Mr. Singh: Not necessarily, sir, but a job has to be done and I have always felt that if a job has to be done it is worth doing properly. Page 100 subhead 1, items (14), (15) and (16) I shall take together page 101, item (33) and a general question on the Buildings Division item (59) onwards; page 102, items (68), (69) and (70). I shall raise one question dealing with all items; page 103, items (109), (110) and (118); page 104, item (135) and (137). Page 107 item 9199); page 110, item (278); page 111, items (321), (322) and (323); subheads 18 and 20; page 112, subhead 37.

Page 100, item (14) Senior Economist; item (15) Economist and item (16) Cost Accountant. I have here my Estimates for 1975 which we dealt with in December last year and I did speak on these three posts. These are posts which form a vital and integral part of the planning unit of the Ministry or Works. Last year these posts reflected vacancies. When we

spoke last year on the items listed on page 103 of the Estimates I said that again the amounts provided were significantly underspent and I asked: is this Unit operating at all? I asked how many vacancies existed because the hon. Minister did acknowledge that there were vacancies.

If we look at the figures for this year we will see that the Approved Estimates for a Senior Economist in 1975 is \$6,960 but that has been revised to \$3,845, and underspending presumably, because the post had not been filled or has only recently been filled. Similarly, for the post of Economist, \$6,384 was provided in the 1975 Estimates but that figure has been revised to \$2,660. Again, the sum of \$6,960 was provided for the Cost Accountant but that figure has been revised to \$3,845, a reduction in the amount of approximately 50 per cent. We would like the hon. Minister to tell us what is the position with this Planning Unit. The sums provided continue to be underspent. Is it that the Unit has not started to function? And, if it is functioning, what contribution is it making to the Ministry?

I remember the rationale behind the setting up of this Planning unit was certainly very sound indeed. It was said you needed a Planning Unit to have an overall look at the activities of the Ministry, to make sure that everything runs smoothly and to do the necessary research. We certainly would like to know what has happened in respect of this Planning Unit and whether there is still difficulty in filling the post?

Page 101, item (33), Senior Supply Officer. I spoke on this last year and we see that in 1975 the Approved Estimate was \$23,760 but that has been revised to \$17,829 suggesting that there are vacancies in this item here. There were supposed to be three Senior Supply Officers. Do we have three Senior Supply Officers?

Item (63) Architect/Assistant Architect. The sum of \$49,844 was approved in the 1975 Estimates. This has been revised to \$33,730 for 1975, thereby suggesting that there are vacancies. We note that in 1974 the actual sum spent was \$37,800 and in 1973 \$29,400. I made a note last year that the hon. Minister said that there was difficulty in filling the vacancy and that

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the Ministry had to revert to using private Architects outside the Ministry. Now this, of course, would be a more costly affair. If salaries are not attractive enough to persuade Architects to work with the Government then something should perhaps be done about revising salaries so that the people could be enticed to work for the Government and not merely do contract work outside at a higher fee. Will the hon. Minister tell us if there is improvement in the position and what prospects there are in respect of filling these vacancies?

Page 102 subhead 1, items (68), (69) and (70). The Approved Estimates has Assistant Quantity Surveyor II \$13,176. This has been revised to \$5,490. In respect of Assistant Quantity Surveyor I, the Approved Estimate is \$4,800 and this has been revised to \$1,640. In respect of item (70) which makes provision for the three Quantities Technicians, the sum of \$9,444 was approved in the 1975 Estimates. That has been revised to \$5,570. All these are vacancies admittedly in respect of technical posts where technical skills are required and either there must be training to fill these posts or salaries be revised to attract the people to the posts. Could the hon. Minister tell us what is the position.

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Page 103, item (109) Senior Superintendent, Quarries. There are supposed to be three Senior Superintendent of Quarries. I think the Government now has three quarries. I know that there is one at Makouria and one at Teperu. I think the other one should be at Port Kaituma. These quarries are big operations; millions of dollars are spent on them so that we would want to know that each quarry does have a senior superintendent. There are three posts listed and when we look at the figures it shows that the sum of \$19,080 was set aside for these three posts. This has been revised to almost \$8,000, which shows a very significant underspending thereby indicating that there are vacancies in respect of these three posts. What has been done to make sure that these quarries are managed by senior superintendents?

Even in respect to Superintendent of Quarries, item (110). The sum voted in the 1975 Approved Estimate was \$3,936, but that has not been spent, because the revised figure was only \$1,640. So that even in respect of Superintendent of Quarries there seems to be vacancies reflected by the underspending.

We come to item (118), Surveyors, and that is a field on which I have talked on several occasions. Provision was made for 61 surveyors on salary scale A20/22 in the 1975 Approved Estimates, the sum of \$325,287 was voted. But this has been revised to only \$249,233, so that the amount has been reduced from \$325,287 to \$249,233. It is very much less. Obviously we do not have 61 surveyors and this have been the pattern for the last few years. The figure which is reflected in the Estimates in 1973 was \$195,700, in the 1974 estimate it was approximately \$200,000. There has always been underspending in the field. There is definitely in this country a shortage of surveyors.

The hon. Prime Minister has said that one of the reasons why the Amerindians have not have been given their land titles is because there is a shortage of surveyors in the country. What is being done to remedy the situation? Is enough being done? The situation does not only exist this year; it has been existing for some time now. In fact, the Amerindians Lands Commission made its report years ago. This shortage of surveyors has been in existence for at least the last ten years. I think it is about time that the Government does get down to really dealing with this problem.

What are we doing is keep the surveyors who qualify in this country? What are we doing to train people in the field of surveying? I am afraid giving a degree course at the University of Guyana would not help the situation. Surveyors are badly needed in the country and we must get down to training them at the technician level. It should not be a difficult problem at all. Why can we not run crash courses, if necessary, at the University of Guyana or at the Technical Institute? Why can we not make the salaries attractive for the people?

There are two problems, one is that the salaries for surveyors are not attractive and we know they have been trekking away to the developed countries, places like the United States and the Bahamas. The Bahamas has a significant number of surveyors. I am not only talking about road surveyors, I am talking about surveyors generally.

Even though this may be dealing with a particular type of surveyor, I want to deal with surveyors generally. I want to suggest to the Ministry that they get down to dealing with the problem. Are there any courses being offered for surveyors at the University of Guyana or elsewhere? I am not referring to a degree course, that is not necessary. Are there courses being run by the Technical Institute? I understand there may be courses run by the Technical Institute but are they catering for enough people? We cannot continue with this problem for all time.

I do not think the Government is doing enough to grapple with this problem. It has been with us for far too long. I do appeal to the Government as a whole, not only to the Minister of Works and Housing to really do something in respect of increasing the number of surveyors. First of all, I understand there is another problem. There are many people acting in posts in the Ministry and not being confirmed in the post. If you keep a man in an acting position too long and he can get appointed somewhere else he is going to leave. Let us revise salaries and let us look at the training, particularly, so that we can increase the output of surveyors generally.

Turning next to page 104. This is really a follow-up to what I was saying. Let us look at item (135), Trainees. Trainees must be trainees for the Ministry of Works and Housing. We are dealing right now with “Works” so that it will refer to trainees in the technical field generally. Let us look at the figures. In the 1975 Approved Estimate the sum of 420,000 was set aside for trainees. This has been revised and lowered to \$9,680. For 1976 we are asking for \$20,000. But what is significant is there is no figure in 1974 so that means that in 1974 no money was spent, nothing was done.

I spoke on this last year when we dealt with page 108 of 1975 Estimates. Let us see what happened there. We have listed under the 1974 Approved Estimates column the sum of \$20,000, and the 1974 revised estimate was \$9,680, so that they have done this year exactly what they did last year. In the final analysis no money was spent because in these 1976 Estimates under the heading “1974 Actual” nothing is reflected. What will happen next year when we get the 1977 Estimates? Will it be shown that the same thing happened in 1975 that no money was actually spent? This is what appears to be the position. Let us see whether there was anything voted in 1973. Nothing was spent in that year. I suspect we will find that nothing was spent on this item in 1975.

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Sir, if we are to produce these people that the hon. Minister of Economic Development admitted were in such short supply, we are going to have to train them. Why then are we not using this vote? I would hope that the hon. Minister would be able to tell us about some plan to spend the money. Let us not leave it there.

In respect of item (137), Laboratory Attendants, here again, it is the same pattern. In 1975, the approved estimate was \$11,148 but that has been reduced to \$5,133. There has been underspending in respect of these 5 posts of Laboratory Attendants. If we do not have them, let us train persons and fill these posts.

On page 107 there seems to be something wrong here. I ask this question in respect of item (199) which provides for 14 Labour Foremen. In the 1975 Approved Estimates, the sum of \$39,012 was approved but nothing appears in the Revised Estimates for 1975 in respect of these 14 Labour Foremen. If we do not need them then let us not provide the sum of \$39,012 in 1976.

Item (278) on page 110 makes provision for 17 Electrical Assistants. The sum of \$35,808 was asked for and approved in the Estimates for 1975 but the Revised Estimates for 1975 reflect

nothing at all to be spent. If we do not need these 17 Electrical Assistants, then why are we asking for money for them in 1976? Is there a mistake? Are we spending \$35,808 or are we not?

On page 111, we can deal with items (321) Temporary engineering Staff, (322) Temporary Clerical Staff and (323) Substitute for Staff on Leave together as the same principle is involved. In every case we see that the actual expenditure exceeds very much the total amount provided. In 1973, we actually spent \$28,000 on item (321) Temporary Engineering Staff. On item (322), Temporary Clerical Assistance, we spent \$95,000 in 1973, \$100,000 in 1974, \$75,000 in 1975. In respect of Substitute for Staff on Leave, item (323) in 1973 we actually used \$18,000; in 1974, \$25,000; in 1975, \$15,000. In spite of these figures we are asking in 1976 for \$1 for Temporary Engineering Staff, \$10, for Temporary Clerical Assistance and \$1 for Substitute for Staff on Leave.

The Minister of Finance will tell us that it is difficult to quantify what will be spent under these items and therefore a token provision is put, but the Prime Minister has agreed that if we have, over a period of years, an indication that it would be way above the token amount, let us at least put some reasonable amount so that we can be more accurate in our Estimates. There is no point in putting \$1 when one knows that last year we spent \$25,000, \$10 when last year we spent \$75,000, or \$1 when last year we spent \$15,000 and when, in addition, expenditure in the previous years has been along the same pattern. I hope that there will be innovation for the next Estimates.

Subhead 18, Subsidy to Guyana Water Authority. I understand that three months ago the well collapsed at Belfield where the Prime Minister lives. What is the position in respect of the well at Belfield? Are we sinking a new well? People have had no water running from their taps for some considerable time now. It is true that the area is being served by the Fire Brigade but that is utilising equipment which should not really be doing that kind of work. It is necessary fair enough, but what is even more necessary is that a new well be sunk or that the old one be repaired.

I am reminded by my hon. colleague that the Guyana Water Authority is very prompt in sending out bills. Is the Corporation going to send out bills to collect water rates in respect of a system that is not functioning? I hope the hon. Minister will not countenance the Guyana Water Authority sending out bills when the water is not flowing from the taps.

On this business of water supply, there is a problem which perhaps I should take up with the Minister in some detail but I may just mention it here now. It seems as though people in extra-nuclear areas and people in some of the areas like Oleander Gardens, having paid Bookers and the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund for water supply, are being billed by the Guyana Water Authority and are being asked to pay. This seems to be wrong. They should not have to pay twice. I have the details and I have the correspondence on it. Perhaps I should take this matter up privately with the hon. Minister but with regard to my earlier question, the nation would like to know the situation with the well at Belfield.

Subhead 20, Training Expenses. I talked on training before and I want to reiterate and perhaps emphasise a little more the point. In 1975, the Approved Estimates provided \$20,000 for Training Expenses.

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For 1975 the revised figure is \$20,000. For 1976 the amount of \$20,000 is being asked. But what did we spend in 1974? The amount of \$20,000 was provided and we spent only \$3,500. In 1973, again we spent only \$2,500. If we vote money in the Estimates for Training, let us use it for Training. We need to do training and I appeal to the hon. Minister to see that this money is utilised. Do not let us go on year after year providing \$20,000 which is not being by the Ministry. Perhaps the hon. Minister would tell us what particular type of training this subhead covers. I take it that it would be training for officers and technical staff in the Ministry.

Page 112, subhead 37, Roads. The sum of \$3,000,000 is being asked for in 1976 and the legend states: "Increased maintenance costs." I have no quarrel with the amount of money being provided here. The amount of \$3,000,000 is not a lot to be spent in respect of maintaining roads but I have heard that the Soesdyke/Mackenzie road is deteriorating. I think the Ministry is in receipt of a recommendation that work be done on that road urgently otherwise the road will deteriorate and rehabilitation after deterioration will cost a tremendous lot more than if maintenance is done now. Could the Minister say if there are plans to do maintenance work on the Soesdyke/Mackenzie road next year in view of the fact that it has been standing up there without much maintenance for a long time? It will have to have a wearing surface put on it. When are we going to do this?

As I am speaking on roads, we were told that there was a road which had been built by self-help. That is the road to Brazil. We have not heard very much about that road within recent times.

The Chairman: I think we can deal with that road when we come to the other head under Hinterland on the next Division to which we are coming to.

Mr. Singh: Yes, sir, but this is dealing with the maintenance of a road. We have not heard anything about it. I will raise it under the next Head.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister.

The Minister of Works and Housing (Cde. Naraine): Cde. Chairman, I think I will take all these questions pertaining to not spending the amount of money provided in the Estimates together. Obviously it will be impossible to spend the money estimated and voted if, in fact, the staff were not recruited at the particular time – that is early in the year – or if, in fact, they were not recruited at all. I would like to agree with the hon. Leader of the Opposition that it is sometimes difficult to get suitable staff, particularly professional staff. The reason for this is

because in some of these cases local people or local boys and girls who go abroad for training, and sometimes get this training even with the assistance of public funds, prefer to remain where they are educated and serve the developed countries. In many cases, with this type of people and training, if you try to analyse the situation, you find that the developing countries in technical staff are giving more assistance to developed countries than the developed countries are giving to the developing countries, because they are encouraged.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition mentioned that we must pay more salaries. Surely, we had our job evaluation exercise and where it became necessary to pay more salaries we did so. In the case of certain categories like Surveyors, Engineers and Agriculturists, they even got several allowances to try and let them remain here or to attract others to come. We do this to try and keep our staff and to attract new staff. But we cannot hope in the near future to compete with the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom, and this is where our greatest losses of professional skilled staff lay.

One would expect that with our new type of educational system whereby our youths will be exposed to National Service, part of this education will be to educate them in terms of the needs of Guyana, in terms of trying to stimulate their Vistas and their ambition, in terms of what are the challenges in Guyana, what are the problems in Guyana and how best they can serve. We will also try to instil in them the concept of serving the people and the country from which they got virtually a free education, of coming to do this rather than learning from the capitalist system and asking, “What is there in it for me?” As long as they continue saying to themselves, “what is there in it for me?”, they will go to the capitalist countries to get salaries. Even if they are dealt with there as second-class and third-class citizens they will always be attracted that way. I hope that, as the Prime Minister says, with national consensus, even the Leader of the Opposition may see the wisdom now of telling these chaps and these surveyors and other professional people who have left the country that what is there in it for me is what you can do to develop your country and make a better place for your children to inherit.

It is also to create an environment where you will be first-class citizens rather than being treated as second, third and fourth-class citizens in other countries. This is the big problem as I see it and, therefore, we have been having difficulties in getting people like senior Economists and Quantity Surveyors. We have been more fortunate recently because we have been able to get three of our young people to come back as Architects and they are now serving here. That situation has improved considerably.

This is the tale we have to tell about the people the hon. Leader of the Opposition referred to, who want more attractive pay. They are getting more attractive pay internally in terms of what others are getting. This is not sufficient. Something more attractive is suggested, namely that we must equate this salary with the Metropolitan countries, the capital countries, the countries that can afford to pay more. We cannot afford to pay more and sometimes we ask for even greater sacrifice although we cannot afford to pay as much as those countries. Because if we all build our country and if we too try to develop and reach the standards that we feel we should reach, if not equal yet very nearly equal to some of these developed countries, then we have to serve for less, initially work harder and build a foundation whereby if we do not inherit our children will inherit those better opportunities.

This is a problem we have been solving. Hon. Members will notice under the Public Service Ministry there is a sum of over \$5,000,000 voted for Guyanese going abroad for training. Is not that a big enough investment for us to try and get people trained? But many come because they have to come. They serve their contractual period and after that they are encouraged – I believe many of them do not leave with their free will – to leave and they are induced to leave for what may be described to them as better things elsewhere.

I thought that I should give a general statement on this matter because, obviously, if I should give a general statement on this matter mentioned I will just be repeating myself. But I would like to repeat that in relations to some of the vacancies requiring particular skills, we could put people who are less qualified to act. Sometimes they have to act for considerably long

periods when the posts are not being filled by qualified people where the people who are acting cannot or do not get the qualification necessary for filling the posts. In these cases we do have people acting for considerably long periods of time.

We are making real attempts because it is shown in our Estimates. If you look elsewhere in terms where real expenditure and training is shown, when we come to deal with Education you will find the increase in amounts to be spent for educational institutions and so forth. We hope there will be a change with the new system of education with the new requirements for people being trained abroad and being trained locally. We hope to instil in them new objectives and take them towards the national goal rather than just train them to do a job and find in many cases the job is not relevant to what is happening in Guyana. We have to change our curriculum. We are doing that so that we could get the people now.

We are expanding our training in engineering. We have a Course being run right now in Highway Engineering at the University of Guyana and I think we have about twelve persons. That will give us twelve locally produced engineers produced by our own efforts because they will have the right orientation. They are being trained by local Engineers who will give them the knowledge, experience and practice relevant to Guyana rather than giving them what is relevant to other countries. If you are taught in a science and the theory that you are taught in that science is relevant to some country and you do not see within your working environment the application of that knowledge, then it would be useless. I would like to assure the hon. Leader of the Opposition that things are going to change because we are now adopting a better system of having people trained for these various posts.

I would like to mention particularly surveying. But before I do that I would like to mention that we are not only training people in engineering at the University of Guyana, we are also training people in architecture and building. A couple of years ago we trained about 12 engineers in Water Engineering and these officers are now working with GUYWA serving the country. So we are building on what we have and, at the same time, our expenditure for our

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education thrust will be well worth the while, because we cannot rely on sending people abroad and then hope and pray that they will return to serve the country. Some who are abroad now are being brought back during their long vacation so that they can go through national development education. For example, they can serve in the National Service. **[Interruption]**

I would like to say what we are doing in surveying. In surveying we are not only trying to improve our training facilities at the Technical Institute but right now we are working out a regional programme for education in surveying. This will include land surveying, land economy and quantity surveying and we hope that it will be done on a regional basis. The school for land surveying which will take students up to Degree level will be in Guyana. The one for land economy will be in one of the other Caribbean territories and the other for quantity surveying will be in another country. Regionally, we will be able to train our people in higher surveying, in land economy and in quantity surveying. Here again we find that this will be the only solution to our problems in getting people who will be trained and who will be accustomed dealing with land economy problems which will be relevant to the region rather than to capitalist systems.

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And so we go on with all the various ways of training people. We have been patient. We waited, we sent missions abroad trying to encourage people to come back. I must admit the success has not been to the level we think it ought to be, but nevertheless we find that we have to take new methods and we are doing that. That takes us right on to about page 103 I think.

In relation to the quarries, I should like to state that it is a fact, and the hon. Leader of the Opposition is quite right that we have not got sufficient people trained to manage all the quarries that we will have because, in addition to Tiperu and Makouria, we are also putting up a new quarry at Kaituma. But we have sent Mr. Walters, the person who will be in charge of Tiperu for some training. He has been away for four months now, so that he can learn more of the modern techniques of quarrying. When he returns we will be sending another person on a similar

course and we hope that when they return with that knowledge we will be able to establish here a course locally. It may have to be done as a course or in seminars whereby existing staff and staff to be recruited for the new quarry will be trained locally, will be trained on the job. I hope that in the coming year we will be able to get people sufficiently trained to fill some of these vacancies in which persons were acting which they could not have filled because they did not have the required technical knowledge training.

I think I have covered the question about surveyors. It is true we have been underspending because we have not been recruiting the 61 surveyors shown here on the estimates. But we are trying to improve our training facilities and I hope that if not all of them can be recruited in the new year by the following year our programme will be sufficiently advanced whereby we will be able to recruit our full staff.

Page 104, items (135) to (137). In the case of item (135), Training, I am not too sure what happened in 1974, whether this is an error or what. We did not spend any money in 1974. But what I should like to point out, Cde. Chairman, is that the chances are that next year this item will hardly be appearing in these Estimates, because the trainees that are now working under this scheme probably would have worked up, and since we are giving free training at all levels then the need of having this vote will become less and less. We find that even right now, we have a number of draughtsmen who have joined the course for architecture at the University of Guyana and they have been given leave with full pay, which may be up to three full years while they are undergoing their training. Although on this items, because of the reason I have mentioned, we have not been spending much, we are in fact spending a lot more money on training because people are coming out of the system and they are receiving full pay and they are receiving training at the Technical Institute and at the University of Guyana. I do not think we should become too much concerned or too much excited in that we have not been spending all this money because we have been spending a lot more on training.

On the question of Laboratory Attendants, here again, we have been having difficulty in getting people with the necessary qualification to join this particular field. The people with the qualification either are going for further training or they probably get into further fields. But we have been employing some people who do not necessarily have all the qualification to be appointed here but nevertheless are appointed on the open vote. In that way we are able to put bodies to do the work that would normally have been done had we have all our laboratory attendants.

We go on to page 107, item (199) Labour Foremen. All I can say is this appears to be an error because in fact there are labour foremen. They are being paid and this money will be utilised.

On page 110, item (278) Electrical Assistants. All I can say is these people are employed and they are being paid. If nothing appeared here on the revised estimate for 1975 it is probably an error.

On page 1, items (321), (322) and (323). I note the point raised by the hon. leader of the Opposition but this can be a very argumentative thing. Should we in fact put what we had in the revised estimate for last year and then find that we did not need it at all and end up with \$1, \$1, \$1? What we have in fact done is that we put these small token sums so that we can use the head. What in fact happens is that we use savings on the total head so that we can employ people under these heads. I thought that having a review of the situation and putting it in the revised estimate would have been one way of dealing with it. Both the Prime Minister and myself have noted it and maybe we can look at it and see if there is any change that may be necessary.

Then there is subhead 18, Subsidy to Guyana Water Authority. There were two questions asked in relation to the water supply in the Belfield area. The well at Belfield is old. There was work done for nearly ... in trying to get the well back into operation but the ... was badly damaged and the well was drawing sand continuously. Therefore it could not have been brought

back into operation. Having found that it was not possible to rehabilitate the well we are presently sinking a new well at Victoria. I gather that ... is about to be put in this well and some time in a week or so the well will be developed. This would take another period of about two to three weeks. So possibly by the end of the year, or early next year, we would be having the water in this area restored by a much larger well. Therefore the water would not only be restored in the quantity originally supplied but in quantities much larger.

5 p.m.

In relation to people being double-billed for water in certain areas I would be happy to look into the matter when the hon. Member sends it to me because these will have to be dealt with as particular cases.

The hon. Member raised the question that we send bills promptly. I am very glad to hear that. I am very glad to hear that the Guyana Water Authority does its work in an efficient manner and that it send its bills promptly. He did not say it but I hope that that same efficiency is exercised in its work. I do not know why he neglected to say that but I hope that he meant that. I should like for that statement not to go in the way it might be intended because the nature of this subhead here is that we are putting \$3.73 million as subsidies in this Water Authority and therefore, the users of water will benefit on the current estimate by the amount of \$3.75 million in subsidies.

If water users are getting their bills promptly at subsidised rates, I think that the Leader of the Opposition should encourage those who may come to him from time to time – no matter how few – that they should promptly pay their bills. [**Mr. Singh:** “Mr. Speaker, providing the water is coming through the tap.”] If someone is getting water in a tap or he is getting it in a bucket, is he not getting water? [**Interruption**] The point I should like to emphasise is that there is a substantial subsidy being given.

I should like also to remind this House, since it was said that I should give a public statement on this, that in addition to this subsidy, in many areas, in areas similar to the ones the Leader of the Opposition described where people were not getting a dependable supply of water, the Government has written off arrears both for Local Authorities and private users in organised and unorganised areas for many years and, this was done during this year. This must have come up to several millions of dollars.

In addition to this, on the Capital Estimates, many millions of dollars will be provided for water supply and since the current cost of water supply is subsidised there is no question whatsoever of any repayment of that capital and, therefore, this is a further subsidy on water supply for the people of this country. We say we will have a feeding, clothing and housing programme. Well, one cannot have a feeding programme without water; one cannot have a better health situation, one cannot have health development in one's country with proper water supply and the Cde. Minister of Economic Development was perfectly right that water supply is very essential not only as food but for the health of our people and this is a tremendous subsidy that is being given.

Now, on this question of Training Expenses, subhead 20, this is really for internal training. We run internally seminars and training courses, that is, training on the job or seminars for particular categories of workers and this sum of money is being used for this purpose. Now, if perchance we are able to organise such courses or such seminars where expenses are taken up in other ways by supply of stationary and other things, we do not necessarily take it from this subhead.

Then again, I do not think that Members should look on this item critically because this is part of a much bigger system and we may have expenditure which may be legitimately charged here but we did not charge here. We may have the travelling of an officer coming to Georgetown to attend a seminar but he puts it in his monthly travelling rather than under this particular subhead. We overlook things like that. I should like to say that we do have an internal training

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programme for the improvement of the quality of the service we get and for the improvement of the individual worker so that he can improve his lot by better learning and getting promotion out of better learning and performance. This is all spent in the interest of the workers.

The last question I think was on Roads, subhead 37. I should like to assure the hon. Leader of the Opposition that we will be doing about 12 miles of resurfacing on the Soesdyke/Linden Highway and it is going to be continuous exercise so that we can always keep the road in good condition. But, it will not be spent only there; it will be spent also on the East Coast Road, on the Corentyne Road and all the roads which we have improved to the standard we see them today. Some of it will be spent on the new roads that are being built in the hinterland: the Orealla Road, the road going to Kaburi, the important roads in the Rupununi area and all those roads will have to be maintained. There is a substantial mileage of roads being added to the national length of roads and therefore, year-to-year maintenance of roads must go up. In addition to the hinterland road, if the hon. Member, the Leader of the Opposition would

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like to raise that question of the Annai Road, I would be happy to answer it on the Capital Estimates.

Head 35, Ministry of Works and Housing (Works) - \$35,008,243 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

SUSPENSION

The Chairman: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, do you wish us to continue the Head or shall we take the suspension?

Mr. Singh: Let us take the suspension, sir.

Assembly resumed.

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The Speaker: The Sitting of the House is suspended for thirty minutes.

Sitting suspended at 5.10 p.m.

5.40 p.m.

On resumption

DIVISION XXII – MINISTRY OF WORKS AND HOUSING (WORKS)

The Chairman: Page 113.

Question proposed that the sum of \$52,860,000 for Division XXII, Ministry of Works and Housing (Works), stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Singh: I propose to speak on subheads 1, 4, 6, 8, 11, 17, 18, 19, 21, 27, 34, and 36. I am not questioning any of these sums of money. They are certainly reasonable sums. In fact, one would have liked to have seen even more money being allocated. Subhead, Georgetown. This question is merely to give the Minister an opportunity to tell us of the good work which his Ministry is doing. The sum of \$2,000,000 is to be provided.

Dealing specifically with subhead 1, Georgetown Approaches, the legend states: "To provide for the construction of the Georgetown Approaches." When I look further down to subhead 4 East Bank Demerara Roads, there is the sum of \$1,200,000 provided here and the legend states: "To connect Houston and Camp Roads, etc. U.S.A.I.D. Loan." When I look at subhead 6, East Coast Demerara Roads, the legend there states: "To provide for improvements from Kitty to Plaisance U.S.A.I.D. Loan." We have got Houston and Plaisance Approaches but we have also got Georgetown Approaches. Presumably, others are planned and I would like to know the details of other Approaches in addition to those two that are being planned. There may

be some other places where we are constructing Approaches and I would like to know about them.

I must say that I certainly consider the East Bank Demerara Road a real hazard and it is really embarrassing when visitors come to this country. I know the hon. Minister appreciates that. We have both travelled along that road on many occasions and the congestion along that road is tremendous. There are people who are scared to go on that road in the rush hour because they fear for their lives.

Subhead 8, East Berbice Roads. The sum of \$2,500,000 is provided and the legend states: "To erect a new Canje Bridge and to construct road approaches. U.S.A.I.D. Loan." I am very pleased to see provision being made because we certainly need a new Canje Bridge. Could the Minister say how far we have gone with this project?

In respect of subhead 11, Hinterland Roads, the sum of \$2,000,000 is being requested and the legend states: "To continue work on the Wismar/Mabura and Hubu/Maripa roads." I would like to know what is the position in respect of the road to Brazil. We brought down people from all over the world literally and paid all their expenses. They went and did self-help work on this road and when corns developed on their hands from holding a cutlass, they retired hurt and enjoyed the rest of their holiday. We do not know the cost of that project. I would appreciate if the hon. Minister would tell us what the operation cost is. I have been asking for it but I never could get the figures. Also, what are the plans in respect of that road? My information is that the road is being taken over by the forest again. Somebody said that the G.D.F was working on it but there does seem to be specific confirmation of this or any information on the work that the G.D.F. is doing in that area.

Subhead 17, Coastal Feeder Roads. The sum of \$400,000 is being sought to provide for work on the Port Mourant and Belfield access roads. Could the hon. Minister tell us what is this Belfield access road?

With respect to subhead 18, Culture Centre, this building should have been ready for Carifesta. We do know that there were lots of problems. The legend states: "To provide for the completion of the Culture Centre." Will it at long last be completed? What is the projected date for the completion? Will it be completed next year? This amount is being requested so we hope we can see the completion of it and see what the contractors have been doing.

Subhead 19, Government Buildings. The sum of \$2,300,000 is being requested to provide for the purchase and construction of Government offices. I do not know that there are some new offices planned. I think there is the new Law Court in New Amsterdam and there is a new Customs and Excise building. There may be others. I wonder whether the hon. Minister would tell us of the plans for the construction of Government buildings.

Subhead 21, Purchase of Equipment. The sum of \$200,000 is requested to purchase miscellaneous equipment. Could we have some idea as to what equipment will be purchased?

Subhead 27, Revised Laws of Guyana. The sum of \$350,000 is being requested. Is this to print an additional set of Laws? What is this really for? Do we have an instalment due to the printers, or is this for additional law books to be printed and made available? Is it a matter of bringing them up-to-date and producing the loose leaves to out inside them? Could the hon. Minister tell us?

Subhead 34, Kaituma Quarry, is appearing for the first time. I think it was estimated in the Budget Speech that the Government intends to re-open the quarry at Kaituma. The sum being requested is \$6.5 million. The legend says "To provide for the re-activation of the Kaituma Quarry." Would the hon. Minister tell us the rationale behind the opening up of the Kaituma Quarry?"

Glasgow Teperu is capable of producing quite a lot of stone and it has been developed, I understand, to a very sophisticated stage. Therefore I wonder whether the economics have been worked out as to whether it was more economical to re-open the Kaituma Quarry at this

considerable cost of \$6.5 million. I am not sure whether that would be sufficient. We may receive requests for Supplementary Provision. We may even have it like Glasgow/Teperu, that is going over to the next year. Would the hon. Minister tell us whether he envisages that this will be all the money that would be required or that more money will be required next year?

Was the cost worked out to determine whether it may not be cheaper to transport stone from the highly developed Glasgow/Teperu area to the Kaituma area and whether it would not be more economical to develop this. And in developing this would you be supplying stone to some area for some particular project or would it be that the stone to some area would be brought down to Georgetown and other areas that would need it. Or could it be that the stone would be required for hinterland development, for example the Hydro power site?

Under subhead 35, Water Supply (Force Account) the sum of \$4 million is to be provided for the Ministry's Force Account to cater for an extension of pure water facilities. Could the hon. Minister tell us the Government's plans in this direction. How is the sum of \$6 million to be spent? Let me iterate that I am not questioning the quantum at all. It is certainly not sufficient.

Subhead 36 Water Supply (Contracts). The sum to be voted is \$5 million. The legend states "To continue the pure water supply scheme. C.I.D.A and U.S.A.I.D. loans and U.N.D.P. Grant." Considering that the U.S.A.I.D/U.N.D.P. grant will be providing some of the funds – as I see it \$5 million in all – where these schemes continue? Could the hon. Minister let us have the Ministry's plans with respect to the contract work in pure water supply?

The Chairman: Cde. Minister of Works.

Cde. Naraine: Cde. Chairman, in relation to the sum of \$2 million on subhead 1, Georgetown Approaches, this is an item for carrying out works over and above which should have been estimated which have been connected with the U.S.A.I.D. projects. The government is presently having discussions and negotiations with a United Kingdom firm of bridge builders in relation to the bridging of the Demerara River. This bridge when constructed would give continuous linkage between the two embankments on the river and the sum provided here for

Georgetown road projects would be necessary in terms of having streets like Hunter Street going right on through Ruimveldt and running parallel to the East Bank road going to about Peters Hall. This road is not included in the U.S.A.I.D project and it will be necessary, moreso for the bridging of the Demerara River to go through.

We said then it is estimated that the bridge across the Demerara River would cost about \$30 million but we are looking at this very seriously because the present situation on the ferry is not desirable, and sometimes not safe. The Makouria has been designed to carry 1,200 passengers and we know that at times as many as 3,000 people may have to be carried.

The Kurupukari is equipped to carry 500 passengers in additions to cars but I understand that sometimes as many as 1,200 go on that boat. Now this proves two things. One is that we have to think of the safety of the users of these vessels and we may very well have to put sanctions in terms of allowing a certain number of people to travel on these boats. It will be more than 1,200 or 500 but nevertheless we cannot have 3,000 and going on to 4,000. If those boats were to get into an accident what would happen to so many people's lives? I agree, a sanction should be implemented immediately. But it does mean that we have to look at the question of bridging the river in relation to building additional ferry boats as well as building terminal facilities, perhaps at Vreed-en-Hoop

TRANSCRIPTS ARE MISSING
