



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY  
OF THE PARLIAMENT OF  
THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC  
OF GUYANA

# OFFICIAL REPORT

*PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION (2020-2025) OF THE  
TWELFTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC  
OF GUYANA HELD IN THE DOME OF THE ARTHUR CHUNG CONFERENCE CENTRE, LILIENDAAL,  
GREATER GEORGETOWN*

---

8<sup>TH</sup> Sitting

Monday, 21<sup>ST</sup> September, 2020

---

**PARLIAMENT OFFICE  
HANSARD DIVISION**

The Assembly convened at 10.09 a.m.

Prayers

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

**MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (70)**

**Speaker (1)**

\*Hon. Manzoor Nadir, M.P.,  
Speaker of the National Assembly,  
Parliament Office,  
Public Buildings,  
Brickdam,  
Georgetown.

[Virtual Participation]

**MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT (37)**

**(i) MEMBERS OF THE PEOPLE’S PROGRESSIVE PARTY/CIVIC (PPP/C) (37)**

**Prime Minister (1)**

+ Hon. Brigadier (Ret’d) Mark Anthony Phillips, M.S.S., M.P.,  
Prime Minister,  
Prime Minister’s Office,  
Colgrain House,  
205 Camp Street,  
Georgetown.

**Vice-President (1)**

+ Hon. Bharrat Jagdeo, M.P.,  
Vice-President,  
Office of the President,  
New Garden Street,  
Georgetown.

[Absent]

+ Cabinet Member

\* Non-Elected Speaker

**Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs (1)**

+ Hon. Mohabir Anil Nandlall, M.P.,  
*Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs,*  
*Ministry of Legal Affairs,*  
*Carmichael Street,*  
*Georgetown.*

**Senior Ministers (16)**

+ Hon. Gail Teixeira, M.P.,  
*(Region No. 7 – Cuyuni/Mazaruni),*  
*Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance,*  
*Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance.*  
*Government Chief Whip,*  
*Office of the Presidency,*  
*New Garden Street,*  
*Georgetown.*  
+ Hon. Hugh H. Todd, M.P.,  
*(Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica),*  
*Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation,*  
*Ministry of Foreign Affairs,*  
*Lot 254 South Road,*  
*Georgetown.*

+ Hon. Bishop Juan A. Edghill, M.S., J.P., M.P.,  
*Minister of Public Works,*  
*Ministry of Public Works,*  
*Wight’s Lane,*  
*Kingston,*  
*Georgetown.*  
+ Hon. Dr. Frank C. S. Anthony, M.P.,  
*Minister of Health,*  
*Ministry of Health,*  
*Brickdam,*  
*Georgetown.*

+ **Cabinet Member**

+ Hon. Priya D. Manickchand, M.P.,  
(Region No. 3 – Essequibo Islands/West Demerara),  
Minister of Education,  
Ministry of Education,  
Lot 26 Brickdam,  
Georgetown.

+ \*Hon. Brindley H.R. Benn, M.P.,  
Minister of Home Affairs,  
Ministry of Home Affairs,  
Brickdam,  
Georgetown.

+ Hon. Zulfikar Mustapha, M.P.,  
Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne),  
Minister of Agriculture,  
Ministry of Agriculture,  
Regent and Vlissengen Road,  
Bourda, Georgetown.

+ Hon. Pauline R.A. Campbell-Sukhai, M.P.,  
Minister of Amerindian Affairs,  
Ministry of Amerindian Affairs,  
Lot 251-252 Thomas & Quamina Streets,  
South Cummingsburg,  
Georgetown.

+ Hon. Joseph L.F. Hamilton, M.P.,  
Minister of Labour,  
Ministry of Labour,  
Brickdam,  
Georgetown.

+ **Cabinet Member**  
\* **Non-Elected Minister**

+ Hon. Vickram Outar Bharrat, M.P.,  
*Minister of Natural Resources,*  
*Ministry of Natural Resources,*  
*Lot 96 Duke Street,*  
*Kingston,*  
*Georgetown.*

+\*Hon. Oneidge Walrond, M.P.,  
*Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce,*  
*Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce,*  
*Lot 229 South Road,*  
*Bourda, Georgetown.*

+ Hon. Nigel D. Dharamlall, M.P.,  
*(Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supenaam),*  
*Minister of Local Government and Regional Development,*  
*Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development,*  
*DeWinkle Building,*  
*Fort Street,*  
*Kingston,*  
*Georgetown.*

+ Hon. Collin D. Croal, M.P.,  
*(Region No. 1 – BarimaWaini),*  
*Minister of Housing and Water,*  
*Ministry of Housing and Water,*  
*Brickdam,*  
*Georgetown.*

+ Hon. Vindhya V. H. Persaud, M.S., M.P.,  
*(Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica),*  
*Minister of Human Services and Social Security,*  
*Ministry of Human Services and Social Security,*  
*Lot 357 East and Lamaha Streets*  
*Georgetown.*

+ Hon. Charles S. Ramson, M.P.,  
*Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports,*  
*Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports,*  
*Main Street,*  
*Georgetown.*

+ Hon. Sonia Savitri Parag, M.P.,  
*Minister of the Public Service,*  
*Ministry of the Public Service,*  
*164 Waterloo Street,*  
*North Cummingsburg,*  
*Georgetown.*

+ **Cabinet Member**

\* **Non-Elected Minister**

**Junior Ministers (4)**

Hon. Warren Kwame E. McCoy, M.P.,  
*Minister within the Office of the Prime Minister,*  
*Office of the Prime Minister,*  
*c/o Colgrain House,*  
*205 Camp Street,*  
*Georgetown.*

Hon. Deodat Indar, M.P.,  
*Minister within the Ministry of Public Works,*  
*Ministry of Public Works,*  
*Wight’s Lane,*  
*Kingston,*  
*Georgetown.*

Hon. Anand Persaud, M.P.,  
*Minister within the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development,*  
*Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development,*  
*Fort Street,*  
*Kingston,*  
*Georgetown.*

Hon. Susan M. Rodrigues, M.P.,  
*(Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica),*  
*Minister within the Ministry of Housing and Water,*  
*Ministry of Housing and Water,*  
*Lot 41 Brickdam & United Place,*  
*Stabroek,*  
*Georgetown.*

**Other Members (14)**

Mr. Dharamkumar Seeraj, M.P.,  
*Lot 71 BB Eccles,*  
*East Bank Demerara.*  
Mr. Alister S. Charlie, M.P.,  
*(Region No. 9 – Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo),*  
*148 Lethem,*  
*Central Rupununi,*  
*c/o Freedom House,*  
*41 Robb Street,*  
*Georgetown.*

Dr. Vishwa D.B. Mahadeo, M.P.,  
*Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne),*  
*Lot 4 Public Road,*  
*No. 66 Village,*  
*Corentyne,*  
*Berbice.*

Mr. Sanjeev J. Datadin, M.P.,  
*Lot 60 Section ‘K’,*  
*John Street,*  
*Campbellville,*  
*Georgetown.*

Mr. Seepaul Narine, M.P.,  
*Lot 321 BB Seventh Street,*  
*Eccles,*  
*East Bank Demerara.*  
Mrs. Yvonne Pearson-Fredericks, M.P.,  
*Mainstay Lake/Whyaka Village,*  
*Mainstay Lake, Essequibo Coast,*  
*c/o Freedom House,*  
*41 Robb Street,*  
*Georgetown.*  
Dr. Bheri S. Ramsaran, M.P.,  
*Lot 340 East Street,*  
*South Cummingsburg,*  
*c/o Freedom House,*  
*41 Robb Street,*  
*Georgetown.*  
Dr. Jennifer R.A. Westford, M.P.,  
*55 AA Victoria Avenue,*  
*Eccles,*  
*East Bank Demerara.*  
Mr. Faizal M. Jaffarally, M.P.,  
*(Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice),*  
*Lot 16-30 New Street,*  
*New Amsterdam.*  
*c/o Freedom House,*  
*Robb Street,*  
*Georgetown.*  
Dr. Tandika S. Smith, M.P.,  
*(Region No. 3 - Essequibo Islands/West Demerara),*  
*Lot 290 Area ‘J’,*  
*Tuschen, North,*  
*East Bank Essequibo.*  
Mr. Lee G.H. Williams, M.P.,  
*Paruima Upper Mazaruni,*  
*c/o Freedom House,*  
*Robb Street,*  
*Georgetown.*  
\*Ms. Sarah Browne, M.P.,  
*Parliamentary Secretary,*  
*Ministry of Amerindian Affairs,*  
*Lot 251-252 Thomas & Quamina Streets,*  
*South Cummingsburg,*  
*Georgetown.*  
\*Mr. Vikash Ramkissoon, M.P.,  
*Parliamentary Secretary,*  
*Ministry of Agriculture,*  
*Regent and Vlissengen Road,*  
*Bourda, Georgetown.*  
Ms. Bhagmattie Veerasammy, M.P.,  
*Lot 32 Crown Dam,*  
*Industry,*  
*East Coast Demerara.*

**MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION (32)**  
**(i) A Partnership For National Unity/Alliance For Change (APNU/AFC) (31)**

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Joseph F. Harmon, M.S.M., M.P.,  
*Leader of the Opposition,*  
*Lot 99 Mazaruni Street,*  
*Guyhoc Park,*  
*Georgetown.*

Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan, M.P.,  
*Lot 10 Delph Street,*  
*Campbelville,*  
*Georgetown.*

Mr. Roysdale A. Forde, M.P.,  
*Lot 410 Caneview Avenue,*  
*South Ruimveldt,*  
*Georgetown.*

Mr. Raphael G.C. Trotman, M.P.,  
*Lot 3202 Pricese 3,*  
*Providence,*  
*East Bank Demerara.*

Ms. Dawn Hastings-Williams, M.P.,  
*Lot 933 Block 1,*  
*Eccles,*  
*East Bank Demerara.*

Dr. Nicolette O. Henry, M.P.,  
*Lot 2227 Ozama Street, North Ruimveldt,*  
*Georgetown.*

Dr. Karen R.V. Cummings, M.P.,  
*Lot 2 Belfield Housing Scheme,*  
*East Coast Demerara.*

Ms. Tabitha J. Sarabo-Halley, M.P.,  
*Lot 3382 Caneview Avenue,*  
*South Ruimveldt Park,*  
*Georgetown.*

Ms. Geeta Chandan-Edmond, M.P.,  
*Lot 48 Atlantic Ville,*  
*Georgetown.*

Mr. Christopher A. Jones, M.P.,  
*Opposition Chief Whip,*  
*Lot 609 Conciliation Street,*  
*Tucville,*  
*Georgetown.*

Ms. Annette N. Ferguson, M.P.,  
*Lot 842 Eccles,*  
*East Bank Demerara.*

Mr. David A. Patterson, M.P.,  
*Lot 151 Durbana Square,*  
*Lamaha Gardens,*  
*Georgetown.*  
Ms. Coretta A. McDonald, M.P.,  
*Lot 202 N, Fourth Street,*  
*Alexander Village,*  
*Georgetown.*  
Ms. Catherine A. Hughes, M.P.,  
*(Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica),*  
*Lot 13 A, New Providence,*  
*East Bank Demerara.*  
Mr. Haimraj B. Rajkumar, M.P.,  
*Lot 18 Public Road,*  
*Johanna Cecilia,*  
*(Region # 2 Essequibo Coast).*  
Ms. Amanza O.R. Walton-Desir, M.P.,  
*Lot 1285 EE Eccles Sugarcane Field,*  
*East Bank Demerara.*  
Ms. Natasha Singh-Lewis, M.P.,  
*Lot 1110 Plot ‘B’,*  
*Herstelling,*  
*East Bank Demerara.*  
Mr. Sherod A. Duncan, M.P.,  
*Lot 590 Good Hope,*  
*East Coast Demerara.*  
Ms. Juretha V. Fernandes, M.P.,  
*Lot 1282 Block EE,*  
*Eccles,*  
*East Bank Demerara.*  
Mr. Vincent P. Henry, M.P.,  
*(Region No. 9 – Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo),*  
*Shulidnab Village,*  
*South Central,*  
*Rupununi.*  
*(Culvert City Lethem)*  
Mr. Ronald Cox, M.P.,  
*(Region No. 1 – Barima Waini),*  
*Mabaruma Compound.*

[Virtual Participation]

Mr. Shurwayne F.K. Holder, M.P.,  
*(Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supenaam),  
Lot 55 Henrietta,  
Essequibo Coast.*

Mr. Ganesh A. Mahipaul, M.P.,  
*Lot 14 Plantain Walk,  
West Bank Demerara.*

Ms. Nima N. Flue-Bess, M.P.,  
*(Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica),  
Lot 88 Nelson Street,  
Mocha Village,  
East Bank Demerara.*

Ms. Maureen A. Philadelphia, M.P.,  
*(Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica),  
Lot 17 Block 1, Section F,  
Plantation Belfield,  
East Coast Demerara.*

Mr. Deonarine Ramsaroop, M.P.,  
*(Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica),  
Lot 40 Block 3  
Craig Milne,  
Cove & John,  
East Coast Demerara.*

Mr. Vincero H. Jordan, M.P.,  
*(Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice),  
Lot 214 Lovely Lass Village,  
West Coast Berbice.  
C/o Christopher Jones*

Mr. Dineshwar N. Jaiprashad, M.P.,  
*Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne),  
Lot 80 Babu John Road,  
Haswell,  
Port Mourant, Corentyne Berbice.*

Mr. Richard E. Sinclair, M.P.,  
*(Region No. 8 –Potaro/Siparuni)  
Church Street Mahdia.  
Lot 4 Public Road,  
Stewartville,  
West Coast Demerara.*

Mr. Jermaine Figueira, M.P.,  
(Region No. 10 – Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice),  
Lot 136 2<sup>nd</sup> Street,  
Silvertown,  
Wismar, Linden.  
Mr. Devin L. Sears, M.P.,  
(Region No. 10 – Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice),  
Lot 90, Section C,  
Wismar, Linden.

(ii) **A New and United Guyana, Liberty and Justice Party and The New Movement (ANUG, LJP & TNM) (1)**

Mr. Lenox R. O’Dell Shuman, M.P.,  
Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly,  
St. Cuthbert’s Mission,  
Soesdyke Linden Highway.

**Officers (2)**

Mr. Sherlock E. Isaacs, A.A.,  
*Clerk of the National Assembly,*  
*Parliament Office,*  
*Public Buildings,*  
*Brickdam,*  
*Georgetown.*  
Ms. Deslyn West,  
*Assistant Clerk of the National Assembly,*  
*Parliament Office,*  
*Public Buildings,*  
*Brickdam,*  
*Georgetown.*

**Hansard Division Officers (20)**

Ms. Allison Connelly,  
*Chief Editor*  
Ms. Marlyn Jeffers-Morrison,  
*Senior Editor*  
Ms. Shawnel Cudjoe,  
*Senior Editor (ag)*  
Ms. Latoiah Joseph,  
*Senior Editor (ag)*  
Ms. Carol Bess,  
*Editor*  
Ms. Shevona Telford,  
*Editor (ag)*  
Ms. Christina Ramroop,  
*Editor (ag)*  
Ms. Tesia Ellis,  
*Reporter*  
Ms. Indranie Persaud,  
*Reporter*  
Ms. Roseina Singh,  
*Reporter*  
Ms. Somna Karen-Muridall,  
*Reporter*

Ms. Eyoka Gibson,  
*Reporter*  
Ms. Lushonn Bess,  
*Reporter*  
Ms. Bianca Cummings,  
*Reporter*  
Mr. Rohan Ramjas,  
*Reporter*  
Ms. Nadeila Allen,  
*Reporter*  
Ms. Celisa DeFlorimonte,  
*Reporter*  
Mr. Parmanand Singh,  
*Pre –Press Technician*  
Mr. Saeed Umrao,  
*Audio Technician*  
Mr. Daison Horsham,  
*Audio Technician*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Contents</i>	<i>Page</i>
-----------------	-------------

8 <sup>TH</sup> Sitting	Monday, 21 <sup>ST</sup> September, 2020
-------------------------	--

Public Business – Government Business .....	845-950
Appropriation Bill - Budget Debate .....	847-951
Adjournment - .....	952

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Apology for the Delayed Start of the Sitting

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, let me apologise for this delayed start. There was an issue that was brought to our attention and we were discussing that. It will be brought to the floor, shortly.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Motion

MOTION FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2020

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

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

AND WHEREAS, estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of Guyana for the financial year 2020 have been prepared and laid before the Assembly on 20-09-09,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly approves the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 2020 of a total sum of three hundred and six billion, two hundred and seventy-one million, two hundred and eighty-five thousand dollars (\$306, 271,285,000), **excluding twenty-three billion, two hundred and seventy three million, eight hundred and forty six thousand dollars (\$23, 273,846,000)** which is chargeable by law, as detailed therein and summarised in the under-mentioned schedule, and agree that it is expedient to amend the law and to make further provision in respect of finance.

[Minister of Public Works on behalf of the Vice-President]

Consideration of a Statement of Excess

**Mr. Forde:** I rise to place before the Speaker and this honourable House, that it is our contention that we are about to engage in a process which is inconsistent with article 219 (3) of the *Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana*. Article 219 (3) provides – and I will just read it very quickly so as to place it on the record:

“Where at any time Parliament has been dissolved before any provision or any sufficient provision is made under this Title for the carrying on of the Government of Guyana, the Minister responsible for finance may authorise the withdrawal of such sums from the Consolidated Fund as he may consider necessary for the purpose of meeting expenditure on the public services until the expiry of a period of three months commencing with the date on which the National Assembly first meets after that dissolution, but a statement of the expenditure so authorised shall, as soon as practicable be laid before the Assembly by the Minister responsible for finance or any other Minister designated by the President and, when the statement has been approved by the Assembly, that expenditure shall be included, under the appropriate heads, in the next Appropriation Bill.”

It is clear that the provision of the *Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana* contemplates the very situation that we are faced with today. The National Assembly, just a few days ago, started its first sitting in this Session. Prior to that, the Minister of Finance would have made withdrawals of sums in accordance with this constitutional provision. It is our submission to this honourable House that – it is a requirement, in view of the clear situation – no provision was made for the carrying on of the Government of Guyana and that the Minister with responsibility for finance was not authorised by this provision to make such withdrawals from the Consolidated Fund, which he did to ensure that the Government of Guyana stayed on even field.

Since the National Assembly has now been constituted, it is the requirement that whoever holds the office of Minister of Finance, or the person who acts as the Minister, having been designated by the President, must bring before this House a statement for its approval. When that approval has taken place, it then forms part of the estimates of expenditure and, eventually, an Appropriation Bill.

What we have before us is a situation where expenditure that has already been incurred and withdrawn by the Minister of

Finance, for the purpose of the Government of Guyana and its operations, being presented as if it is to be spent.

This provision does not contemplate that. This is a provision that permits expenditure in a sort of emergency situation or in a sort of a special category. The qualification and the restriction on it are that, immediately after the House is constituted, the Minister must bring before the House, a statement of the expenditure, so that it could form part of the next Appropriation Bill. The next Appropriation Bill that will be passed by this House will be an Appropriation Bill based on these estimates; these estimates which are premised on funds already spent and discharged for the purpose of the Government of Guyana.

Mr. Speaker, we ask that you consider that this is the first budget after the summoning of Parliament, after a dissolution of Parliament and after the fact that no budget was in place for a number of months. Mr. Speaker, I also ask you to consider that, throughout the debate, we have been told that \$160 billion already represents funds expended by the Government. If we are going to be called upon to approve that figure, we cannot approve it as if it is to be spent. We have to approve it, recognising that it has already been spent. The only provision in the *Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana* that contemplates the situation is article 219 (3).

I ask that this be conformed with the *Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana*. The precedence in this House is that a statement is presented after the first budget of a newly convened Parliament. I ask that we act in accordance with the *Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana*. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you very much, Hon. Member. We will invite the Hon. Attorney General, Mr. Anil Nandlall, to speak on the matter.

**Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs [Mr. Nandlall]:** Mr. Speaker, thank you. I rise to respond to the Hon. Member, Mr. Roysdale Forde. In this House, we are governed by practice, procedure, precedence and the *Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana*. This House has the procedural freedom to create its own rules and procedures to govern its business, and that is stated in the *Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana* itself.

The first point that I wish to make is that this identical situation obtained after the 2015 General and Regional Elections. Those Elections, as you may recall, took place on

11<sup>th</sup> May, 2015. *Budget 2015* was in August of that year, so we did not have a budget until the eight month. There is only a one-month difference now since the budget this year came in the ninth month. There was no Statement of Excess placed before this House to address the spending that would have taken place in an identical, constitutional, political and factual circumstances, as obtains now. In that House, there were no Statement of Excesses and that can be borne out by the Clerk of the National Assembly, who is the official custodian of the record of this House. I have a copy of the record here with me.

The second point is that one of the fundamental functions of this parliamentary process is financial scrutiny. It is rather parliamentary scrutiny of the expenditure of public funds, which is a fundamental and pivotal function of this House. That function cannot be submerged, it cannot be subverted, and it cannot be diverted by any technical interpretation of any Standing Order or any constitutional provision, or else it will defeat one of the major functions of the Parliament of this country. If there is conflict between some procedural rule or regulation and the fundamental function of oversight and scrutiny of the expenditure of public funds, I dare say, Sir, let us err on the side of oversight and scrutiny.

The third point I wish to make is that my learned Friend’s application or objection is premature. The Statement of Excess comes contemporaneous with the Appropriation Bill. It is laid along with the Appropriation Bill and put into headings in accordance with the Appropriation Bill. That is what the *Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana* states. It cannot come now and be used as a basis to stifle or stymie scrutiny of moneys already spent. It is simply a procedural requirement to mop up and correct the accounting record of the House.

In the case of Attorney General against Raphael Trotman and David Granger, in the judgement of Justice Ian Chang, those points of law at the relevant sections of the *Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana*, were examined. That was the case where they had cut the budget. Justice Chang ruled that they violated the *Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana* and, essentially, ordered the Executive to spend the money which was cut and restore it by a Statement of Excess. It is simply a procedural requirement. If it is that Your Honour wishes to rule that the process must be complied with, then we will comply with it at the time when the Appropriation Bill is laid.

10.24 a.m.

However, I invite Your Honour not to fall into the trap that is being set for you and this House, which is to preclude scrutiny of the moneys spent from January to July.

In the circumstances, I ask that the objection be overruled and that we be ordered to proceed with the business scheduled for this morning. Thank you very much, Sir.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you very much, Hon. Attorney General. I will give the Hon. Member, Mr. Forde, a minute to respond, having raised this issue.

**Mr. Forde:** Mr. Speaker, we are far from seeking to conceal review of what took place in terms of expenditure. The proposal and the interpretation presented of article 219 of the *Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana* is to ensure that this House has an opportunity to interrogate and to review what was actually spent. That is the fundamental responsibility of this House. What is happening in this situation here, with the greatest of respect, is that figures are being brought to this House to say that they are to be spent when, in fact, they were already spent, which might not have been spent, because that is the purpose of the Statement of Excess. It is a statement of what would have been withdrawn from the Consolidated Fund for the purposes of maintaining the Government of Guyana. This is not an effort to prevent or stifle interrogation; it is to ensure that it happens. It is to bring before this House what has actually been spent, and the *Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana*, in its wisdom, contemplates these situations. The *Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana* in its wisdom contemplates that there will be situations which may arise where there may not be a National Assembly. The Minister of Finance will have to provide funds for the Government but, when that happens, it must come to this House where we should be able to make a decision on it and approve it before it forms part of the budget or the Appropriation Bill.

I just want to draw to your attention that, very interestingly, in today’s *Stabroek News* newspapers, on page 8 and continued on page 17, a well-known Accountant, Mr. Anand Goolsarran, a former Auditor General, wrote this in his article:

“Article 219 of the *Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana* requires the Minister of Finance or any other Minister designated by the President to cause be prepared and to present to the Assembly within 90 days of the commencement of the fiscal year, the estimates of revenue expenditure for that year. Upon approval of the estimates by the

Assembly, an Appropriation Bill is introduced providing for the amounts approved and for the purposes specified, to be withdrawn from the Consolidated Fund. The Bill becomes an Appropriation Act when the president assents to it.”

Then he continued:

“By way of comment, it was most unfortunate that these requirements could not have been adhered to in respect of the 2020 Estimates...”

He provided the reasons that it could not have happened before. Some of those reasons being the convening of the elections and the fact that no National Assembly was in place. In the following paragraph he says this:

“If, in the execution of the budget, it is found that the amount appropriated by the Appropriation Act for any purpose is insufficient to meet the related expenditure, or if a need arises for expenditure for which no appropriation has been made, a supplementary estimate is presented to the Assembly for its approval. Similarly, **if it is found** that expenditure had been incurred in excess of the amount appropriated, a statement of excess expenditure has to be tabled in the Assembly for its ex post facto approval. In both cases, once the amounts involved are approved, they are included in a Supplementary Appropriation Act...”

Mr. Speaker, I am asking you to consider the issues raised. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you very much, Hon. Members.

Hon. Members, we shall proceed with consideration of the estimates in the Committee of Supply. I want to say that this business is not concluded yet. I agree with the position that the Appropriation Bill is slated to come until Friday. There is some time for me to look at all the arguments and the law. I understand that Ms. Teixeira would like to make a contribution.

**Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance and Government Chief Whip [Ms. Teixeira]:** I thought that you were closing so I did not want to ...

**Mr. Speaker:** Sorry, in fact, I received the message late.

**Ms. Teixeira:** I did not want to prolong it. I think that you have made your position. Except, I want to say to the Hon.

Member that, if he had looked at the estimates on the schedule before the House, we will be dealing with expenditures between January and July as well as the request for up to December. The scrutiny that he appears to want will be and is available right now in the estimates. I think the Hon. Member is getting a little confused.

In August, 2015, as the Hon. Member and my Colleague said, this was what happened, especially where the Ministries were split. As far as I know, this House will be looking at all expenditures from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2020, right up to now and then we will be looking at requests up to 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2020. I assume that the Hon. Members will do the scrutiny they so request and use the opportunity of the estimates to do that.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you very much, Hon. Member. The Assembly will now resolve itself into Committee of Supply.

**Leader of the Opposition [Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon]:** Mr. Speaker, I have been signalling that I wanted to speak even before you acknowledged the Hon. Ms. Teixeira.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Leader of the Opposition, you may proceed.

**Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon:** Thank you very much, Sir. We just want to make it very clear that the *Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana* is the supreme document and the supreme law of Guyana. This is the document that the Hon. Attorney General has been putting up all of the time. The *Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana* states what has to be done. Why are we agreeing to a process which says that we must bypass what the Constitution states? **[Mr. Nandlall: (Inaudible)]** That is what you are saying.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, this is not a point...

**Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon:** I just want to put on record that the Opposition requires that the statement be debated and passed in this honourable House before we embark on anything else with respect to this Budget. I am just...

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I think the protocol is that when the Speaker comes on the microphone, we give him the floor.

**Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon:** I heard you; sorry.

**Mr. Speaker:** And, if a speaker stands, you take your seat. We are not embarking on any process of violating the *Constitution of the Co-Operative Republic of Guyana* by considering these estimates now.

As I said, the point is that the Appropriation Bill comes on Friday and it gives us all more time to look at the legal arguments and also the convention and the procedures that have been previously adopted in this Parliament in similar circumstances.

Hon. Members, I would not take any more contributions on this matter. We will proceed to the Committee of Supply and, as I said, we will have some time to engage.

On the good news, I should get my certificate of clearance from the COVID-19 secretariat today, as they have said. Once I have that in my hands, I am prepared to appear in the National Assembly in person.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the Assembly will now resolve itself into Committee of Supply to begin consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure for the year 2020.

*Assembly in Committee of Supply.*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, we are now in Committee of Supply. We are just giving the staff a few minutes to get in place.

Hon. Members, as they are doing that, let me say that we will proceed in accordance with the schedule of the Business Sub-Committee of the Committee of Supply. Hon. Members, kindly get the *Co-operative Republic of Guyana Estimates of the Public Sector, Current and Capital Revenue and Expenditure for the year 2020 Volume 1* and turn to page 40.

Hon. Members, as we go through this process, because I have a delay in putting on my microphone and the staff putting on your microphone and my microphone, there will be some gap. There will be a few seconds delay between the two. Also, the Standing Orders state that Members should make their presentations and their votes from their seats.

In this instance, I am going to allow the Minister, who is on the floor with their staff, to vote and to make presentations from the table or the seat in the centre of the Dome so that we do not breach any Standing Order. With that said, I am going to have to rely on the staff to identify for me the Hon. Member who is on their feet because I am not familiar with all the voices. Please bear with us for today as we go through this meticulous process of considering the estimates.

I trust that the Minister and supporting staff are in place.

**Agency 05: Ministry of the Presidency**

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 051 – Policy Development and Administration – \$1,464,913,000**

**Mr. Chairman:** We are at pages 40 and 41. Hon. Member, Mr. Trotman, you may have the floor.

**Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon:** It is Harmon.

**Mr. Chairman:** Sorry.

*10.39 a.m.*

**Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon:** Hon. Minister, first of all, let me thank you for answering these questions upfront. The Minister I see is the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance. I wonder if the Minister could indicate whether she is also the Secretary to the Cabinet.

**Mr. Chairman:** I do not think that is a fair question under this head; that should have been raised in the policy debate. Nevertheless, if she wants to answer, she can.

**Lt. Col (Ret’d) Harmon:** I will not repeat it. I will speak to line item 6011, Statutory Wages and Salaries. There is a budget of \$15,412,000. Could the Hon. Minister state what date these figures cover, whether they are up to 2<sup>nd</sup> August or up to 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2020? If so, would she be able to disaggregate that into pre 2<sup>nd</sup> August and post 2<sup>nd</sup> August?

**Ms. Teixeira:** Thank you, Mr. Harmon.

**Mr. Chairman:** It is Hon. Member Mr. Harmon.

**Ms. Teixeira:** I am sorry.

We are dealing with the Ministry of the Presidency, which, as of August, no longer exists. All of the items in the Ministry of the Presidency go up to 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2020. It has expenditures included for January to July, and then August to September projections, because the transitional period would be ending. You will see in the estimates a list of the places. You will then come to the Office of the President, which will have the figures for October to December. For the Members of Parliament (MPs), let me just clarify and repeat that where there is the Ministry of Presidency, that is up to the end of September. Where there is the Office of the President, you will be dealing with October to the end of December. That is money that is now being requested. The moneys that are in the Ministry of Presidency include moneys already spent, as well as what were projections of moneys used in August-September. You will see that throughout the Estimates, particularly where Ministries have been divided or rearranged.

With regard to the question by the Hon. Member, line item 6011, as it goes up to the end of September, deals exclusively with the salary of the President. In the 2020 Budget, what is here is \$15 million that was used to pay the salary of President Granger. I am not sure if President Ali has been paid as yet, but if he has been, for one month, it would be included in this amount of \$15,412,000. I hope I have made that clear, Lt. Col (Ret’d) Harmon.

**Lt. Col (Ret’d) Harmon:** I have another question for the Hon. Member. Under line item 6116, Contracted Employees, there is a figure of 217 in 2019 and 182 in 2020. That is a reduction of 35. Could the Hon. Minister explain to this Committee, the details of these 35 persons who have left and whether, in fact, there are persons who have been taken on and are now part of the 217?

**Ms. Teixeira:** Thank you, Lt. Col (Ret’d) Harmon; I was delighted by your question. This figure, under line item 6116, Contracted Employees, directly relates to those who have been unpaid and are on the payroll up to the end of August. I am advised by the Ministry of Finance and the Permanent Secretary (PS) that the 217 figure is what was relevant up to 2019, almost to the end of 2019, around October of 2019. In the interim, 14 resigned – not all since August because many were before that – and there were four deaths. There are a number of staff members who were, originally, in 2018 and 2019, on the list of contracted workers, who were moved and transferred lineally to the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports. There was also, in the interim, between the 2018 Budget and the end of 2019, new arrivals – people who were hired – and I think you know some of those people as well.

In terms of your question of the reduction to 182, that is how it happened. None of the people hired under this Government has been paid as yet, and they are not on the payroll. The figures that you are looking for, the reason for the reduction, have nothing to do with ‘new arrivals,’ as you call it. Under this 217, because of the time lapse between the Budgets of 2018 and 2020, there were a number of people who moved, resigned, new people came in and old people went out, and so on. This reflects the payroll of 182. That is, people on the payroll at this point in September, 2020.

**Lt. Col (Ret’d) Harmon:** Mr. Chairman, I would still wish for the Hon. Minister to identify for me the names of the persons who have been sent off after 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 2020, and those who have been employed after that date, as reflected in this 35.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Hon. Member, I am sure there is an opportunity to ask that question, but not here. We are dealing with actual people who are on the payroll and are being paid as of 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2020. When we come to the Office of the President and you notice anything there, you have the right to ask. But we are dealing with a line item where 182 physical persons are on the payroll, and they will be paid. Even if they were sent off, as you are trying to raise, they have to get their benefits. I remind you of what you did to me when you sent me off. I did not get my benefits, by the way.

**Dr. Westford:** Could the Hon. Minister please say, for this Committee, what are the categories of workers under the very head that we are speaking about? Secondly, could she please tell us the highest and lowest paid of those categories?

**Ms. Teixeira:** The category of workers ranges from the Commissioner/Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission (GLSC)... at one point, \$3 million plus duty, gratuity, travelling, entertainment, rental of house, *et cetera*. Did you want those details, Dr. Westford? The Head of the Office of Climate Change, \$821,791; Advisor on Land Matters, \$820,638; Operations Manager, \$640,633; and Senior Advisor to the President, \$640,633. I am leaving out the benefits, gratuities, rents, and stuff like that. I have it all written here; if anybody would like to see it afterwards, then we could show you. Ministerial Planning Officer, \$611,319; Project Manager, Project Management Office (PMO), \$578,322; Project Manager – there seems to be two Project Managers at the PMO – \$518,814; Head of Office of Public Parks – this is a famous one, as I am sure you know who this is – \$557,093, gratuity, duty at \$25,000, and entertainment at \$25,000; Communication Specialist; and Tourism Specialist.

The lowest paid, which you asked for, would be a large number of cleaners and household support staff. The 217 include a lot of the support staff for the former President’s housekeeping. The President at that time, under this Budget, was Brig. (Ret’d) Granger. There are a lot of cleaners, housekeepers, gardeners, and so on, and their salaries had been in the range of approximately \$60,000. They are the lowest paid in the list of 182. I hope I have answered your question.

**Dr. Cummings:** Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: I noticed that there is a decrease of about \$4,599,000, from \$27,716,000 to \$23,117,000. I am wondering if there are additional works to be done. If the works were divided, then how many contracts were the works divided into, the names

of the contractors, the method utilised for the selection of those contractors, and was there was any contract splitting?

**Ms. Teixeira:** The budgeted revised, amount for 2019 was \$27,716,000. The budget request for 2020, and herein, up to September, was \$23,117,000. This relates to general maintenance for the Ministry of the Presidency’s building at Shiv Chanderpaul Drive; the Castellani Villas on Vlissengen Road, the State House on Carmichael Street and the Department of Energy’s building on Brickdam. Remember that the Department of Energy moved into the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP) building on Brickdam, so I believe there were general maintenance issues that had to be taken care of. I am so advised. I believe, too, with the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and everything else, that a lot of these works were slowed down in different Ministries.

**Opposition Chief Whip [Mr. Jones]:** Line Item 6284 – Other: I see a reduction here. Two things: Could the Hon. Minister please indicate to this House what has occasioned the reduction, and what does “Other” constitute?

**Ms. Teixeira:** Remember, Hon. Member Jones, that we are dealing with moneys expended up to the end of September. In fact, we have reached the end of September. It is moneys spent up to the end of July, and projections to August-September. When you come to October-December, at the Office of the President, you may see a shift.

*10.54 a.m.*

In other words, there is an additional amount of money put forward for December. For line item 6284, Other, this is payments for a number of things such as the *Official Gazettes*, consultancy fees and advertisements for newspapers, radio and television from January to September. Line item 6284, Other, is always an issue that concerns all of us as Members of Parliament because one can take a lot of things out of this generally. Because it is under Other Goods and Services Purchased, this is where it tends to have employment of consultants. There were consultants hired, as far as I know. Included in this, may be things that are required for the State House, for example, whether it be furnishings or other things that need maintenance work or fixing things that are electrical. So, the State House would also fall under this, in terms of general requirements.

**Mr. Figueira:** Line item 6291 – National and Other Events: Could the Hon. Minister indicate to the House what were the national events this allocation catered for, factoring in the COVID-19 environment that it was spent in?

**Ms. Teixeira:** This would be the Ministry of the Presidency’s contribution to and involvement in Independence Day and other activities, such as stakeholders’ meetings, *et cetera*. We did have a virtual Independence Day but there was Mashramani before that and the Republic Day anniversary activities that were held in February, which were supported by the Ministry of the Presidency. There may have been stakeholder meetings prior to March, but in terms of subsequently, there really has not been any expenditure under this after that.

**Mr. Nandlall:** Line item 6294 – Other...

**Ms. Teixeira:** As you noticed, \$120 million was spent in 2019, which has been reduced. Line item, 6294, Other, is where a large percentage of it was spent on a consultant who was paid approximately US\$6,000 a month and this is what we inherited. In this also would be requests for expenditure on whatever other emergency situations which might occur. A large bulk of this item, up to September, 2020, was spent on the consultancy fees, including for a particular consultant who was paid over US\$6,000 per month.

**Mr. Nandlall:** Could I ask for a follow-up, Mr. Chairman?

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, Hon. Attorney General.

**Mr. Nandlall:** The Minister was somewhat muffled. Could I ask, for the consultant that you are referring to, what was the nature of the consultancy?

**Ms. Teixeira:** The consultant is in the PMO and he is dealing with climate change, as I understand.

*Programme: 051 – Policy Development and Administration – \$1,464,913,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 051 – Policy Development and Administration – \$4,986,000**

*Programme: 051 – Policy Development and Administration – \$4,986,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 052 – Defence and National Security – \$73,488,000**

**Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon:** Mr. Chairman, I refer to line item 6282 – Equipment Maintenance. Could the Hon. Minister indicate why there is a reduction in the amount for maintenance of equipment? Could the Hon. Minister state what equipment was not maintained and, if so, why was the equipment not maintained as was scheduled?

**Ms. Teixeira:** Line item 6282 – Equipment Maintenance: I believe, Sir, you know that from March, we have had COVID-19 and that a lot of the staff have either been rotating or working from home. Therefore, under this head, mainly printers, air conditioners and computers are maintained but, with less usage, this figure has dropped in this period. So, it is not that money was not there to be used but they only used a certain amount because of COVID-19 and the rotation of staff, *et cetera*.

*Programme: 052 – Defence and National Security – \$73,488,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 052 – Defence and National Security – \$0**

**Ms. Teixeira:** Mr. Chairman, there is no capital requested for 2020 up to September under this head.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, Hon. Minister. There is nothing to consider, so we will return to Current.

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 053 – Public Service Management – \$816,845,000**

**Mr. Chairman:** Let us give the staff a few minutes to get settled and then we will have the Hon. Member, Ms. Sarabo-Halley.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Line item 6241 – Rental of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister explain the \$4.7 million decrease under this line item?

**Ms. Teixeira:** Could the Hon. Member speak a little louder? The latter part of her voice was muffled. I could not hear the latter part of her question.

**Mr. Chairman:** Could the Hon. Member please repeat?

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Line item 6241 – Rental of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister explain the \$4.7 million decrease under the line item?

**Ms. Teixeira:** Thank you very much, Hon. Member. Under line item 6241, Rental of Buildings, This, as I understand, and I am advised, is for students who are attending the Bertram Collins College of the Public Service but, due to COVID-19, they only rented the St. Paul’s Retreat Centre from January to March and they paid \$1.457 million per month. However, because of COVID-19, at the end of March, the College closed and went virtual, in most cases, and the 22 students who were accommodated here were sent home. So, we have not paid rent in that period and that is why the figure has reduced, Madam.

11.09 a.m.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you Hon. Minister. Hon. Members, any more questions?

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Could the Hon. Minister explain the \$2 million that is there? What is it for?

**Ms. Teixeira:** Again, Mr. Chairman, we are not hearing the Hon. Member well. I do not know if it is the microphone or the mask.

**Mr. Chairman:** It is 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, I think.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Could the Hon. Minister explain the \$2 million contribution? Who was it for?

**Ms. Teixeira:** I think the Hon. Member is well aware that this subvention at 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, is for the Guyana Public Service Union (GPSU). It is its annual subvention. For the past several years it is exactly the same amount. So, this has not been reduced; it will receive its \$2 million.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** A follow up question on the same line item. Could the Hon. Minister say whether the subsidies/subvention given to the Guyana Public Service Union will continue under this Administration?

**Ms. Teixeira:** It is a policy question, but I do not see why it should not be. It has been historically there. Of course, any agency receiving money from the Government, according to the rules must have audited reports, and so this sometimes causes delays. Any non-governmental organisation (NGO) or civil society body receiving money from the Government has to have its registration in order, has audited reports in order and has to submit a report on expenditure; that is the law. I see no reason why the GPSU, once in compliance I assume,

would be removed at all. There is no policy direction to do so.

**Dr. Westford:** Line item 6281 – Security Services: Could the Hon. Minister please say which security service was employed by the Ministry of the Public Service, and which areas are being utilised for the security service?

**Ms. Teixeira:** I am advised, Hon. Member, that the security company is Courtney Benn Contracting Services, and it covers four locations: the head office, Training Services Division, the Staff College and the residence of the Senior Director of the Bertram Collins College of the of the Public Service. There were some savings as a result of COVID-19.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Hon Member, same line item, 6281 – Security Services: Could the Hon. Minister say when this contract was signed with the security service?

**Ms. Teixeira:** I am advised that this contract dates back to 2018. It was a public tender and there were no responses; therefore, the contract was extended. I do not know the company, but this dates back to 2018.

**Dr. Westford:** On the response that was given to the question that was just asked, could I repeat that question? I would like the Hon. Minister to say when that contract was entered into with this security service.

**Ms. Teixeira:** I understand that the contract will come to an end in September and, I assume, under the new Minister, the Ministry will go to public tender.

**Dr. Mahadeo:** Could the Hon Minister advise me as to how this security company was identified? Was it by public tender?

**Ms. Teixeira:** I am advised that, in 2018, this was done by open public tender, and that subsequent efforts resulted in the extension due to non-response to the tender. I am advised that the companies that did respond were not eligible.

**Dr. Westford:** The question has just been answered because I am just hearing when it is ending. I wanted to know when the contract started. I just heard that, I think.

**Ms. Teixeira:** I said the contract started in 2018 and I now have the date, April, 2018.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, Hon. Minister.

*Programme: 053 – Public Service Management – \$816,845,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Mr. Chairman:** The Capital Expenditure for this corresponding head has no allocation, so, there is nothing to consider.

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 055 – Citizenship and Immigration Services – \$270,173,000**

*Programme: 055 – Citizenship and Immigration Services – \$270,173,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Ms. Teixeira:** I do not think the question was put, so the Members did not get an opportunity to ask questions, I believe.

**Mr. Chairman:** The question was proposed.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Usually, we give a few minutes, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** I can repropose it.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Please.

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 055 – Citizenship and Immigration Services – \$270,173,000**

**Mr. Datadin:** Hon. Minister, under line item 6224, Print and Non-Print Materials, in 2019, the sum of \$219,992,000 was spent. Could the Hon. Minister say what was it spent on?

**Ms. Teixeira:** Did the Hon. Member say line item 6224 or 6243?

**Mr. Datadin:** I said line item 6224 – Print and Non-Print Materials.

**Ms. Teixeira:** In 2019, \$219,992,000 was spent, and the expenses, I believe, may not be necessary in 2020, for \$29 million. I believe it is a large sum of money that should be recorded. This covers the purchase and acquisition of birth certificates; approximately 100,000 birth certificates in several sets. Some were bought in May, 2019 and paid for in 2020, and some were purchased in 2020 and paid for. These birth certificates were purchased from a company in Florida and the value of this contract is probably about US\$150,000 in total. In addition, passports were ordered at the cost of

US\$171,600 from Caribbean Bank Note and, added to that, US\$319,000 was also included to pay for equipment maintenance of the passport system.

*11.24 a.m.*

On the number of passports that were ordered, I have a copy of the contract, but I am not clear on the number of passports that were issued. These were the readable passports with the microchips in them. Oh sorry, the Permanent Secretary (PS) is advising me that 20,000 passports were ordered and paid for. Therefore, the request for this year has not been utilised as yet, mainly because the centers for the passports have been working on a rotational basis because of the COVID-19. So, the demand is lower.

**Mr. Datadin:** Could the Hon. Minister advise which were the companies involved and, if possible, who are the principals of those companies?

**Ms. Teixeira:** The passports were ordered through the Canadian Bank Note Company Limited. Is there a difference? The contract states the Canadian Bank Note and another document says Caribbean Bank Note. I assume there is a mistake. The Caribbean Bank Note Company Limited dealt with the Passports. The 2019 and 2020 purchases for birth certificates are \$23 million. They were purchased from Universal Procurement Services Incorporated. It is a company in Miramar, Florida. However, the contract was signed by Mr. Larry London. I am not sure what is the proficiency of this company or whether the due diligence was done on this company. It is the first time that I have ever heard of it. Having been a Minister of Home Affairs, I, along with my Colleagues who were there subsequently know that birth certificates used to be published in Guyana by the local printers with safety and security watermarks.

I find this rather unusual and strange. I thought it was a company of a level of the Canadian Bank Note. I have never heard of this company. The principal makes one have certain concerns.

**Dr. Westford:** Line item 6117 – Temporary Workers: Could the Hon. Minister please say what are the categories of those workers? Who are the highest and lowest paid of those workers?

**Ms. Teixeira:** I understand, Hon. Member, that the temporary employees who are listed from one in 2019 to 20 in 2020 include Data Entry Clerks who were used in the Citizenship and Immigration Services up to August, 2019, in

terms of doing data entries to do with birth registration at the General Register Office (GRO). I understand the project is complete and that these persons have been returned to which ever place they worked. The salary, I understand, was \$70,000 per month for the Data Entry Clerks.

**Mr. Datadin:** Line item 6284 – Other: In 2019, the sum of \$176,145,000 was spent. Could the Hon. Minister explain what that expense was for?

**Ms. Teixeira:** Apparently, for line item 6284, the expenditure in 2019 versus 2020 relates to the GRO’s agency fees and payments made for advertisements and other services. The GRO has been paying rental as well. The GRO placed a big tent in the Bedford House where the Department of Citizenship was. The rental for that was \$1.5 million per month. Apparently, the tent was placed there because of COVID-19 from March when COVID-19 started to the end of this month, because the Department did not want people to go into the building. We could see it when we pass. That is the main expenditure under this this heading. The GRO also paid for agency fees in relation to the GRO and the processing that the Guyana Post Office Corporation (GPOC) handled for a number of the certificates and so on. The GPO is paid for that service. I forgot the fees for the Marriage Officers and the Birth Registrants in the various areas.

**Mr. Datadin:** Could the Hon. Minister identify the companies to which these payments were made and, if possible, the principals?

**Ms. Teixeira:** Apparently, the owner of Star Party Rental and the principal is Mr. Lennox Cush. This arrangement will end at the end of this month.

**Dr. Westford:** Line item 6281 – Security Services: Could the Hon. Minister please say the name of the security service, how many locations the security service is providing services to and when was the contract signed?

**Ms. Teixeira:** The name of the Security Service is Brans Security Service, and the company deals with the security at what was called ‘Bedford House’ and is now called ‘Stephen Campbell’ where the Citizenship and Immigration Services were. Kalibur Security Service deals with the Linden and Berbice Immigration Offices.

*Programme: 055 – Citizenship and Immigration Services – \$270,173,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 055 – Citizenship and Immigration Services – \$15,974,000**

**Mr. Datadin:** Project code 2509900 – Furniture and Equipment: The 2019 Estimates’ figure is \$711,401,000. Could the Hon. Minister say what it was, was it delivered and whether it has been received?

**Ms. Teixeira:** Apparently, this quantum, which is large, relates to equipment that was ordered for the upgrading of the Cheddi Jagan International Airport (CJIA) Immigration, passport issuance, borders, scanners and so forth. The sum of \$650 million was ordered from the Canadian Bank Note Company Limited. As of today, the majority of that equipment has not arrived in the country. A smaller amount of over \$100 million was spent to buy support equipment such as readers, scanners and so forth. Those came in February, 2020, but the larger bulk has not arrived as yet. That has to do with upgrading our capacity to run the airport in a very modern and efficient manner. However, I do not have a copy of that contract in my possession.

*11.39 a.m.*

**Mr. Patterson:** On the same line item, could the Minister confirm that the tender was done *via* public tender for the machine-readable passport kiosks?

**Ms. Teixeira:** I understand that it is the Canadian Bank Note Company Limited and it was single sourced. There was no open tender on these purchases or acquisitions at the time.

*Programme: 055 – Citizenship and Immigration Services – \$15,974,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 056 – Social Cohesion – \$234,613,000**

**Dr. Westford:** Line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Hon. Minister please say, what categories of drugs were bought and to what use were they put?

**Ms. Teixeira:** I understand that it was basic drugs for headaches and Vitamin C, in light of the COVID-19, to try to boost persons among the staff immune systems.

**Dr. Mahadeo:** Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister state what these persons are employed as? Are they managers or whatever? What are their salaries? Where are they placed? Are they all in Georgetown or in the regions? I have a follow-up after that.

**Ms. Teixeira:** The numbers that are recorded here are not only members of staff in the Department of Social Cohesion. This is all of the general administration staff of what was the Department of Culture, Youth and Sports. There are a number of persons: Social Officers, Technical Officers, Special Assistant, Project Officers, Liaison Officer, as well as 41 employees who were in the general administration of the Department of Culture, Youth and Sports. The range of these contract employees are from the Cleaner, going up to Superintendent of Works, the Registry Supervisor, Public Relations Officer (PRO), the Regional Social Cohesion Officers, and Project Officer. This will include responsibility allowance, telephone allowance, gratuity, vacation allowance, employees, *et cetera*. If you want a list, we could provide that.

**Dr. Mahadeo:** Follow-up: Hon. Minister, could you advise as to what works these Social Cohesion Officers were doing? I was outside here when the recount was happening for 34 days and I saw some of the officers employed under the Social Cohesion Programme here for all 34 days. Were these persons paid whilst doing political work?

**Ms. Teixeira:** There was one part of your question that I did not answer, and that is if the majority of persons were located in regions. The majority of persons who are under contracted employees are here in Georgetown.

With regard to your other question, I know that a number of the Regional Social Cohesion Officers were in the recount. I am advised that, they did not seek permission for leave to do that. They did that unauthorisedly. However, they were also paid a salary in the period when they were in the recount.

**Dr. Mahadeo:** Follow-up: Could the Hon. Minister provide us with the sums of moneys that were, in my opinion, illegally acquired?

**Ms. Teixeira:** What is that? I cannot hear you.

**Dr. Mahadeo:** For the persons who were absent from work and were paid, what is the total sum of moneys that the Government expended?

**Ms. Teixeira:** The Regional Social Cohesion Officers were paid \$181,769 per month as regional officers. In some cases, they may have had other allowances, but they were all paid that in the period that we are talking about.

**Ms. Singh-Lewis:** Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): Could the Hon. Minister say if the training

under the Department of Social Cohesion was guided by a strategic plan?

**Ms. Teixeira:** I find the question a little odd in the sense that, I believe the Hon. Member asking is the person who was in charge of developing the strategic plan. Therefore, I would love to have a copy, since it is not in the records at the Ministry of the Presidency. I would assume that, having been there for five years, there would have been some framework within which the Department of Social Cohesion was being developed *et cetera*.

I repeat that the staff, specifically at the Department of Social Cohesion, were 10 persons. The rest of persons that the Hon. Member asked about that were on contract, additionally, were general administration staff, which belonged to the Department of Culture, Youth and Sports, up to the end of September.

**Ms. Singh-Lewis:** Before I ask my next question, I am happy that the Hon. Minister indicated that there is a plan for which the activities were carried out, because the Hon. Charles Ramson said that there is no plan.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, I do not want you to misquote. I think the Hon. Minister said that she did not see one and she would love to have one, if it could be provided.

**Ms. Singh-Lewis:** I just want to note that the Minister said that there was none. I will be happy to send one in my handover statement to the Permanent Secretary (PS). There are 17 hard copies and a soft copy that were left at the Ministry.

Follow-up: Could the Hon. Minister list the activities and projects that were executed under the Department of Social Cohesion, as was just referred to in line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships) and line item 6291 – National and Other Events?

**Ms. Teixeira:** According to the question, I think I made it quite clear, maybe I was being nuanced in what I was saying, that I was surprised at the question you asked because you are the person who had to do it. If you have done it, then it should be a public document. It should have been made public for the population to know what the strategic plan for social cohesion was. The fact that it seemed to have been handed over at some point, in recent times, is unfortunate. As I said, it would be interesting to see a copy of it. Then, whether it has Cabinet’s approval, the issue of a strategic plan

must have Cabinet’s approval. It is not an issue for a department alone.

To go back to the question at line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships), I am informed that there were: diversity, education, unity and inclusion training programmes in Orealla; and diversity and education training, social cohesion in action and administrative professional training, which was in-house. That is what you spent the money on.

Did you ask about line item 6291 – National and Other Events?

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes. You are correct.

**Ms. Teixeira:** The only money that was spent by this programme was spent on the Mashramani Jubilee celebrations, which was one. There were the Republic Jubilee celebrations, which was what we would normally call Mashramani, but this year it was called Republic Jubilee. This was involvement with the costume and float parade, Clean and Bright Up Competition, Independence Day celebration – which, as you know, was virtual – and the decoration of buildings in observance of the national holidays. That is what the money was spent on, in terms of national and other events.

**Dr. Westford:** Line item 6281 – Security Services: Could the Hon. Minister tell us the name of the security firm and the locations for which services were being provided?

*11.54 a.m.*

**Ms. Teixeira:** Under Programme: 056 – Social Cohesion, line item 6281 – Security Services: this is mainly for the head office on Main Street and the Caribbean Festival of Arts (CARIFESTA) Sports Complex. The security company is Radar Security Service & Supplies.

**Dr. Westford:** Line item 6222 – Field Material and Supplies: Could the Hon. Minister, please indicate to this House what categories of field supplies were purchased and, if possible, to what use were they put?

**Ms. Teixeira:** It relates to materials such as long boots, overalls, umbrellas and raincoats for field work by the auxiliary staff.

**Dr. Cummings:** Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I have noticed there is a decrease in contracted workers from 46 to 41 employees. I was wondering if their services were terminated and when was that termination done?

**Ms. Teixeira:** I think I had explained this already but let me explain it again. The numbers stated in the Estimates reflect those employees who are on the payroll as of the end of September, and the change in the numbers from 46 to 41 employees, as far as I know, are employees who were shifted in the period between the last budget and now to the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports or the Department of Culture, Youth and Sports programme in the Office of the President. They are no longer under the Social Cohesion Programme. I was also informed that there were three resignations, one retirement and one dismissal prior to August, 2020.

*Programme: 056 – Social Cohesion – \$234,613,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 056 – Social Cohesion – \$6,210,000**

*Programme: 056 – Social Cohesion – \$6,210,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 057 – Environmental Management and Compliance – \$949,004,000**

*Programme: 057 – Environmental Management and Compliance – \$949,004,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 057 – Environmental Management and Compliance – \$12,462,000**

*Programme: 057 – Environmental Management and Compliance – \$12,462,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 058 – Cultural Preservation and Conservation – \$579,871,000**

**Dr. Westford:** Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister please tell the Committee the categories of workers who were employed under this line item, the salaries of the top four employees and bottom three employees?

**Ms. Teixeira:** The highest paid employees would be the Confidential Secretary – \$139,238; the Administrator – \$380,972; while the one of the Instructors, Instructor I, is at

\$260,638. The lowest paid employee would be the Cleaner at \$77,075. These figures are for the employees’ basic salaries. In addition to that, there is the gratuity, vacation and uniform allowances, National Insurance Scheme (NIS), Pay As You Earn (PAYE) and other things. These emoluments were for 42 employees for the year 2020. There is one person missing who, regrettably, passed on. This is not anyone that was terminated, as my Friends on the other side, seem to be occupied with that.

12.09 p.m.

*Programme: 058 – Cultural Preservation and Conservation – \$579,871,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 058 – Cultural Preservation and Conservation – \$15,000,000**

*Programme: 058 – Cultural Preservation and Conservation – \$15,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 059 – Youth – \$ 445,403,000**

**Mr. Chairman:** Let us just give the staff a chance to get in place.

**Dr. Westford:** Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister please advise this House of the categories of these workers and their geographic locations?

**Ms. Teixeira:** I am advised that the workers under the line item 6116 are Cultural, Youth and Sports Officers. I am looking for the regional people. The majority are in Georgetown and not in the countryside or outside of Georgetown. Hon. Member, most of these people seem to be technical or administrative people. As I said, they are: Cultural, Youth and Sports Officers, Cooks, Handymen, Cleaners, Livestock Attendants, Sports Organisers, Library Assistants, Community Development Officers and Drivers, *et cetera*.

These appear to be persons who are also involved in the programmes at the Kurukuru Training Centre under the Youth Entrepreneurial Skills Training Programme (YEST) and also the Sophia Training Centre. Under Programme 059, Youth, there are two training programmes, including the President Youth Award – Republic of Guyana. These are

covered under Programme 059. A number of the people under this category are involved in all of those programmes.

**Dr. Westford:** Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): Could the Hon. Minister please advise this Committee as to what were the trainings, the types of training that were done and what criteria was used to choose or to implement those training programmes?

**Ms. Teixeira:** I keep forgetting; I am very sorry.

Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): The figure, as you know, has dropped from 2019 to 2020. This is mainly because of the COVID-19 and the closure of a number of the training schools that I mentioned earlier. The programmes that have been held for this year, so far, include: a Cosmetic Course at the Vryman’s Erven Training Centre (VETC) in New Amsterdam, *[Inaudible]*... building, Master Class Training at the Sophia Training Centre, Project Management Course, Music Training Programme, Youth Night School, Financial Literacy and Small Business Training, Proposal for the Guyana Youth Forum – I do not know what that is doing there – Robotic Training, Renewal Energy Training, Data Management Operation Training and Information Technology (IT) Training for Region 3. But after March, the schools such as the Vryman’s Erven Training Centre, Sophia Training Centre and Kurukuru Training Centre were closed and that is why the expenditure is much smaller.

**Mr. Chairman:** Dr. Westford, do you have a follow-up question?

**Dr. Westford:** No, Mr. Chairman.

*Programme: 059 – Youth – \$445,403,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 059 – Youth – \$6,132,000**

*Programme: 059 – Youth – \$6,132,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 05A – Sport – \$319,121,000**

**Mr. Chairman:** Let us give the staff a chance to settle.

**Dr. Westford:** Line item 6115 – Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled: Could the Hon. Minister please tell this House the

categories of staff under that head? While I am on my feet, Mr. Chairman, also line item 6116 – Contracted Employees, could we also be told what are the categories of staff employed under that head and the emoluments of the top four persons in that category?

**Ms. Teixeira:** Line item 6115, Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled, relates to a number of persons who are vehicle drivers, security supervisors, handymen, cleaner, four stadium groundsmen and one groundsman for another venue.

Line item 6116, Contracted Employees, relates to, again, workers who are on contract at the athletic track, Handymen, Operations Manager, Head Coach, Stadium Assistant Manager, Groundsman, Cleaners, manager for another entity and vehicle Drivers. Again, they are all administrative staff who are involved in the management of the sports facilities that are under this heading.

**Mr. Seeraj:** Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister please inform us from where the Director of Sport is paid?

**Ms. Teixeira:** The Director of Sport is paid under the National Sports Commission (NSC), which is reflected under line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations. Under this line item 6321, you will find the allocation for the National Sports Commissions and in that programme, you will find the payment for the Director of Sport.

12.24 p.m.

**Dr. Westford:** Line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Hon. Minister please advise this Committee of the categories of drugs purchased and to what use they were put?

**Ms. Teixeira:** I am advised that these are all over the counter (OTC) drugs used for the staff, in particular, vitamins and the usual pain killers, *et cetera* – all OTC. Apparently, the figure went up for 2019 because of COVID-19. Therefore, there was additional expenditure for helping the staff to take care of themselves.

*Programme: 05A – Sport - \$319,121,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 05A – Sport - \$ 30,449,000**

*Programme: 05A – Sport - \$30,449,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 05B – Petroleum and Energy Management - \$144,912,000**

**Mr. Chairman:** Do we have Dr. Westford’s microphone on?

**Dr. Westford:** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Chairman:** Go ahead, Hon. Member, Dr. Westford.

**Dr. Westford:** Line item 6281 – Security Services: Could the Hon. Minister please inform this Committee of the name of the security service and the location or locations that they were responsible for? Also, could the Hon. Minister please advise this Committee where this petroleum and energy management department was housed?

**Ms. Teixeira:** I understand, Hon. Member, that Brans Security Service is the security company that is handling the security services at the headquarters, which was the old United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) headquarters on Brickdam. This has been converted into the headquarters for this programme. As a result, they have hired more staff, *et cetera*, but Brans Security Service is the security company there. I think you know they were originally located within the Ministry of the Presidency.

*Programme: 05B – Petroleum and Energy Management - \$144,912,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 05B – Petroleum and Energy Management – \$267,444,000**

*Programme: 05B – Petroleum and Energy Management – \$267,444,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Agency: 01 Office of the President**

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 011 – Administration - \$276,211,000**

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: I see an allocated sum there of \$80,000 and I also see a staff complement of 92. Is that amount sufficient to

purchase drugs and medical supplies given this COVID-19 pandemic?

**Ms. Teixeira:** Hon. Member, the money allocated is just for three months, October to December. This is over the counter drugs such as: pain killers, bandages and vitamin C. This should suffice. I am sure the Minister of Health, Dr. Frank Anthony, if we were to run into any critical issues, would support the Office of the President with additional supplies, were our budget to run out.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Mr. Mahipaul, are you back on your feet?

**Mr. Mahipaul:** No, Sir.

**Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon:** I refer the Hon. Minister to line item 6114 – Clerical and Office Support – to say that there is an increase from zero to 20. Could the Hon. Minister state what is the nature of this increase? What are the categories of the persons employed there and the salaries of those persons who have been so employed?

**Ms. Teixeira:** I know the Hon. Member is very concerned about us inflating. However, I wish to assure the Hon. Member that, if he remembers, when we were dealing with Ministry of the Presidency, just an hour or so ago, we had the staffing details, which showed that line item 6114 had 27 staff, both for 2019 and 2020. What we did in the Office of the President was split Programme: 051 into two programmes, those are, Programmes: 011 and 012.

If you look at the contracted employees under this Programme, you will see that the number is 46, but if you add the 135 from Programme: 01, it will make the total 181, which we were looking at under the Ministry of the Presidency. And with the 20, these were reflected in Programme: 051, but are now being split between Programme: 051 to what is now Programmes: 011 and 012, those are – National Policy Development Presidential Advisory Services and Administration.

At this point, as far as I know, there has been no additional staffing in the last month.

**Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon:** I take the Hon. Minister to say that there has been no increase in staffing under this line item – 6114.

Line item 6115 – Semi-skilled Operative and Unskilled: From zero to 18. Could the Hon. Minister say what has given rise to the additional number of persons in this category?

12.39 p.m.

What are the skill sets and the salaries that are paid to these persons?

**Ms. Teixeira:** If I could ask the Hon. Member to go back to Programme: 051 – Policy Development and Administration – he will see that under line item 6114, there are 27 staff for 2019 and 2020. Go to Programme: 011 – Administration – and you will see under line item 6114, 20 people. If you turn to the next Programme, which we are going to do, Programme: 012, you will see 7 persons under the category of line item 6114. As I have said before, it means that Programme: 051 under the Ministry of the Presidency has been made into two Programmes: 011 and 012. The staff have been moved between the two Programmes based on their skills and specialities. The question that you asked earlier about the 20 people, these are mainly cleaners and handymen under line items 6114 and 6115. These are the persons who have been moved around based on the split in the Programme.

**Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon:** I take the Hon. Minister to say that there have been no changes with respect to persons who are employed in this category, under line item 6115.

I will now go to line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: There are 46 employees there. Could the Hon. Minister state the designations and salaries of these persons who are employed in this category and whether these persons were employed after 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 2020?

**Ms. Teixeira:** Thank you, Hon. Member. No. But let me assure you again that these persons were not employed after 2<sup>nd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> August. We are dealing with persons who are on the payroll, and who were employed prior to that. I do need a magnifying glass to see some of these things, but I will try. We have a Political Assistant, a Research Assistant, a Political Assistant, an Administrative Assistant to the Minister of State, a Special Assistant, a Personal Assistant to the Minister of State, a Driver, Confidential Secretary, a Political Liaison, Technical Officer of Communication, Political Assistant, Cabinet Office Manager, Word Processing Operator, Secretary and Senior Confidential Secretary. Would you like the salaries for these people too? There is also an Administrative Assistant to the Minister of State, Special Assistant to the Minister of Social Cohesion, Maintenance Assistant, Confidential Secretary, *et cetera*. There are more Special Assistants and more Confidential Secretaries; more Confidential Secretaries, more Special Assistants. *et cetera, et cetera*.

These are all staff that we inherited. Let me put it safer and clearer for Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon. What we are dealing with are the persons who we have inherited from you. That is not to say that, as the Government coming in, we will not hire skills that we need in order to do our work efficiently and effectively. What I am answering for in the Budget is what is there. As you are well aware, if new staff are hired, the arrangements with the Ministry of Finance, under its... There is a line item in the Ministry of Finance that allows an agency to pay staff who may be hired in the interim between budgets, if they are not catered for. Just to put that into perspective.

**Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon:** My direct question is, since 2<sup>nd</sup> August, how many persons in this category were either hired or fired?

**Ms. Teixeira:** Hon. Member, these persons are still on the payroll. I think you understand that. Therefore, if they are on the payroll, they are getting paid.

Secondly, you asked the additional people, is that it? How many additional people? I have said before that, at this point, the Advisors, their Confidential Secretaries and Personal Assistants who will be brought in by the new Ministers are still in transition. Those contracts and arrangements have not been finalised. Therefore, they are not on the payroll and not budgeted items. That is the issue there. They are right now in transition.

**Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon:** Hon. Minister, you have basically said that there are persons who have been hired but their contracts have not been completed. Could you say whether there are any Members of Parliament (MPs) who have been hired as Advisors for Ministers in the Government? And if so, how many are there? It is the same line item.

**Ms. Teixeira:** As I said, the Advisors have not been hired. They have not been put on the payroll. They do not have contracts. We are dealing with budgeted items. Therefore, I cannot answer. I do not know how many Advisors there will be. The Ministers have a right to have Advisors if they would like. They have Personal Assistants, Confidential Secretaries and Drivers; once those get into being, they will be reflected in the budget numbers for 2021, when we come with the budget request. But at this point, all of that is in transition. As it relates to how many Members of this House are Advisors, I really cannot say because none of them have been hired; none of them have been given a contract or been paid. I really do not know. Someone could be asked to be an Advisor, and when he/she sees the salary, he/she could say that he/she does

not want the job. So, I cannot answer in advance for those persons. Thank you very much.

**Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon:** Line item 6117 – Temporary Employees: There are three employees here. Could the Hon. Minister state what jobs these three persons are performing and the skillset that has been utilised here?

**Ms. Teixeira:** Hon. Member, is it line item 6117 – Temporary Employees?

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, it is line item 6117.

**Ms. Teixeira:** These are temporary employees. There are three of them. These are household services for the various homes of former Presidents and the present President, a Driver and one or two staff who were on probation as a construct. There are a number of persons who are under this line item.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister provide to me a list of the names, designations, salaries and other benefits for the 46 employees under this line item?

**Ms. Teixeira:** Hon. Member, you want the names, salaries and positions of line item 6116 under Programme: 011, is that correct? Yes. Sir, it will be done.

**Ms. Hastings-Williams:** Line item 6284 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister tell this Committee what that entails?

**Ms. Teixeira:** These are similar to what we dealt with in Programme: 051. This heading deals with expenses related newspapers advertisements, payment of the *Official Gazette*, television and radio materials and commercial fees, consultancy fees and miscellaneous services. As you would have seen in Programme: 051, the amount that was spent, so far, for the year was \$125,129,000. This is just to pay for October to December.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, I will now put the question.

**Ms. Ferguson:** No, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you for the opportunity, but I will yield to my Colleague, the Hon. Mr. Mahipaul, since he was on the floor before me.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Could the Hon. Minister give a breakdown of line item 6294 – Other?

**Ms. Teixeira:** Line item 6294 – Other includes the procurement of cutlery, wares and utensils for State House, the installation of blinds and refurnishing at the State House and the Office of the President, feasibility studies and research, project development and the cost for the website. Did you hear me or am I coming over really muffled?

**Mr. Chairman:** We heard you.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Mr. Chairman, I did not hear the Hon. Member clearly.

**Mr. Chairman:** Do you not hear? Hon. Minister, please repeat for Mr. Mahipaul and those who did not hear.

**Ms. Teixeira:** I beg your pardon.

Line item 6294 – Other – \$20 million: This was, as I have said earlier, but I will repeat, this is for procurement of cutlery, wares and other utensils for the State House, the installation of blinds at State House and the Office of the President, feasibility studies and research, project development and the cost for the website.

12.54 p.m.

As I said earlier, the amount that was spent in 2019 was \$34,138,000, as of the end of September. This is now \$20 million, from October to December, with regard to the new President. Also, we need to do feasibility studies, research for project development and the cost for the website.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Mr. Chairman, I am following up on line item 6294– Other, please.

**Mr. Chairman:** Go ahead, Mr. Mahipaul.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Could the Hon. Minister provide a breakdown, in writing, of the \$20 million? I would appreciate that.

**Ms. Teixeira:** We can do that, except, at this point, the \$20 million was an allocation to cover some of these expenses. There were no details in terms of if one is buying cutlery, wares or curtains. It was a provision so that the money there at line item 6294 – Other, like in all of the other Ministries and prior, would allow for these kinds of purchase. *[Interruption]* Yes, I meant all of that, I did not mean to leave anything out.

The assessment now of what is there or what is not there, is for the determination of the President and his family. What I am saying is that the provision here includes the Office of the

President and State House. It includes research studies and feasibility studies; it includes research for project development; and the cost for the website. We can give you an estimate of these things but, at this point, on 21<sup>st</sup> September, we are not necessarily aware of how many blinds or how many cutleries need to be purchased. We do have an idea of what feasibility studies have to be done, what is the cost for the website, *et cetera*. Do you not want anything else?

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Mr. Chairman, I will depend on the breakdown from the Hon. Minister, in writing. Thank you.

**Ms. Ferguson:** Mr. Chairman, I turn your attention to line item 6291 – National and Other Events. I notice here a proposal for \$32,241,000, which is intended to be spent between October to December, 2020. Now that we are in a COVID-19 period, I would like the Hon. Member to explain to this Committee and to provide a breakdown of what would entail the National Events and the sums that are to be expended for each event. Thank you.

**Ms. Teixeira:** We had an expenditure before of \$32 million which was approved under line item 6291 –National and Other Events, Programme 051 and we now have \$32 million here. This includes a number of activities which is traditional for all presidents of Guyana. They have held them every year for example, the Christmas programmes for the children in different parts of the country, the Inauguration of the President, as well as official visits, *et cetera*, of any dignitaries who had come and or will come between now and the end of the year.

**Ms. Ferguson:** Thank you very much, Hon. Member, for your response but the Hon. Member has not given a commitment to the laying over of the information.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Mr. Chairman, I am afraid that I did not understand what the Member said. I did not hear, and I did not understand it: I have two problems. Could that be better explained?

**Ms. Ferguson:** Mdm. Minister, you have just outlined some of the events that are to be held between October to December, 2020. What I am asking you to provide to this honourable Committee is a breakdown – the cost for each event or the allocation for each event.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Thank you, Hon. Member. Except, I am not a far see. I cannot see Christmas parties, how many Christmas parties and in which communities they will be held between

now and December. We know that we will try to reach, based on allocation, maybe 1000 villages. Do you wish to have a list of 1000 villages? We are willing to provide information to you, but the request must be within reason. Christmas has not happened as yet.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, Hon. Minister. Hon. Member, these are expenditures that will happen; all the breakdowns are not available at this moment.

**Ms. Ferguson:** Mr. Chairman, the response given by the Hon. Minister is unacceptable. Preparing a budget and arriving at cost, one would know exactly, for each event, what the cost will be; that is one. Two, we are in a COVID-19 environment. I do not know how we are going to hold Christmas parties for children in a COVID-19 environment. So, you will have to tell me and tell the honourable Committee what you intend to do.

**Mr. Chairman:** Once again, I will ask the Hon. Member to make a response. After this, we are going to have to move on. Why do we have to move on? Initially, we had allocated two and a half hours to cover up to Agency 016. One hour and seven minutes were occupied with other discussions and that is what I am giving back now. So, just before seven minutes after one o’clock, I will have no choice but to put all of the other outstanding heads. Go ahead, Hon. Minister.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased that you reminded the Committee.

Mdm. Member of Parliament, the Christmas issues are routine. Every President, including former President Granger, had these parties. During COVID-19, even if we cannot have the physical parties, there is nothing to stop us from giving gifts to children in different parts of Guyana and, certainly, the money will probably stretch further because parties will not be held. We are actually giving the children the benefit. Madam, these are routine activities.

I believe that, as a Member of Parliament, of course, you can ask a question to the Minister. As we get closer to November, you can ask how many parties are planned or how much is planned. You can ask those questions. You know this has been a routine event for the Office of the President and the Ministry of the Presidency for the last 20 to 30 years.

*Programme: 011–Administration- \$276,211,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 011 – Administration- \$247,750,000**

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Project code 1214100 – Office and Residence of the President: I see in the legend “Provision for buildings, security hut and electrical system.”. Could the Hon. Minister confirm if all of this will be at State House or is there any other place for the security hut and the electrical system?

**Ms. Teixeira:** Thank you, Hon. Member. The figures are related to \$5 million for the old electrical wiring; \$10 million for tiling of the Baridi Benab at State House because of problems with the blocks – it is from the floor of the benab; rehabilitation of the living room at State House; construction of a new sentry hut; and repairs to damaged Demerara shutters and installation of mosquito mesh on each shutter. That all comes up to \$25.7 million and we have the breakdown for each one of them. This is the State House between Carmichael and Main Streets. There is only one State House that I know about in Georgetown.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister provide a breakdown in writing? I know I asked for some breakdowns in writing before, could the Hon. Minister say when I will receive them? Thank you.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Sir, the normal practice is that it is given to the Clerk of the National Assembly and the Clerk distributes it to the Hon. Members.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, Hon. Minister. Hon. Members, I will have to put the question.

**Mr. Patterson:** Mr. Chairman...

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, who is it?

**Mr. Patterson:** Sir, it is Mr. Patterson.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, Mr. Patterson, I have just about one minute remaining on the time allocated for all the remaining heads. I will take the question but then I will have to start proposing and putting all the other heads. Hon. Member, go ahead.

**Mr. Patterson:** Project code 2405200 – Land Transport: Could the Minister state what vehicles are being purchased, who or for which office and what method of procurement is going to use, since we only have three months to spend these? Obviously, everything comes to a close on 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2020. What are the types of vehicles, which officials they will

be for and the method of procurement that is going to be used?

**Ms. Teixeira:** Mr. Chairman, this is to replace some very old and damaged vehicles. We have had our own personal experience. When vehicles were sent in by the former Ministers, we were shocked at their condition, with cracked windscreens, fender benders, the seats of the vehicles were all dug up, stained and scratched. I do not know what they were. Those vehicles will have to be fixed. There are also a number of vehicles that have been boarded by the Office of the President. They need to be boarded because they are too old and high maintenance. We are spending more on maintaining them. There is a list of the vehicles that has been provided by the staff. This is a list that the Ministry of the Presidency actually did... [**An Hon. Member:** (*Inaudible*)] I will answer my question how I like, if you do not mind. I cannot know that you cannot hear. I have said it very clearly. Are you hearing me now?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister, I think that you should speak to the Chairman.

**Ms. Teixeira:** We have a list of vehicles that have been boarded because they cost more to maintain than to buy new ones.

*1.09 p.m.*

Secondly, there are vehicles that are defective. I gave the example of when the former Ministers submitted their vehicles, we were shocked to see that a number of them, a rather high percentage, had cracked windscreens, scratches, bumps, and the seats were damaged, stained and ripped up. We do not know who did that or how that happened. There were also vehicles that our Ministers got into thinking that the vehicle looked alright and then discovered, as they went down the road, that there were two different sets and sizes of tyres and radiators were damaged.

We, therefore, have to do some repairs, and we also had to purchase new vehicles. This is an allocation to allow that. This is not just for the Office of the President, as far as I know. This is an allocation to be able buy vehicles for a number of Ministers whose vehicles are defective and we keep recycling them, returning them, trying to fix them and send them back out. This is not just for the Office of the President; it would also be for the Cabinet members, *et cetera*.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, Hon. Minister. Hon. Member, we are now way over the time for the entire head. Go ahead, Hon. Member Mr. Patterson.

**Mr. Patterson:** Mr. Chairman, I asked very specific questions. I did not ask why the allocation was there, I asked what types of vehicles, the number and where they... The Minister took all the time to explain why they were there. I asked for the number of vehicles being bought, the types of vehicles being bought, the method of procurement, *et cetera*. I did not ask anything about why.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, let us give the Hon. Minister a chance because I think you have repeated that two times.

**Ms. Teixeira:** I am not aware of the types of vehicles; I am not aware of the cost of the vehicles. I am aware that, because of the urgency to get the budget and to get money, because the Consolidated Fund was expiring, we had to rush and we needed to put in an allocation for vehicles because there was a problem in a number of places with vehicles, particularly for the safety and security of the President, Vice-President and Prime Minister of this country. Therefore, this is an allocation for that purpose because we had five weeks to bring the budget in, otherwise we would not have had money as a country. So, forgive us.

I promise you in 2021, my dear Mr. Patterson, we will have the make, the model and everything thing that you want available to you because we will have the time to do that.

**Mr. Patterson:** Mr. Chairman, is the Hon. Member saying to us that the allocation in here is a guesstimate or could it be for one vehicle? Is it \$95 million? She has no clue about the type of vehicles or the number of vehicles? It could be one vehicle for one person. The persons on this side have been part of budgeting exercises, the Accounting Officer next to her has been part of a budgeting exercise. One does not just put in a blank guesstimate. One says if he or she would like to buy three, four, five or six items. This country deserves to know if the \$95 million is for one vehicle or for how many.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, Hon. Member. Hon. Member, I will ask the Hon. Minister once again if she has more particulars. If she does not have more particulars, I will have to put the question. Hon. Minister, you have the floor?

**Ms. Hastings-Williams:** Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Chairman:** Go ahead Hon. Member.

**Ms. Hastings-Williams:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Line item 63... *[Interruption]*

**Ms. Teixeira:** Mr. Chairman, I do not know if we are going to public tender and we put all these details in. If we are going to procure, maybe that explains it. The procurement is that we are going to go out to be able to acquire certain types of vehicles that are related to the top officials of this country. Therefore, it depends on the tender and, of course, the price one gets. Whether one buys three, four, or 10, it will be dependent on a procurement process, which I know the Hon. Member has problems with. I know he has problems with it. He cannot comprehend certain things about the procurement process, but to ask me to put in model and type, and so on, I cannot do that. I have said, very honestly, to this Committee that I cannot do it. I do not have it. What I am saying is that when the Budget is passed and the determination is made as to which vehicles are needed for the highest officials, they will go out to tender and the process of procurement to acquire them within the \$95 million that has been put in the Budget.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, Hon. Minister.

**Mr. Patterson:** Mr. Chairman, is the Hon. Member saying that the procurement method that will be employed...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, could you first pay the courtesy of getting acknowledged?

**Mr. Patterson:** Mr. Chairman, is she saying that the Government’s side will put out a public tender saying that there is \$95 million available. What can we get, a donkey cart or whatever it is? Are you saying that every time you go? The procurement law states that one has to clearly state what one is procuring, and one has to put it exactly like that. You have to have an engineer’s estimate. Is the Hon. Member saying that the engineer’s estimate is \$95 million and that whatever they give, it will be accept?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, I will give one final opportunity for the Minister to be succinct. Other than that, we will be engaging in the making of some speeches.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The figure has been arrived at by looking at the pattern of purchases over the last few years for similar vehicles. That judged the quantum that is put in the budget. Secondly, we will go to procurement. You do not need an engineer’s estimate for the purchase of vehicles. I understand why my Comrade, on the other side, is

having difficulties. Please do not quote the Procurement Act to me. That is not your area of specialisation.

*Programme: 011 – Administration – \$247,750,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, we have only now completed Programme 011 for Agency 01: Office of the President. There are five more programmes, consisting 10 heads of both current and capital expenditures. Could I now put all of those heads together? I seek your concurrence. Hon. Leader of Government Business, Ms. Teixeira, I am asking if I can put all 10 heads. What is your view?

**Ms. Teixeira:** Mr. Chairman, we agreed on a time allocation, and we, therefore, have to keep to that.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you. Hon. Chief Whip or the Leader of the Opposition, you have the floor?

**Lt. Col (Ret’d) Harmon:** Mr. Chairman, I do not agree. These are important heads that we have to deal with. What we have here is the Minister who is responsible for the Office of the President being the same Minister responsible for the Guyana Defence Force (GDF). And so, even if we are to take a break at where we are now, we still have time so that we can catch up after the break. I am saying that it will not allow us to properly scrutinize the expenses of the Government if you were to just put all of these things just like that. This has been... *[Interruption]* This has been a deliberate ploy on the part of the Government to waste time this morning.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Leader of the Opposition, could you allow me please?

**Lt. Col (Ret’d) Harmon:** Yes, please. They have been wasting time all morning asking all sorts of questions...*[Inaudible]*

**Ms. Teixeira:** You have to manage your time. That is what you have to do. A Chief Whip has to manage the time.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, I will now ask that we resume so we can take the suspension. We can have the two sides and us meet immediately after the suspension to see how we can reach an understanding on the way forward. We have to resume the House and then suspend for lunch. During the suspension, I ask that the two sides and the Speaker meet on the way forward.

*Assembly resumed.*

*Sitting suspended at 1.21 p.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 2.25 p.m.*

*In Committee of Supply*

*2.27 p.m.*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, we are going to proceed with the Office of the President for another 20 minutes, at which time, if we do not conclude, I will have to put the unfinished heads to the vote.

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 012 – National Policy Development Presidential Advisory Services – \$418,380,000**

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I would appreciate if the Hon. Minister can lay over to the Committee, in writing, the names, designations, salaries and other benefits for the 135 contracted workers.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much. Hon. Minister, you shall so do, is that right?

**Ms. Teixeira:** Mr. Chairman, I had explained when Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon raised the issue under Programme 011-Administration, that these were the same figures in Programme 051-Policy Development and Administration, which we passed for the administration of the Ministry of the Presidency. This is because Programme 051 - Policy Development and Administration, under the Ministry of the Presidency, was split into two programmes: Programme 011 being Administration and Programme 012 being National Policy Development Presidential Advisory Services. As I explained then, if you added the numbers from Programme 051 and looked at the numbers in those two other programmes, they will add up. So, the 135 contracted workers in Programme 012, plus the 46 contracted workers in Programme 011, would come up to the number that was in Programme 051 – Policy Development and Administration, which we passed earlier this morning. So, there is no additionality. It is the same people whose names I read from the list. God knows what time that was, I have now gone blank; we read out a list of names for the Opposition hours ago for that same quantum of people who are now there in the system, but in two programmes, instead of one.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Mr. Chairman?

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, Hon. Member?

**Mr. Mahipaul:** My request is, if the Hon. Minister could please lay over to this Committee, in writing, the 135

contracted employees under line item 6116 – Contracted Employees, Programme: 012-National Policy Development Presidential Advisory Services, their names, designation, salaries and other benefits?

**Ms. Teixeira:** As I said before, the 135 plus 46 employees make up the 181 employees who were in Programme 051 – Policy Development and Administration. I read out those positions earlier and I had also read out the figures when I dealt with Programme 011 – Administration. We are now on Programme 012 -National Policy Development Presidential Advisory Services. Yes, we can make those documents available, but I could read them out for you again, as I did then. Maybe you were not paying attention.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister, just lay over the information. Hon. Members, I put the question that Agency: 01 Office of the President, Programme: 012 – National Policy Development...

**Ms. Fernandes:** Mr. Chairman, if I may, I had a question.

**Mr. Patterson:** Mr. Chairman, one of our Members was on the floor, but I would like to raise an issue that has been troubling us on this side of the Committee. Because you are virtual Sir, you are not seeing the persons. Plus, there is a delay of at least 30 seconds waiting for you to say something. That eats into the 20 minutes that you are giving us. We are constantly at a disadvantage, where two Members on this side have had their...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, I understand. If we could be very brief or succinct, which I think might be the right word, we can move on.

**Mr. Patterson:** We are waiting on you, Sir. At the end of the...

**Mr. Chairman:** I have two Members who are on the floor right now, the Hon. Member, Ms. Hastings-Williams, and the Hon. Member, Ms. Fernandes.

**Ms. Hastings-Williams:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Could the Hon. Minister say if there is a new Commissioner of Information? I am seeing that there is a tune of \$10 million allocated to the Office of the Commissioner of Information. If not, are they planning to appoint or to hire a person to fill that vacancy?

**Ms. Teixeira:** Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations refers to local subventions. It is

\$168,180,000. These involve: The Youth Advisory Council – \$25 million; Gaming Authority of Guyana – \$23,177,000; Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission - \$37 million. Remember this is from October to December because they have received their subventions earlier, so this is a balance of their subventions. Then there is the Institute of Applied Science and Technology (IAST) – \$69.5 million; Office of the Commissioner of Information – \$10 million; and Office of the First Lady – \$3 million. This is for the new First Lady because the last First Lady, as you saw from the earlier document, \$15 million was spent. The total budget for this is \$18 million but only \$3 million is for the new First Lady.

In terms of the question to do with the Office of the Commissioner of Information, we will come to that when we can. This is not urgent right now, but we will have to appoint. The law prescribes how it has to be done and we will follow as is required by the law.

**Ms. Fernandes:** Line item 6116 — Contracted Employees: As we were so guided by the Hon. Minister, when we were looking at line item 6116 – Contracted Employees and under Programme 012 – National Policy Development Presidential Advisory Service, this programme would have been one of the splits from Programme 051 – Policy Development and Administration. My question comes from the fact that, under Programme 051 – Policy Development and Administration, there is an allocation of \$524,461,000. That would have been for the nine months, as we were so guided again by the Hon. Minister. That particular amount was for until the ending of September. The average for the nine-month period would have been \$58,273,000. We move over to the fact, as we were so guided, that this was spilt between Programme 011 – Administration and Programme 012 – National Policy Development Presidential Advisory Service. Programme 011 – Administration had an allocation of \$34,375,000. We now look here to that line item being allocated \$182,663,000. I would just like you to note that amount, for that three-month period, would give you a monthly figure of \$72,337,000, which is an increase of \$14,064,000.

My question is, given the fact that we had a monthly figure for that nine-month period averaging \$58,273,000 and now that monthly figure for this three-month period averages \$72,337,000, what accounts for the increase of \$14,064,000?

**Ms. Teixeira:** Thank you very much, Hon. Member. As you know, because I think you have worked at the Office of the President, line item 6116, under all the programmes, includes not only salaries, but also gratuity, vacation allowance, *et*

*cetera*. In September/October is when the gratuities and so on are usually paid. The increase relates to gratuity and so on that will have to be paid for the period. Let me preface what I have said by “I am advised”. [**Hon. Member:** (*Inaudible*)] Do you want to question my advice? If so, you can do that. [**Hon. Member:** (*Inaudible*)] Mr. Chairman...

**Mr. Chairman:** I am listening.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Do you want to use your 20 minutes or not because your 20 minutes will finish fast if you continue at this rate, and you still would not finish?

Hon. Member, I have been advised about the numbers because, as I had explained earlier, you cannot put persons in the budget who have not been hired. You have to only put the bodies that are on the payroll now. This is so that any additional people hired, which I think is what you are trying to get at, cannot be included. As I said two hours ago, they will be included by the facility of wages and salaries, under the Ministry of Finance, where new people hired can be put under. Those new people will be reflected in the 2021 Budget, which is just around the corner. This is dealing with persons in the system who have to have their gratuities and other things that are required which relate to the increases. I see you are nodding your head. Maybe you should talk to the Permanent Secretary, as you know better than she does. Thank you.

*Programme: 012 – National Policy Development Presidential Advisory Services – \$418,380,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 012 – National Policy Development Presidential Advisory Services – \$49,079,000**

*Programme: 012 – National Policy and Development Presidential Advisory Services – \$49,079,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

2.42 p.m.

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 013 – Defence and National Security – \$38,158,000**

*Programme: 013 – Defence and National Security – \$38,158 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Mr. Chairman:** There is nothing stated there for the capital programme, so there is nothing to put.

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 014 – Public Policy and Planning – \$78,690,000**

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies, 6222 – Field Materials and Supplies, 6223 – Office Materials and Supplies and 6224 – Print and Non-Print Materials: Who would the drugs and medical supplies, field materials and supplies, office materials and supplies, print and non-print materials be procured for, given that programme 014 has no staff?

**Ms. Teixeira:** This is a new programme that is being established and, at this point, the main funds are for the Guyana Office for Investment (GO-Invest). Although the staffing provision will be made when persons are hired, they still wanted to put in moneys for drugs, printing, fuel, electricity, *et cetera*. This is so that, once the unit is set up, we would not have to come for supplementary to get additional money. The staff has budgeted for a minimum number of people in terms of the staff for the new unit. Once they are hired, they would have basic facilities to get moving.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Follow-up: If I am hearing the Minister clearly, there is no allocation for total wages and salaries for staff, but there are allocations for other spending. Is it not fair to conclude that the same way you would have to come for a supplementary for the staffing, you could have come for the others?

**Ms. Teixeira:** Hon. Member Mr. Mahipaul, we do not come to the House for supplementary for staffing. If you want to use your 20 minutes in this way, I will continue to facilitate. It is not my problem. As I have explained, this is a new programme and people have not been hired as yet. We have to advertise, we have to hire people and they will be taken care of under the Ministry of Finance’s provision under wages and salaries. However, because we want this programme, we are putting in the basics for the facility to work because we have to hire them in October. This is a new programme and there is not going to be a big delay.

Thirdly, the largest sum of money under this is for GO-Invest at line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations.

**Ms. Ferguson:** I just heard the Hon. Member say that this particular agency is a new agency that will be formed.

However, I noticed at line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, there is a whopping \$58,470,000. Could you explain to the honourable Committee which agencies or organisations will be benefiting from this subsidy?

**Mr. Chairman:** Before I ask the Hon. Minister to answer, under Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations and International Organisations, there are tables at the back of the Estimates that detail every single one of these organisations that got an allocation and the amount. So, it is easy to refer to that.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Under Public Policy and Planning, the Guyana Office for Investment has been moved from where it was before, under the Ministry of Business, to under the Office of the President. As I pointed out, they have received the first part of their subvention, and you will see that in another programme when we come to the Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce. This is the balance of the money for them for October to December. I hope I have clarified the issue for the Hon. Member.

*Programme: 014 – Public Policy and Planning – \$78,690,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 014 – Public Policy and Planning – \$5,000,000**

*Programme: 014 – Public Policy and Planning – \$5,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 015 – Environmental Management and Compliance – \$540,585,000**

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I see there is a total of 14. Could the Hon. Minister layover to this Committee the names, designations, salaries and other benefits of the 14?

**Ms. Teixeira:** There has been a tradition in this House of not putting the names. I am sure Lt. Col (Ret’d) Harmon and Mr. Trotman have advised the Hon. Member accordingly. The 14 are Driver, Administrative Assistant, Personal Assistant to the Minister of State, Cleaner, Office Assistant, Cleaner, Senior Administrative Officer, Environmental Officer – and there are two of those – Gardener, Handyman, Sustainable

Development Coordinator, Renewable Energy Liaison Officer, Data Management Officer and Environmental Policy Educational Coordinator. These are the 14 persons that are under 6116 – Contracted Employees.

**Mr. Jordan:** Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister state who is presently performing the duties of head of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)? Also, please indicate the gross salary and emoluments of that person.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Are you asking about Environmental Protection Agency or the Department of Environment? Could you clarify for me?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Mr. Jordan, the Minister would like you to clarify whether you are speaking about the EPA or the programme under Office of the President.

**Mr. Jordan:** I am speaking about the EPA.

**Ms. Teixeira:** That person is not in the 14, Sir. The 14 persons are from the Department of Environment and the head of that has resigned. That is a department in the Office of the President. The EPA is an agency that receives a subvention from the Office of the President at line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations. If you check the tables at the back, to which the Chairman referred, you will see how much the EPA got.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Line item 6294 – Other and 6284 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister please tell this Committee what constitute 6284 – Other and 6284 – Other?

**Ms. Teixeira:** Line item 6284 – Other: This is payment for advertisements and other sundry items that are normally under this head.

Line item 6294 – Other: This \$121,000 is to cater for request for any other purchase necessary over the period for three months.

**Mr. Chairman:** Our time is going. We are way above the 20 minutes to which we had agreed. Please.

*Programme: 015 – Environmental Management and Compliance – \$540,585,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 015 – Environmental Management and Compliance – \$66,377,000**

*Programme: 015 – Environmental Management and Compliance – \$66,337,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

2.57 p.m.

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 016 – Police Complaints Authority – \$16,345,000**

*Programme: 016 – Police Complaints Authority – \$16,345,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 016 – Police Complaints Authority - \$1,000,000**

*Programme: 016 – Police Complaints Authority – \$1,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Agency 53: Guyana Defence Force**

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 531 – Defence and Security Support - \$13,056,361**

**Mr. Patterson:** Line item 6133 – Benefits and Allowances: There is an increase to \$535 million. Could the Minister list the top six beneficiaries, their ranks and benefits incurred for the amount given?

**Ms. Teixeira:** The increase from \$489 million in 2019 to \$535 million in 2020 has to do with the upgrade with regard to salaries and salary upgrade for Drivers.

I am sure you aware that when one’s salary increases, it affects the benefits that one obtains. In this case, the salaries were upgraded, including that of Drivers, and that has affected the benefits that would be accrued.

**Mr. Patterson:** I asked a specific question. Maybe, I could drill down a bit more, Mdm. Minister. I know it deals with salaries and benefits. The Legend is very clear. I asked and what I am asking is: Did the payment for one Colonel, who was promoted to Brigadier, and four Lieutenant Colonels, who were promoted to Colonel and backdated retroactively to 2018 come from this line item? How much were they paid from this line item?

**Ms. Teixeira:** I am a bit confused, my dear Friend. You should have probably asked that question earlier. As far as I know, the persons have not been paid as yet. I assure you, I said they have not been paid as yet. I believe that you were in Government in 2018, 2019 and 2020 up to August. Maybe, it would have been a good idea to pay them then.

**Mr. Figueira:** Line item 6243 – Janitorial and Cleaning Supplies: There has been an astronomical increase by \$56 million. Could the Hon. Minister explain the reason for this significant increase?

**Ms. Teixeira:** This increase is due to the COVID-19. There would be soldiers living in close proximity and it would need to be ensured that they properly protected and sanitation, *et cetera*, is upgraded. The increase is for preventative measures to protect our soldiers due to COVID-19.

**Mr. Jones:** Line item 6294 – Others: Could the Hon. Minster indicate what has occasioned this sharp increase and what constitutes ‘Other’?

**Ms. Teixeira:** I thank you for asking the question. Remember, unlike the Office of the President and the Ministry of the Presidency, when it comes to the Guyana Defence Force (GDF), we are dealing with the whole year and not any bifurcation of January to July and then the rest of the year. The increase has to do with hampers that were organised by the Civil Defence Commission (CDC) to be sent out. It also includes intelligence operations and intelligence funding, personal protective equipment (PPEs) and uniform fabric, *et cetera* for the staff as well as the 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the GDF.

**Mr. Jones:** Line item 6281 – Security Services: I am curious as to whether or not the Guyana Defence Force hires a private security service.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Thank you for your inquiry, Hon. Member Jones. You have to remember that we have seven former Chiefs of Staff and private security is paid for at their residences. This is not for active leaders of the Army. This is for all the former Chiefs of Staff. Right now, we have seven which shows we have a healthy longevity in our society.

*Programme: 531 – Defence and Security Support – \$13,056,361 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 53 – Defence and Security Support - \$670,090,000**

*Programme: 53 – Defence and Security Support - \$670,090 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

*3.12 p.m.*

**Agency: 02 Office of the Prime Minister**

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 021 – Prime Minister’s Secretariat – \$627,983,000**

**Mr. Chairman:** This should have started at 2 p.m. We are now at 3.11 p.m. Thank you very much for making up some time.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: I see the breakdown on page 596. For 2020, it is \$231,499,000. How much of this amount was already disbursed and spent by the Department of Public Information (DPI)?

**Prime Minister [Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips]:** The sum allocated caters for January to September, 2020.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Follow-up: Would the Department of Public Information not be funded for October, November and December?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** I am advised that it has been moved to Programme 05 for the rest of the year.

**Mr. Figueira:** Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I have noticed that, in 2020, there is an increase by \$17 million. Could the Hon. Prime Minister indicate to us what are the skillsets of these two contracted employees?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** The staff of the former Ministry, known as Ministry of Public Telecommunications, are now under the Office of the Prime Minister. Basically, one is speaking of Typist Clerks, Secretaries, Assistant to the Prime Minister, Handyman, Driver, Mechanic, *et cetera*.

**Mr. Figueira:** Thank you, Hon. Prime Minister, but I am speaking specifically to...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Mr. Figueira, please address the Chair.

**Mr. Figueira:** Thank you, Cde. Chair. Hon. Prime Minister, I am specifically referencing the two additional contracted staff

to that line item. I would like to know, specifically, what are the skillsets of those two contracted employees.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** They were Advisors to the former Minister of Public Telecommunications, and they will continue to advise me for as long as I see fit.

**Mr. Figueira:** Hon. Prime Minister, in 2020, two additional contracted employees are employed here, according to this line item. If you are saying that they were Advisors to the former Minister, are you still retaining those two employees? It is because there is an increase from 22 to 24.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** Mr. Chairman, I already answered the question asked by the Hon. Member.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, I thought the Prime Minister said these are two Advisors who he will retain until he sees fit. That is what I heard. [*Inaudible*] the answers to the questions that you are asking.

**Mr. Figueira:** Greatly appreciated, Hon. Prime Minister.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Mr. Figueira, if I was wrong, please go ahead.

**Mr. Figueira:** Thank you, Sir. Line item 6113 – Other Technical and Craft Skilled: There is an increased by 12 employees. Could you please indicate the skillsets of these individuals?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, I think that you are talking about line item 6114 – Clerical and Office Support and not 6113 – Other Technical and Craft Skilled.

**Mr. Figueira:** I stand corrected.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** Okay.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Could the Hon. Prime Minister layover to this Committee the names, designations, salaries and other benefits of the 53 staff for his Secretariat?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Prime Minister, before you answer, I just want to say to the Committee that it has been a long-standing policy that we do not issue people’s names. We issue designations and salaries.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** All the staff that you had mentioned are listed but, of course, we can furnish you with the names at a later date.

**Ms. Ferguson:** Line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: I note that, for 2018 and 2019, respectively, there

were small appropriations. I noticed that a large sum has been appropriated here. Could the Hon. Member explain to this House the reason for the increase?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** There has been an increase in the number of staff and also this is the year of COVID-19. So, the combination of the two led to the increase.

*Programme: 021 – Prime Minister’s Secretariat – \$627,983,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 021 – Prime Minister’s Secretariat – \$37,882,000**

**Mr. Holder:** Project code 1219300 – Buildings: I noticed there is a provision for a security hut at the whopping cost of \$4 million. Could the Hon. Minister state where exactly this hut will be built, whether it is at his home or at the Secretariat?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** The security hut is being constructed at Colgrain House and, of course, Colgrain House is a heritage site. So, if any new structure is going to be put there, it should conform to the aesthetics of the area.

**Mr. Holder:** Follow-up: I would like to ask the Hon. Minister if there is a security hut there already. Also, could he give the full specifications of the security hut?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** The facility now houses the Office of the Prime Minister, so there is no longer the normal security. One has to cater for the additional security that is responsible for securing the Prime Minister. Therefore, there is a need for a more complex structure to accommodate both the external security and the internal security that are tasked with securing the Prime Minister.

**Mr. Holder:** I specifically asked for dimensions and possibly the full specifications. How many security officers do you expect to have in this hut and are they live-in security officers? At \$4 million, it is close to the cost of a low-income home. Please lay out the details, Sir.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** This is a concrete structure, and we will lay it over if the Hon. Member wants details, but I am certainly not prepared to give any details pertaining to the security.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Project code 2404000 – Land Transport: Who would be using this vehicle?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** This is an off-road vehicle and, as one may know, the Prime Minister is using cars right now; so, I need a vehicle to go off-road to visit 83,000 square miles.

**Mr. Patterson:** Follow-up: Project code 2404000– Land Transport: Mr. Prime Minister, when the Hon. Member, Minister Teixeira, responded to questions on the \$95 million, less than an hour ago, she clearly stated that included in that \$95 million were cars for the President, the Prime Minister, the Vice-President and other Ministers. Is this an additional car for your fleet? Is it in addition to what is being procured?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** I am prepared to address what is in my budget for the Office of the Prime Minister. I think the Hon. Member is speaking about a previous agency.

3.27 p.m.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Follow-up: Same project code 404000 – Land Transport; I heard the Hon. Prime Minister say that he is currently using cars and he is in need of an off-road vehicle, if I heard him quite clearly. In the Legend for this same project code, it states:

“Provision for final payment and purchase of vehicle.”

This is in the Legend in Volume 3 of the Estimates. If one would go the Legend in Volume 1, it states:

“Provision for vehicles and final payment – Rollover: \$0.882M.”

Could the Hon. Prime Minister clarify this please?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips]:** From my understanding, it is a rollover project and the \$18 million is the final payment for the vehicle.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Mr. Chairman, if I am to seek clarity, the Hon. Prime Minister is confirming that the vehicle was already purchased.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** I am advised that there is a mistake in the description. There is a cost for a payment for a vehicle and the cost for a rollover for a project in Linden. So, there is typographical error here.

*Programme: 021 – Prime Ministers Secretariat - \$37,882,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 022 – Disaster Preparedness, Response and Management - \$3,006,344**

**Bishop Edghill:** Mr. Chairman, this would be a good time for me to bring to the attention of the Committee that there has been an erratum issued on this specific programme.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, Bishop Juan Edghill, please proceed.

**Bishop Edghill:** Under Programme 022, Disaster Preparedness, Response and Management, there is an erratum which was issued this morning. So, Members, when asking questions, should consider the erratum. It was circulated to the Assembly.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Public Works, could you tell the Committee, please, because I do not have the document either.

**Bishop Edghill:** Mr. Chairman, I would appreciate if the Clerk of the National Assembly could assist you in getting a copy of the document. The erratum has to do with the staffing details.

**Mr. Chairman:** Are you saying that it is not the money and that it is just the staffing details?

**Bishop Edghill:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr Chairman:** I would ask that someone takes a WhatsApp picture of the document and send it to me.

I do not know if this is helpful to me or not. I just saw the cover memorandum. Nevertheless, let us propose the question.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** I would like to seek a clarification before I ask the question. If I may ask, is Programme 022, under the Office of the Prime Minister, coming from a different department or is it a new programme?

**Bishop Edghill:** If I could give some assistance, Disaster Preparedness, Response and Management, for the first part of the year, was dealt with under the Ministry of the Presidency. These allocations that are under this programme because it now falls under the Office of the Prime Minister. So, the first part of the year was already dealt with.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** So, the clarity is that these amounts allocated here are for the remainder of 2020, for October, November and December.

Line item 6294 – Other: Could the Hon. Prime Minister please breakdown the sum of \$1,810,543,000, which is allocated under this line item for the three-month period?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** The \$1.8 billion represents the preparation of relief hampers for vulnerable coastal households.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** I have a follow-up question. What criteria is being used to determine the vulnerability of these households in order to decide who gets hampers and who do not get hamper?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** There is a process which entails applications being submitted online and, based on how the questions are answered in those online applications, there will be criteria and an assessment process to determine who will qualify for the hampers.

**Mr. Figueira:** I have a question on the same line item. Could the Hon. Prime Minister please indicate to the House how many households benefitted from this distribution of food hampers?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, just for clarity for me, did you say ‘benefitted’ or ‘will benefit’? Hon. Member, I heard you say ‘benefitted’ as if it has happened. Is it ‘benefitted’ or ‘will benefit’?

**Mr. Figueira:** The moneys have not been spent as yet. Could the Prime Minister please indicate who is the head of this project that will be assessing the distribution of these hampers and, more so, is the distribution of the hampers going to be based on the region’s population? We would like to know what are the criteria.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** My understanding is that 90,000 households will benefit. We have the Economic and Social Sub-Committee of the COVID-19 Taskforce, working through the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security, and the Civil Defence Commission (CDC) that will manage the entire process so as to ensure all the households benefit, as they qualify based on the criteria mentioned earlier.

**Dr. Cummings:** I am using the addendum and the new amendment that was circulated. Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I noticed that there are 23 contracted employees. Could the Hon. Minister indicate to this Committee the designation of the top five contracted employees, the remuneration packages and the dates of employment and, also, the bottom three contracted employees?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** I have the list here and it will be submitted to the House.

**Mr. Henry:** Mr. Chairman, going back to line item 6294, Other, if I heard correctly, the Hon. Prime Minister said that this is for coastal communities and then he mentioned that the applicants would have to do an online application. Our communities in Region 9 and elsewhere may not have those facilities to do online application. Is there any money allocated in this amount for the hinterland communities and, if not, where can I find moneys allocated for that in the Budget?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** The total allocated includes 38,000 households from hinterland communities. I am sorry if I did not mention that earlier on. It will be delivered to the communities.

**Mr. Figueira:** Line item 6292 – Dietary: I noticed almost \$1 billion for the remaining four months. Could the Hon. Prime Minister indicate to this Committee what are some of the needed dietary substances that would require almost \$1 billion of taxpayers’ moneys?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** Just a while ago, we had been speaking about hampers being delivered to hinterland communities or what we refer to as Indigenous communities. Some \$950 million would be utilised to purchase food items to make the hampers for those communities.

**Mr. Figueira:** Sir, thank you for the response. I believe there is some kind of a mix-up with your response. I am speaking specifically to line item 6292 which states \$900 million for dietary.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** To bring some clarity to the whole issue, the \$900 million would be utilised to purchase food items which will be packaged and delivered to hinterland communities. The \$1.8 million will be for the hampers that will be processed through the application system. A total of 93,000 households will benefit from this activity.

3.42 p.m.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Mr. Figueira, I have quite a few other Hon. Members lined up behind you. Please, go ahead.

**Mr. Figueira:** Okay. Thank you, Cde. Chairman. With regard to the communities that the Hon. Member deem as hinterland, of the 30,000 households to which he propose to hand out these hampers, would Region 10 be included in

that? More so, if it is indeed a ‘yes’, how many households from Region 10 would benefit?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** Mr. Chairman, the hampers are for all 10 administrative regions of Guyana. With regard to what will be available for Region 10, we could provide that information to you later.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Mr. Mahipaul, you have the floor.

**Mr. Figueira:** Mr. Chairman, I have a final question, if I may.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Mr. Figueira and all Hon. Members, we do have a certain amount that we said we would limit... some conventions that have been established long in the House.

**Mr. Figueira:** I yield, Sir. Thanks.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. This is a follow-up question on line items 6292 and 6294, Dietary and Other, respectively. Was an assessment done to know how many hampers the Office of the Prime Minister would have to cater for? If so, could you please give a breakdown, in terms of regions, as to how many hampers will be distributed in each regions and if there are specific villages or communities that will be targeted?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** To the Hon. Member, the simple answer is that, based on the work done by all the agencies, including the Civil Defence Commission (CDC), 45% of the population will have the need to be given some support during the COVID-19. Based on that percentage, we arrived at these households and the figures to support the conclusion of the whole analysis.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** I have a final follow-up, Mr. Chairman. Could the Hon. Prime Minister...?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, you have to give me a chance to acknowledge you and give you the floor before you begin to talk.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Please do.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, please, go ahead.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Could the Hon. Prime Minister layover to this Committee the assessment that was done the specifies the 45% of the population to benefit? This is for us to see the

breakdown so we will know, directly, which communities will be receiving hampers.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** The information is available, and we can make it available to the Hon. Member.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member and Deputy Speaker, Mr. Shuman, you have the floor.

**Deputy Speaker [Mr. Shuman]:** Mr. Chairman, thank you. I almost feel like I am playing Jeopardy by having to cue the microphone. I hope that some system could be developed where we could have a cue. Could the Hon. Prime Minister, within line items 6265, Other Transport, Travel and Postage and line item 6294, Other, tell the Committee how much of that money or that transport cost would be utilised for not only going into the Indigenous communities, but for the utilisation of Indigenous transport means?

Also, could the Hon. Prime Minister say what is the type, and if he does not have that yet, is the support of perishable nature being given to Indigenous communities? Thank you.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** Out of the moneys allocated, a sum of \$133 million will be utilised to transport the hampers to the communities and, in putting together the hampers, it will be non-perishable food items that we will focus on.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, Ms. Singh-Lewis...

**Mr. Shuman:** Mr. Chairman, I do not think...

**Mr. Chairman:** Sorry, Hon. Deputy Speaker, go ahead.

**Mr. Shuman:** Mr. Chairman, I do not think the Hon. Prime Minister answered the question for line items 6265 and 6294, as to how much of that money will be spent in Indigenous communities for transport or are we to expect that the entire coast will benefit from that transport cost?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** For the transportation of hampers to the hinterland communities, we will be utilising local transportation. Some of that money, if not all, will be spent on hiring transportation within the regions where we have to deliver the hampers. We have done it before. We worked through the regions and the Toshaos and we hired local transportation.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Ms. Singh-Lewis, you may have the floor.

**Ms. Singh-Lewis:** Line item 6292 – Dietary and 6294 – Other: I know that the Hon. Prime Minister is new to this, so I

am asking if he could please layover the criteria used to approve the hamper applications.

**Mr. Chairman:** I will take two final questions – one from Mr. Mahipaul and one from the Hon. Member, Mr. Figueira. I think Ms. Singh-Lewis has the floor. She wants to follow-up.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** The information will be provided, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Mr. Chairman, I yield to Mr. Figueira.

**Mr. Figueira:** With regard to line items 6292, Dietary and 6293, Refreshments and Meals, could the Hon. Prime Minister indicate, with the spending of this sum so that the regions could benefit, would the items be procured from each individual region as a means to develop the economy of those regions?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** I wish to assure the Hon. Member that, in the past, that was done and there is no reason why we would not do it this time around.

*Programme: 022 – Disaster Preparedness, Response and Management – \$3,006,344,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Capital Estimates**

**Programme: 022 – Disaster Preparedness, Response and Management – \$16,417,000**

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Project code 2606400 – Civil Defence Commission:

“Provision for building, furniture and equipment - Rollover: \$1.124 million...”

What is the rollover for, and which building does this cater for?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** To the Hon. Member, the rollover is for two projects: Region 9 Multipurpose Centre and the other project is the headquarters of the CDC.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Follow-up question: The rollover is \$1.124 million; the remainder of the money is for the provision of a new building, I am assuming.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** It is \$11 million and not \$1.124 million.

**An Hon. Member:** *(Inaudible).*

**Mr. Mahipaul:** It is not my fault that it is written differently here.

Mr. Chairman, my book is showing \$1.124 million.

**An Hon. Member:** *(Inaudible).*

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Well who printed it?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, please.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Mr. Chairman, I am seeking clarity because my book states that the rollover is \$1.124 million and the sum allocated is \$16 million, so I am seeking to know...

**Mr. Chairman:** I am reading the same thing too. It states:

“Provision for building, furniture and equipment – Rollover: \$1.124M (Previously reflected...)”

This is just a part of... Anyway, Hon. Prime Minister, go ahead.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** The rollover that the Hon. Member is talking about is for the Regional Warehouse at Lethem and the CDC expansion.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** A follow-up: If I am correct, is the Hon. Prime Minister saying to us that the \$1.124 million is accurate and, if so, what is the remainder of the money for?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** Hon. Member, how much money are you questioning here?

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Mr. Chairman, with your permission, the sum allocated for 2020 is \$16,417,000. In the Legend, we are seeing that the rollover sum is \$1.124 million. Hon. Prime Minister, I am, therefore, asking, when you minus the two, what is the difference for?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** There is a total here for furniture and equipment included in the sum that you are questioning. We will have the rollover from the building and the furniture and equipment to complete the project.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** My final question on the same project code: Could the Prime Minister please provide to this Committee, in writing, the furniture and equipment that will be purchased under this project code with the equivalent costs?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** The list includes conference chairs, conference tables, laptops and other office equipment. The list is here.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I asked for the list to be laid over. Could the Prime Minister please commit to laying it over to this honourable Committee?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** I have no problem with laying over the list for the Hon. Member as requested.

*Programme: 022 – Disaster Preparedness, Response and Management – \$16,417,000 agreed to and ordered to stands part of the Estimates.*

3.57 p.m.

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 023 – Power Generation – \$1,018,660,000**

**Mr. Patterson:** All my questions will refer to line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, since it is the only line item for which any sum was allocated. Just to save time, I would not repeat which line item I am speaking to.

Mr. Prime Minister, the first question, Sir: During the Budget debate, the Junior Minister of Public Works reported that Linden Mining Enterprise (LINMINE) needed over \$900 million to address its shortfall. I notice that you have allocated here \$688 million only, which leaves a shortfall of almost \$120 million. Could you explain, if the Junior Minister is right, why the utility was not given the correct funds?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** Mr. Chairman, I wish to remind the Hon. Member that it is my remit to deal with the last part of the year only, which is October, November and December, 2020.

**Mr. Patterson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Prime Minister. I am very well aware that your remit is to deal with the last part of the year. I will repeat my question. The Junior Minister said that LINMINE needed over \$900 million. He made reference that we did not even look after supporters, *et cetera* – you could look back at the tape, which meant that they needed money from now until the end of the year. I am asking, Sir, is he correct? Was he misleading this House? If he was not, why is there a shortfall? Like he said to us, could I say to the people of Linden that they could expect power failures because either the Junior Minister is right or you are deliberately underfunding Linden?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** Mr. Chairman, it is quite obvious to the Hon. Member that what he is commenting on falls

under the Ministry of Public Works, which was formerly known as the Ministry of Public Infrastructure.

**Mr. Patterson:** Sir, the sums allocated under the former Ministry of Public Infrastructure are up to the end of September. I am saying that to fund LINMINE for the next three months, versus what the Junior Minister got up here and said and you did not correct him, it is on the record in the *Hansard*, LINMINE needs \$900 million. There is a \$120 million shortfall. What I am asking is... it is either that the Junior Minister was misleading the entire House or there is not enough money allocated.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Mr. Patterson?

**Mr. Patterson:** Yes.

**Mr. Chairman:** I think the entire Committee of Supply heard this same question stated three times and twice the answer was that, under the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, some was accounted for. If I heard the Prime Minister correctly, this sum of over \$600 million caters for October to December. Hon. Prime Minister, I trust I did not hear wrong.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** Mr. Chairman, our responsibility is to cater for energy. That was mentioned and we will cater for it for until the end of the year. The aspects pertaining to the operation and expenditure of the company were not catered for by my Ministry.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much, Hon. Prime Minister. I heard that the third time. Thank you.

**Mr. Patterson:** Mr. Chairman, I just want to point out to this Committee...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Mr. Patterson, do you know that you have to get the Chairman’s attention and permission? You are doing it all in one. You did not give the Chair a chance to respond to you. Hon. Member Mr. Patterson, please proceed.

**Mr. Patterson:** Mr. Chairman, it is not a question; it is a statement. I make this statement because...I am addressing you, Mr. Chairman.

**Bishop Edghill:** Mr. Chairman, I rise on a Point of Order.

**Mr. Patterson:** I will not... Mr. Chairman, he cannot have Point of Order...

**Bishop Edghill:** Standing Order 40...

**Mr. Patterson:** The ruling in this House is...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Public Works, what is the Point of Order?

**Mr. Patterson:** Mr. Chairman, your ruling is that if the Member is on his/her feet and he/she does not say...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Mr. Patterson, please, I am addressing the Hon. Minister of Public Works. I am asking him what is the Point of Order, similar to what I had asked you.

**Bishop Edghill:** Mr. Chairman, we are in Committee of Supply. Members answering questions should be answering based on a question coming from a line item and Members are not allowed to make statements.

**Mr. Patterson:** What is the Point of Order, Sir?

**Bishop Edghill:** There is a procedure in this House for when people would like to make statements. Sir. I am just bringing that to your attention.

**Mr. Patterson:** Mr. Chairman, may I remind you that you had previously ruled...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Mr. Patterson, it is total disrespect to the Chairman for the Chairman to be addressing a Member and you are talking at the same time. Please, I urge you, allow me to conclude with the Hon. Minister of Public Works on his Point of Order. Are you finished, Hon. Minister of Public Works?

**Bishop Edghill:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much. Hon. Minister of Public Works, I do acknowledge that it is a Point of Order. However, I still feel that the Hon. Member, if he needs some clarifications, and I have been very lenient with respect to the number of questions, I will ask the Prime Minister one more time to provide an answer.

Hon. Member Mr. Patterson, do you want to restate?

**Mr. Patterson:** Mr. Chairman, you said the entire... I have restated my question. I am saying, Sir, the Constitution requires one to lay before the House, as we had said this morning, what moneys would spent beforehand. That has not been done. I am saying that there is a difference between what was stated publicly in the *Hansard* and what is being paid. I am now being told and this Committee is now being told, without any evidence, that the sums were paid before. There is no evidence before this House.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Mr. Patterson, I do not think I heard anyone saying sums had been paid before. He said it is addressed under that head. When we come to that, we could deal with it further. The Prime Minister acknowledged that he is dealing with October to December, under this particular subvention item. Thank you.

I have the Hon. Member, Mr. Shuman, Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Shuman:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the Hon. Prime Minister, under line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, which is the only line item that reflects any figure, as to how much... We know that hinterland electrification was previously housed or, maybe, is still housed under the Ministry of Public Works. My understanding is that it is now being transferred to the office of the Prime Minister. I would like to ask the Hon. Prime Minister how much of that money will be used to provide electrification for the hinterland communities? Thank you.

**Brigadier (Ret'd) Phillips:** Mr. Chairman, permit me to advise the Hon. Member that this is Current Expenditure. If you are talking about providing electricity in terms of buying generators and putting in distribution systems, that will come under Capital Expenditure. This is just the cost associated with keeping the generators going and keeping the lights on.

**Mr. Patterson:** Mr. Chairman, I hope you do not mislead the Prime Minister; he is new. Within this sum, capital works, there is a subvention to an agency.

Anyway, Sir, I will ask it in a different question. For Kwakwani Utilities Inc. (KUI), there is \$147,347,000. Could the Hon. Prime Minister say to this House how much power... is this allocation for 24-hour electricity for the utility? Are these moneys adequate to buy new filters for the water system, since there is need new water system? Is this sum allocated for payment of the licence fees and the other stuff that would be needed for the television stations? Will this sum cater for all the current employees? Finally, has anyone been hired or relieved of duties from 2<sup>nd</sup> August onwards?

**Brigadier (Ret'd) Phillips:** Mr. Chairman, again, to the Hon. Member, the simple answer is yes. We are only providing the services for the last three months of 2020.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much, Hon. Prime Minister. Hon. Deputy Speaker, I had acknowledged. Did you give way to the Hon. Member, Mr. Patterson?

**Mr. Shuman:** Mr. Chairman, my apologies. There seems to be a massive lag in the system. Maybe I need to rephrase the

question for the Hon. Prime Minister. Considering the quantum which is reflected on this page, the Hon. Prime Minister should be informed that hinterland communities also have power generation that needs to be maintained. I will put the question to the Hon. Prime Minister again. How much of this money, within the Budget, will be allocated to maintaining electrification in the hinterland? Thank you.

4.12 p.m.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** If I am to understand the Hon. Member, what is catered for here are the utilities that fall under the Hinterland Electrification Company Incorporated (HECI). The utilities that may fall under a village are the responsibility of the village, as I speak now.

**Mr. Chairman:** Is the Hon. Deputy Speaker still on the floor?

**Mr. Shuman:** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Chairman:** Go ahead, Sir.

**Mr. Shuman:** I just want a point of clarity from the Hon. Prime Minister. Is the Hon. Prime Minister saying that, of this \$1,018,660,000 allocated from now to the end of the year, zero of that will be spent in Indigenous communities? Did I hear that correctly, Sir?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** Again, for clarity, let me read out the list that we will utilise the money to provide electricity: Mahdia Power & Light Company Incorporated (MPL), Lethem Power & Light Company Incorporated (LMPC), Kwakwani Utilities Incorporated (KUI), Matthew’s Ridge Power & Light Company Incorporated (MRPL), Port Kaituma Power & Light Company Incorporated, Linden Electricity Company Incorporated (LECI), Moruca Power & Light Company and Mabaruma Power & Light Company Incorporated. There is a sum there for the Hinterland Electrification Company Incorporated; a small sum for them to use as they see fit.

**Mr. Patterson:** Could the Hon. Prime Minister state to this Committee with relation to Lethem, Mabaruma, Mahdia and Port Kaituma – in that order – how many hours of electricity they get and how many hours of electricity this allocation caters for in the last half of the year?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** Perhaps, could you help me, again, with the names of the locations.

**Mr. Patterson:** The locations from the top are: Lethem, Mabaruma, Mahdia and Port Kaituma.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** Port Kaituma gets 18 hours, and the plan is to go to 24 hours during the last quarter. Mabaruma gets 19 hours and, again, the plan is to go to 24 during the last quarter. Kwakwani, Lethem and Mahdia get 24 hours of electricity.

*Programme: 023 – Power Generation – \$ 1,018,660,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 023 – Power Generation – \$ 2,068,216,000**

**Mr. Patterson:** Project code 2606700 – Hinterland Electrification: It states \$17,250,000 for the provision of power supply for hinterland electrification. Could the Hon. Prime Minister provide some clarity as to where is the power going to be supplied and how it is going to be supplied?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** To the Hon. Member, Matthew’s Ridge is in need of a new generator and there are some cable works to be done at Lethem. That is the extent to where the money will be used.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Mr. Holder...

**Mr. Holder:** Mr. Chairman, I yield to Mr. Patterson.

**Mr. Patterson:** I was going on to project code 2606800, Power Utility Upgrade Programme, but if anyone has any questions for the officers on project code 2606700, Hinterland Electrification, I will yield to save time so that we do not have to go and come back. Sir, I will yield to Mr. Holder because he would like the same officer to answer.

**Mr. Holder:** This project is a total cost of \$17,250,000. Could the Hon. Minister say what is the specific budgeted allocation for the generator? That is one. What is the capacity of the generator?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** The capacity is 175 kilowatts (KW) and the money allocated is \$15 million.

**Mr. Holder:** Under this project code, benefits were listed as “improved generation and distribution” and “improved operational efficiency”. Could the Hon. Minister say what is the current operational efficiency and what is the specific target set out to be achieved by completing this project?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** I would say, the fact that there is one generator down and one running, there is a 50% efficiency. When we buy the next generator, that will carry the efficiency up.

**Mr. Chairman:** I will have the Hon. Member Hastings-Williams, if it is on this same project code 2606700. If not, I will have to take Mr. Patterson on another project code.

**Ms. Hastings-Williams:** Under this same project code 2606700, are there any moneys allocated for the works to be completed on the generator at Kamarang?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** The generator at Kamarang does not fall under the HECI. I understand that it falls under the regional administration.

**Ms. Hastings-Williams:** I would now like to ask on project code 2610000 – Solar System Project.

**Mr. Chairman:** Before you go there, let me take Mr. Patterson who was holding before you.

**Mr. Patterson:** Sir, I am moving on. Mr. Shuman, do you want to ask on the same project code? Sir, somebody wants to ask on the same project code.

**Mr. Shuman:** Like Mr. Patterson said, I think during the *Budget 2020* presentation, which was so eloquently articulated, I recall there was a promise of 25,000 solar panels. My understanding is that we are dealing with *Budget 2020* and considering that it comes under project code 2606700, Hinterland Electrification, I only see \$17,250,000 here and I hear nothing about the hinterland communities. I want to ask the Hon. Prime Minister to direct me to where, within this Budget or within the last two items we discussed, we could find the money allocated for the 25,000 solar panels.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** My understanding is that the solar panels are coming from India as a form of aid for Guyana, so it is catered for.

**Mr. Patterson:** Project code 2606800 – Power Utility Upgrade Programme: It is a programme funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the European Union (EU) and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB). There is a sum of \$1,445,676,000 to be expended for the rest of the year. I first would like to ask the Prime Minister if this is measured work, and will this amount of money be expended? How can you possibly expend this amount of money in the final three months of the year?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** Hon. Member, this sum comprises the total for the work to be completed by the end of 2020 – the whole year.

**Mr. Patterson:** A follow-up: Obviously it is self-explanatory that the money in the Budget is to be spent to the end of the year. Thank you for making the most obvious, obvious, Prime Minister. I am asking you could disaggregate the total and explain to us how you are going to disburse and spend. What are the measured works for the rest of the year? Could you disaggregate the different components? In order to move forward, Mr. Prime Minister, I will accept a written answer. All I need from you, at the moment, is the confirmation that the moneys here are for lots A, B, C and all the components, and that none of the components are stalled.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** The sum is for the completion of the network. Here I am speaking about lots A, B and C.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, I will now put the question.

**Mr. Patterson:** Mr. Chairman, you said that we must sit until you acknowledge. I would like to go straight on to project code 2610000, Solar System Project. Unless somebody else has a question on the Power Utility Upgrade Programme or anything else, I would like to go there.

4.27 p.m.

**Mr. Chairman:** Could you go ahead with yours please? We are going to take them as they stand because this going and coming... Whoever is on the floor, I will take them. Go ahead Mr. Patterson.

**Mr. Ramjattan:** I think Mr. Patterson is yielding. In relation to Project Code 2606900, Sustainable Energy Programme, a sum of \$225 million will be spent. I understand from the capital project profile that there is the construction of a hydro power scheme at Kato as number two and, as number one, there is a set of photovoltaic systems for a number of places. Could the Hon. Prime Minister indicate, disaggregate, how much will be spent out of that \$225 million on Kato and how much will be spent on the individualised photovoltaic projects that are listed in capital on page 34? If he cannot do it now, I would be pleased if he can do it in writing.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** Hon. Member, the photovoltaic system is \$272.5 million and for Kato \$71.9 million.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, I have Mr. Henry and Ms. Dawn Hastings-Williams.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** The additional information is that \$114 million was already spent for the year.

**Mr. Patterson:** Sorry, Mr. Chairman, I do understand that the Prime Minister is new at this and we do not want to pressure him. However, when I spoke earlier about Linden, and you admonished me, the Prime Minister made it very clear that he is only speaking about the last three months. The Prime Minister cannot say it is for the rest of the year. Mr. Prime Minister, we understand, and my Colleague has offered to take a layover. Maybe you can accept that offer.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, Mr. Patterson, you know I would have acknowledged you. I waited but I did not hear anything. I called on Hon. Members Mr. Henry and then Ms. Dawn-Hastings and then you appeared. Please let us get some order. The time is going, and we are now two hours behind. Hon. Prime Minister, would you answer the Hon. Member, Mr. Patterson, please.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** For the purpose of clarity, I will repeat again. The total was \$339 million. We already spent \$114 million for the year and we have \$225 million remaining.

**Mr. Henry:** I notice here that we have project code 2610000, Solar System Project, to the tune of \$218 million: “Provision for solar systems - INDIA.” Is it the same project for the 25,000 solar systems or is it something different? If it is something different, I still wish to ask what will be the output of each of those 25,000 systems that you say are coming from some sort of grant or gift from India?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** I will ask the Hon. Member to please repeat the question.

**Mr. Henry:** Let us go back to Project Code 2610000, Solar System Project. I am asking two questions in one. Is this for the same 25,000 systems that are supposed to be distributed in the hinterland or is it something different? If it is for the same 25,000 systems, what will be the output? The last set of solar systems were at minimal output. Only two weak bulbs were lighted with every unit. What would be the output this time? Thank you.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** Hon. Member, this is a 100-watt system and it will, definitely, run more than the two bulbs that you had the last time. It is an upgrade from what you had before.

**Ms. Hastings-Williams:** A follow up: Project Code 2610000 – Solar System Project: If it is 25,000 and more, could the

Hon. Prime Minister be kind enough to lay down the breakdown of the number of communities that will benefit from this project as per region, from Regions 1 to 10?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** To the Hon. Member, based on our plan, we have 200 communities that will benefit from this project. We will work with all of the communities, the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs and everyone to ensure that we deliver in keeping with the project profile.

**Mr. Holder:** Project Code 2606900 – Sustainable Energy Programme: The description is ‘Procurement of photovoltaic system to several areas’. I see that there is an amount of \$225 million being budgeted. My question is: How much of this money will be spent in Akawini, Bethany and Kabakuburi? I would like to have specific details on the project, whether it is photovoltaic (PV) systems for individual households or whether it is for the health outposts, schools or other government buildings. Thank you.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** These systems listed are for community buildings and it was clearly mentioned in my presentation. Perhaps, if you were there, you would have heard me explain it.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much, Hon. Prime Minister. I have the Hon. Member, the Deputy Speaker, Mr. Shuman, and the Hon. Member, Mr. Patterson, in my line-up.

**Mr. Shuman:** Referring to the very same project code 2606900, Sustainable Energy Programme, based on 25,000 systems, it is exactly \$8,200 per solar panel. If one were to work it out it would be, roughly, \$1,090,000 per community. I would like the Hon. Prime Minister to provide the kind of clarity that, maybe, would help me to understand what component of that is for storage, what component of that is for transporting this equipment to communities, and what component of that is for acquisition. I have not seen that document. I do not know if the Hon. Prime Minister would be so kind as to lay that over. Thank you.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** I wish to inform the Hon. Member that this sum is solely for the procurement of the equipment. The other sum pertaining to what you are questioning will be catered for in the next budget. You are aware that a next budget will be available in three to four months’ time.

**Mr. Patterson:** Project code 2610100 – Small Hydro Projects: Sir, I refer to the capital in Volume 3. There are four items listed there. I will not read them. I would like the Hon.

Prime Minister to say what will be done with \$10 million for the four items that are listed in the capital project profile.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** I would ask the Hon. Member to kindly repeat his question. [*Inaudible*] If the Hon. Member is talking about the \$10 million, it is to set up the project unit.

**Mr. Chairman:** We have exhaustive questions on this particular programme.

*Programme: 023 – Power Generation - \$2,068,217, 000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 024 – Telecommunications and Innovations - \$478,143,000**

*4.42 p.m.*

**Ms. Flue-Bess:** I have observed, under line item 6116, Contracted Employees, that there are six employees. What would be their designations and their emoluments?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** I would ask the Hon. Member to please repeat the question loud enough so that I can hear.

**Ms. Flue-Bess:** Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I see there is a total of six new employees. What would be their designations and emoluments?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** These employees fall under the Industry and Innovation Unit. Basically, they are Education Officers, Outreach Officers, Systems Development Officer, Coordinator of National Events, Coordinator of Outreach Services, and Business Analysts. In relation to salaries, it will range from just under \$250,000 to \$195,000 at the lowest level.

**Ms. Ferguson:** I turn our attention to line item 6294, Other. I note that, for the previous years, 2018 and 2019, there were no appropriations, but for 2020 there is \$8 million. Could the Hon. Member say to us what constitutes Other?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** Hon. Member, if we are looking at the same document, there is nothing under line item 6294.

**Ms. Ferguson:** Sorry, Hon. Member. The line item is 6284 and not 6294. There is \$8 million.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** If we are talking about line item 6284, the allocation will cater for consultancy for the e-Commerce and Data Protection Bill, which was mentioned in my presentation to this House, and for the Information and

Communications Technology (ICT) National Strategic Plan. Basically, it is for consultancy services.

**Ms. Philadelphia:** A follow-up on the question posted by Hon. Member Flue-Bess under line item 6116: Could the Prime Minister please give us a breakdown as to the contracted employees he spoke of before, bearing in mind that the cost attached to this line item is \$5,298,000?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** Hon. Member, if you are going to pay a basic salary to a contracted employee, you will have to factor in gratuity payments. The \$5,298,000 will account for everything, allowances, *et cetera*.

**Mr. Henry:** Line item 6282 — Equipment Maintenance: Most of the communities in Region 9 have WiFi and, because it is a new technology there, it would need servicing every now and then. I am asking if this is the head that will be used to maintain those internet systems in the hinterland because, currently, I know that, at least, Shulinab does not have WiFi because it is down.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** I need to be guided. Which charter of account are you talking about, Hon. Member?

**Mr. Henry:** The line item is 6282, Equipment Maintenance.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** The National Data Management Authority (NDMA) is responsible for those kinds of maintenance, and they will be conducting the maintenance. That will not be reflected here in the Estimates.

**Mr. Figueira:** Line item 6291 – National and Other Events: Could the Hon. Prime Minister inform this House what are the events that will be catered for in this COVID-19 environment, in the remaining months?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** I wish to advise the Hon. Member that, yes, we are in COVID-19, but the work will not stop. A lot of things will be done virtually. There are hack-a-thons that can be done virtually, there are seminars that can be done virtually, and other discussions. They all carry a cost, so we have to provide for them.

**Mr. Figueira:** A follow-up, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Mr. Figueira, you have to allow me to acknowledge the Prime Minister’s conclusion and then recognise you.

**Mr. Figueira:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Hon. Prime Minister, I am very much aware of what can be done in this COVID-19 environment.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** I wish to correct the Hon. Member, it is, ‘What is being done’.

**Mr. Chairman:** I just want to say, Hon. Members, please address the Chair, not across the floor, when you are speaking. Hon. Member Figueira, does that complete your question?

**Mr. Figueira:** No, Sir. If I can continue, Hon. Prime Minister, you have not yet informed...

**Mr. Chairman:** No, Sir. You have to say ‘Hon. Chairman, can I ask the Prime Minister’. Any direct talk is not allowed when we get a response like that from the Prime Minister.

**Mr. Figueira:** Okay, Mr. Chairman. Could the Hon. Prime Minister inform the House, what are the events that will be hosted in the remaining months, not what could be hosted?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** I wish to inform that there are a number of activities planned for the rest of the year. For example, in November, there will be an online hack-a-thon, and Region 10 will be included. There is, also in November, the public comment period and a national consultation on the legislation that we want to put forward for the protection of ICT.

*Programme: 024 – Telecommunications and Innovation - \$478,143,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 024 - Telecommunications and Innovation - \$55,620,000**

*Programme: 024 - Telecommunications and Innovation - \$55,620,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Mr. Chairman:** I do not know if we have to give the Prime Minister an opportunity to change staff.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 025 - Government Information and Communication Services - \$194,901,000**

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Under line item 6221, I see a budgeted sum of \$50,000. I see no staff under this programme, so I am wondering if this is to buy drugs and medical supplies for the Hon. Member, Mr. Kwame McCoy.

4.57 p.m.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** This miniscule sum is for drugs for a unit that forms part of the Office of the Prime Minister. The unit is under the control of the Minister in the Ministry, the Hon. Minister, Mr. McCoy.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Line item 6224 – Print and Non-Print Materials: Could the Hon. Minister please say what is it that will be needed for print and non-print?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** Again, to the Hon. Member, we are setting up the secretariat. As I mentioned before, the unit is headed by the Hon. Minister, Mr. McCoy, and it is being established. These are expenses related to the stationary supplies for that unit.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** I know that there is zero allocation for line items 6111 to 6117. Could the Hon. Minister say how many persons he intends to employ to work in this programme?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** There is a reason why there is no figure there, because we are now working on establishing the structure. Therefore, there is no figure at this moment.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** I did ask how many employees are intended to be employed. Nonetheless, line item 6241, Rental of Buildings, which buildings are we talking about?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** Again, to the Hon. Member, the work of this unit, which is under construction... We envisage that it would not be a Georgetown-bound unit. This unit will be working throughout Guyana. In the first instance, we will be looking at offices in Regions 5 and 6.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: There is a sum of \$182,601,000. If I may turn to page 596, it specifies that the sum of \$182,601,000 is for the Department of Public Information (DPI) and the National Communications Network (NCN). I see NCN with an amount of \$104,100,000 and under Programme: 021 – Prime Minister’s Secretariat, the Hon. Prime Minister indicated that \$140,247,000 was money already spent up to September. The APNU/AFC for nine months, excluding August and September, spent \$140,247,000 and for three months, the current Government is requesting \$104,100,000. Is the Government preparing for early elections?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** The figure would be utilised to cover salaries and the payment for a satellite costing \$5 million per month.

**Dr. Westford:** Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: I just heard that some of these subventions are for NCN. Sir, could the Hon. Prime Minister say or give us a list of the agencies that owe NCN, since I see that we are giving NCN more money? What moneys do agencies have outstanding? How many agencies are they? Which are those agencies that owe NCN? What mechanisms are being put in place to recoup those funds?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** To answer the question posed by the Hon. Member, \$114 million is owed by 21 agencies. I have the list here. It has the Guyana Learning Channel...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Prime Minister, maybe you can lay it over?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** A Partnership for National Unity – \$14.9 million. Should I go on, Mr. Chairman?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Prime Minister, you can lay it over, please.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Mr. Chairman, we on this side are answering the questions. If the Hon. Member wishes to answer the question, he has a right to do so. This is being listened to by the public.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** On which Standing Order is the Hon. Member standing.

**Ms. Teixeira:** When these things are distributed, the public does not see it.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, she has a right to so do. I should not have interrupted.

**Ms. Teixeira:** I resent us being restricted.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much, Hon. Prime Minister, you may proceed, Sir.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** Mr. Chairman, I am guided here...

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Mr. Chairman...

**Mr. Chairman:** The Hon. Prime Minister is on the floor, Sir.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** My apologies.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** If I may be guided here. You said I may proceed but I am unaware as to proceed with what. Should I continue to read the list?

**Mr. Chairman:** You may proceed to provide the answer orally.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** Should I read the entire list?

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, Sir.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** The Guyana Telephone and Telegraph Company Limited (GT&T) – \$1 million; Edward B. Beharry and Company – \$1 million; distance education – the National Center of Educational Resource Development (NCERD) – \$1 million; STARCOM Network Incorporated (SNI) Caribbean Group – \$1.1 million; the Guyana Revenue Authority – \$1.1 million; the Guyana Power and Light Incorporated (GPL) – \$1.16 million; the Central Assembly of God – \$1.17 million; Freelancer Advertising Agency – \$1.35 million; the Guyana Sugar Corporation (GuySuCo) – \$1.2 million; Ministry of Education – \$1.38 million; the Guyana Lottery Company – \$1.4 million; ES Advertising – \$1.4 million... Should I go on, Mr. Chairman?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Prime Minister, it is your answer. If you choose to decide to curtail a layover, please indicate.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is because of the mask I am wearing.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Line item 6284 – Other: Could the Hon. Prime Minister give a breakdown of the line item?

**Mr. Chairman:** Would you like a similar breakdown as to what he was reading just now?

**Mr. Mahipaul:** I would appreciate it if he can lay it over.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** Hon. Member, the \$2 million would cater for the hiring of consultants and an advisor to support the work of the Minister, Mr. McCoy, in the execution of his duties.

**Ms. Fernandes:** The Hon. Prime Minister was just reading a list of companies that owed moneys to NCN. Could I ask the Hon. Prime Minister, whether he has done an age analysis on the moneys owed and from what period those moneys were owed.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** To the Hon. Member, no. However, as I plan to lay it over, we can have a column reflecting the time.

*Programme: 025 – Government Information and Communication Services – \$194,901,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 025 – Government Information and Communication Services – \$26,600,000**

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Project code 1219300 – Buildings - provision for washroom – \$1.6 million: Could the Hon. Minister say which washroom and for which building?

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** To the Hon. Member, it is in keeping with our policy to provide, in a responsible manner, for all of our workers, including our females. This money will be utilised to construct a washroom for the female employees.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** I did hear the Hon. Prime Minister say ‘to construct a washroom’ but he did not answer the question as to which building it will be allocated. I noticed in the Legend it states the project entails provision for a washroom, indicating, in my humble estimation, that there is an existing washroom that requires rehabilitation. I am asking which washroom, in which compound, is the sum of \$1.6 million to be spent?

*5.12 p.m.*

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** Let me apologise to the Hon. Member, it is not construction, but it is for the rehabilitation of the female washroom at the Department of Public Information complex.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Follow-up: I know that this programme currently caters for the Hon Junior Minister, as was indicated by the Hon. Prime Minister. Will he be using that washroom or a separate one?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, I do not think that the building I heard might be the building that the Ministers occupy. Nevertheless, let me ask the Prime Minister to answer.

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** I already answered the question. I am quite certain the Hon. Member can recall my answer.

*Programme: 025 – Government Information and Communication Services – \$26,600,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

*Assembly resumed.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I have the good news to relay. I did, a short time ago, receive, officially, my Certificate of Clearance from the Executive Secretariat of the National COVID-19 Task Force. As such, I will endeavour to join you after the suspension in person.

*Sitting suspended at 5.15 p.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 6.27 p.m.*

*Assembly in Committee of Supply.*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, at 6.30 p.m., we are running one and a half hours behind. While it has been a challenge to preside virtually, I trust that, being here today, we would accelerate the process and use our time more efficiently. Without further ado, let me turn to the Ministry of Legal Affairs.

**Agency: 52 Ministry of Legal Affairs**

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 521 – Policy Development and Administration – \$353,522,000**

**Mr. Forde:** Line item 6111 – Administrative: I observed that the total wages and salaries increased from \$11,992,000 to \$27,986,000, which is an increase of \$15,994,000. Could the Hon Minister explain what accounts for this increase? Were persons employed? If so, how many, their names, the dates when they were employed and their designation?

**Mr. Nandlall:** I am advised that this increase is due to the payment of salaries for the appointment of two staff and four other officers from programme two. I am told that programmes one and two would be merged from October. The designations of the staff are Permanent Secretary – \$591,402; Deputy Permanent Secretary – \$346,818; Principal Assistant Secretary (PAS) Finance and Principal Assistant Secretary General both at \$225,575; and Accountant and Administrative Assistant both at – \$91,997. All these were hired before August of this year.

**Mr. Forde:** Line item 6111 – Administrative: I observed also that there was an increase in the employment complement by two persons. Who are the two persons? What are their designations?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, when you say who, we are not going to give names.

**Mr. Nandlall:** It is the same two designations, namely, Permanent Secretary and Deputy Permanent Secretary.

**Mr. Forde:** Would it be correct to say that the increase in salary for this line item by \$9,251,000 is with respect to the Permanent Secretary and Deputy Permanent Secretary?

**Mr. Nandlall:** I did not get that; could you repeat that for me.

**Mr. Forde:** When one looks at line item 6111 – Administrative, the Revised Budget for 2019 is \$7,798,000 and the Budget for 2020 is \$17,049,000, an increase of \$9,251,000.

**Mr. Nandlall:** If you look at the staffing details, you will see an increase from two to four.

**Mr. Forde:** Yes. I am asking if that is related to the Permanent Secretary and Deputy Permanent Secretary.

**Mr. Nandlall:** Yes, that is what I am advised.

**Mr. Forde:** Line item 6112 – Senior Technical: In 2019, the budgeted allocation was \$1,613,000 and it increased to \$1,742,000. Could the Minister explain this increase?

**Mr. Nandlall:** It is the annual salary increase that would have been paid to public servants last year, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, if you have a question, could you please direct it to the Chairman.

**Mr. Forde:** Line item 6113 – Other Technical and Craft Skilled: I observed that there is no employee listed, but there is an allocation of \$300,000. Could the Minister explain this, please?

**Mr. Nandlall:** The increase is for payment of salaries from October. This is due to the merging of programmes one and two. The staff involved is the Assistant Accountant.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Attorney General (AG), he is saying that there is no employee listed in the establishment there, so, 300 to zero is infinity. Is this sum a back pay for a previous employee or something?

**Mr. Nandlall:** Sir, I am told that there is a merger of two programmes from October of this year and that accounts for some duplicity that may appear on the current record. There is an addendum explaining such.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Attorney General, before the Hon. Member uses one of his five questions, the Hon. Member is making the point that the Ministry is paying 300 to zero with

no employee. If it is to pay somebody that is under another programme one would expect it to be allocated under that programme.

**Mr. Nandlall:** If you look at XXV, at the beginning of the Budget document, there is an explanation of the merger – Agency 52.

**Mr. Forde:** With the greatest of respect to my Learned Hon. Attorney General, that cannot explain the allocation of \$300,000 with respect to where there is no employee. I would ask the Hon. Attorney General to provide a written explanation for this, please, so that we can move along.

**Mr. Nandlall:** Sir, I am told, and I will reiterate, that the same staff who had been paid from January to October will now be paid under a different programme from October to December. That is the explanation that the technical staff has given me, Sir. It is the same person.

6.39 p.m.

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. Forde, if that is the explanation he has, you cannot bagger him to provide another. You may not like it, but that is his explanation.

**Mr. Forde:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. I understand the explanation, but I think it is unacceptable. In relation to line item 6114, Clerical and Office Support, there is an increase from \$923,000 to \$5,642,000 – an increase of \$4,719,000. Could the Hon. Minister explain this increase in view of the fact that no additional staff were employed? If a new person was employed, please indicate the designation and the date from which that person was employed.

**Mr. Nandlall:** There is no new employment. The increase is for payment of salaries from October which was due to the merger of programmes one and two. The staff involved are five Accounts Clerk II, three Accounts Clerk III, five Typist Clerks, one Administrative Assistant, one Storekeeper, one Stores Clerk, one Librarian and four Office Assistants. I have the salaries for them.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Attorney General, are you saying this is a misprint in the Budget?

**Mr. Nandlall:** What is it, Sir?

**Mr. Chairman:** Is it a misprint? It has here one member of staff and you have listed more than one.

**Mr. Nandlall:** Sir, I am told that you have to look at programme one and programme two together.

**Mr. Forde:** We could look at all the programmes one and two at pages XXV and XXVI, but that does not provide an answer stated under the staffing detail.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, Mr. Forde, again I would say, if that is the explanation which the Hon. Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs gave, then that is the explanation.

I just want to say, in some Parliaments when Ministers do not want to answer a question, the standard convention is that they will say that it will cost too much.

**Mr. Forde:** Mr. Chairman, thank you for allowing me to continue. Again, for the purpose of the record, I wish to highlight that this is unacceptable and inaccurate.

Line item 6115 – Semi-Skilled Operates and Unskilled: There is an increase from \$1,658,000 to \$2,945,000 – an increase of \$1,287,000. Could the Hon. Minister explain this increase in view of the fact that, should no additional staff be employed?

**Mr. Nandlall:** The explanation is that the increase is for payment of salaries from October which is due to the merger of programmes one and two. The staff that are involved are four Cleaners and three Drivers.

**Mr. Forde:** Again, the explanation is unacceptable. In relation to line item 6116, Contracted Employees, there is no employee but there is an allocation of \$308,000. Could the Hon. Minister explain this?

**Mr. Nandlall:** The increase is for payment of salaries from October which is due to the merger of programmes one and two. The staff involved is one Telephonist.

**Mr. Forde:** We see where this is heading, and this is probably the type of management that this organisation is going to receive.

**Mr. Nandlall:** Mr. Basil Williams was managing it.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, order. Hon. Mr. Forde, during the consideration of the Estimates we ask questions pertaining to the Estimates.

**Mr. Forde:** My statement pertains to this here. In relation to line item 6131, Other Direct Labour Costs, there is an increase from \$466,000 to \$998,000.

**Bishop Edghill:** I would like to be of some assistance to the Committee as it relates to the question.

**Mr. Chairman:** Could you give the assistance to the Hon. Attorney General and then he could talk to the Committee, please.

**Bishop Edghill:** May I proceed?

**Mr. Chairman:** No, Sir. If you want a few moments to consult with the Attorney General and his staff so that, at least, the answer would be in unison. Hon. Members give them a few minutes to consult. Probably, the Hon. Minister of Public Works have had the experience in that Ministry.

**Mr. Nandlall:** I am told that this is another one that is caught by the merger.

**Mr. Forde:** Again, I find the explanation unacceptable. Line item 6281 – Security Services: Could the Hon. Minister disclose to the Committee the security firms that were engaged, the contracted sum and the date when those contracts were entered into?

**Mr. Nandlall:** The payment was made from January to September. The other budgeted sum is from October to December.

**Mr. Forde:** The other part of the question is: Which were the firms that were contracted and the dates when those contracts were entered into?

**Mr. Nandlall:** The security provider service is the Commissioner of Police.

**Mr. Forde:** Line item 6284 – Other: Could the Hon. Attorney General indicate what items are covered in this line item?

**Mr. Nandlall:** I am told that the items that are covered are advertisements, installation of air conditioning units and stipend for members of tender board.

**Mr. Forde:** Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Could you indicate what are these organisations in respect ...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, Mr. Forde, could you consult with the appendix at the back?

**Mr. Forde:** Yes, I will go to that.

**Mr. Chairman:** It is listed there.

**Mr. Forde:** ... of the State Assets Recovery Agency (SARA) which seems to be the only organisation listed, in view of your statement which is a representative of the Government's

position, if you do not intend to have this organisation functioning...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, just a point of information. If there is nothing against an agency or Ministry, you are not entitled to ask a question. Continue, Hon. Member, Mr. Forde.

Thank you, Hon. Member, Mr. Forde and Attorney General. I did not hear a comment from anyone. My information was that the Hon. Member, Mr. Forde, said there is nothing listed there. I am sorry, Hon. Member.

**Mr. Forde:** Mr. Chairman, I did not say that. I said that I was aware, in responding to you, States Assets Recovery Agency (SARA) was the only organisation listed at the back to receive subsidies. I was going to ask...

**Mr. Chairman:** Go ahead, Sir.

**Mr. Forde:** I will ask the Chief Whip to ask the question.

**Mr. Jones:** Line item 6272 – Electricity Charges: We see a provision for \$3.5 million and, as indicated previously, it was \$0. Could the Hon. Minster please indicate which building or buildings these electricity charges are for?

**Mr. Nandlall:** There are two buildings from which the Ministry operates: The main building at 95 Carmichael Street and the building that is housing the Inter-American Development Bank (I-ADB) at Hadfield Street. The Government has to pay the electricity bill for that building while the project is ongoing.

**Mr. Forde:** In relation to the question that I wanted to ask earlier in relation to line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, where there is an allocation to SARA of over \$200 million, I wish to enquire from the Attorney General about the policy of the Government in relation to this organisation over the fiscal year?

**Mr. Nandlall:** The Government has stated, repeatedly, that it will close the operations of SARA, but we still have contractual obligations currently. Until that is done, it is prudent to budget for it. We have \$2.1 million per month for rent that we owe to the landlord.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, we have one hour allocated for this head. We started at 6.29 p.m. We are already consuming close to half of that time and we are still on the first programme.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: I noticed that, in 2019, it was \$15,000 and that, in 2020, it is \$25,000 for the number of staff here who are being merged for Programme 521. Is \$25,000 sufficient to purchase drugs and medicine?

**Mr. Nandlall:** Are you asking if the budgetary sum is enough for drugs and medicine?

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Nandlall:** As far as I am aware, yes. We have a healthy Ministry.

**Mr. Figueira:** Line item 6111 – Administrative: The Hon. Attorney General informed us that the additional \$9 million was for the payment of the two staff, namely the Permanent Secretary and the Deputy Permanent Secretary. Could the Hon. Attorney General inform us if those two employees are contracted employees or are they on the fixed establishment?

**Mr. Nandlall:** There are more than two staff, Sir. The two staff that he is referring to are on the fixed pensionable establishment. One of them is seated here.

*Programme: 521 – Policy Development and Administration – \$353,522,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

6.54 p.m.

**Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 521 – Policy Development and Administration – \$296,500,000**

**Mr. Forde:** Project code 1501500 – Justice Sector Programme: Could the Hon. Minister explain what these funds will be used for over the fiscal year?

**Mr. Nandlall:** The activities are: The pilot Legal Aid Project, which is ongoing; there is a probation strengthening programme that will start; a leadership development programme; a restorative justice programme; strengthening of magistracy; and judiciary and the prosecution.

Mr. Forde may have observed that the reservations made under the projects are for the Brickdam Superintendent Prosecutor Office. A donation has also been made to the Berbice office and there will be an opening of that office, and there is public awareness campaign. It is a lot of run-on programmes that will go over to next year.

**Mr. Forde:** Could the Hon. Attorney General provide that in writing to the Members of this House, please?

**Mr. Nandlall:** Mr. Forde speaks very muffled; I am not hearing.

**Mr. Forde:** I am asking whether you could provide that in writing to myself and other Members of the House.

**Mr. Nandlall:** I will do better than that, I will present a copy of the Inter-American Development Bank programme – the profile of the project, I will give to you.

*Programme: 521 – Policy Development and Administration – \$296,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 522 – Ministry Administration – \$50,942,000**

**Mr. Forde:** Line item 6111 – Administrative: It reveals that the complement of employees was reduced by one, from 20 to 19. Could the Hon. Minister explain this reduction and what accounts for it?

**Mr. Nandlall:** This is the reverse of the merger. The expenses coming down here are being increased on the other side.

**Mr. Forde:** Line item 6113 – Other Technical and Craft Skilled: Could the Hon. Minister explain the reduction in the sum allocated, even though one person is still employed?

**Mr. Nandlall:** It is the same thing. If you look, you will see that all the expenses are getting smaller because of the merger of the programme. This only caters from October to December.

**Mr. Forde:** Line item 6114 – Clerical and Office Support: Could the Hon. Minister explain the reduction of the budgeted amount in the face of the increased employment of an additional employee? Could the Hon. Member, also, indicate whether the employees were dismissed and the basis of their dismissals?

**Mr. Nandlall:** No employees were dismissed from the Ministry, from August to now – if that is what Mr. Forde wants to know.

I do not witch-hunt people, like what you all did. The list of employees is: five Accounts Clerks, three Clerks, five Typist

Clerks, one Administrative Assistant, one Storekeeper, one Store Clerk, one Librarian and three Office Assistants.

**Mr. Forde:** The question I asked is whether the Minister could explain the reduction of the budgeted amount in the face of the employment of an additional employee? I do not think that he answered that.

**Mr. Nandlall:** This sum caters for salaries from January to September. Salaries from October to December are catered for in Programme: 01. Again, it is because of the merger. You are going to find that throughout.

**Mr. Forde:** Line item 6115 – Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled: Could the Hon. Minister explain the reduction of the budgeted amount in the face of the employment of an additional employee?

**Mr. Nandlall:** It is the same explanation; it is the merger of the two programmes.

**Mr. Forde:** It seems as if the entire agency is merging. What is it merging to?

Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister explain the reduction of the budgeted amount in the face of the employment of an additional employee?

But, before he answers, I say that he would say, it is because of a merger.

**Mr. Nandlall:** It is the same thing. I do not know what he expects me to say.

**Mr. Forde:** Line item 6117 – Temporary Employees: In this instance, there is no employee, but there is an allocation of \$83,000. I guess this is another instance of a merger.

**Mr. Nandlall:** I am told that the person is now being appointed as a temporary Cleaner.

**Mr. Forde:** Line item 6131 – Other Direct Labour Costs: Could the Hon. Minister explain what items are covered under this line item and the reduction of other direct labour costs, in the face of the employee complement remaining the same?

**Mr. Nandlall:** There is no reduction. I am told that this caters for one month’s basic salary and vacation allowances.

**Mr. Jones:** Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: We see a Revised Budget of \$5,722,000 and, in 2020, we see an

allocation request of \$980,000. Could the Hon. Minister please indicate what has occasioned this reduction?

**Mr. Nandlall:** My predecessor may have exceeded himself; I am not sure. He spent \$5,722,000 in 2019 and \$980,000 is what it is budgeted for. I think, realistically, it is for mostly repairs and maintenance. It is not necessary that you do maintenance every year.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much, Hon. Attorney General.

*Programme: 522 – Ministry Administration – \$50,942,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 523 – Attorney General’s Chambers – \$375,158,000**

**Mr. Forde:** Line item 6114 – Clerical and Office Support: I observed that the wages increased from \$11,994,000 to \$15,489,000, an increase of \$3,495,000. Could the Hon. Minister explain this increase, please?

**Mr. Nandlall:** This is due to the appointment of an additional staff and salary increases.

**Mr. Forde:** Line item 6111 – Administrative: There is an increase from \$45,941,000 to \$60,796,000. Could the Minister explain the increase?

*7.09 p.m.*

**Mr. Nandlall:** Three state Counsels were hired at a cost of \$292,488 each per month.

**Mr. Forde:** Just as a follow-up, I would also ask the dates they were employed?

**Mr. Nandlall:** They were appointed in late 2019, and we do not have the exact date.

**Mr. Forde:** In relation to line item 6113, Other Technical and Craft Skilled, no sum is budgeted, but it indicates that there is an employee. Could the Hon. Minister explain how this employee is paid?

**Mr. Chairman:** There is nothing to answer there. We have to move on.

**Mr. Nandlall:** There is no budgetary allocation.

**Mr. Forde:** If you look on page 403, line item 6113, Other Technical and Craft Skilled...

**Mr. Chairman:** Which page is it?

**Mr. Forde:** It is page 403.

**Mr. Nandlall:** We are on page 404. Mr. Ramjattan, could you help him see straight?

**Mr. Chairman:** Did we not pass that already? We are on pages 404 and 405.

**Mr. Forde:** I think there is a mistake with my pages; the pages are repeated.

**Mr. Chairman:** It could happen because I did not have page 620. I heard it is because of the merger.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Line item 6241 – Rental of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister say which building is this or if there are more than one?

**Mr. Nandlall:** This is the wasted rent paid for the Law Reform Commission when no Commissioner was ever appointed. As I said, in my Budget presentation, with the help of Minister Ramson, I got accommodation in a Government building and it is saving the taxpayers \$850,000 per month, which was being squandered as rent for a Commission that produced nothing.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Line item 6284 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister please explain this line item for the sum of \$95,660,000?

**Mr. Nandlall:** These expenses had been incurred prior to my arrival at the Ministry, but I am happy that the Hon. Member has asked the question. It is for economic cost of 25% for Guyanese law students; sensitisation, which is a programme my predecessor was running; legal costs; and fees. There was a huge retainer for private services from which many here may have benefitted; consultation on a new Arbitration Act – I am not aware if the consultation was actually done; payments for an online library; and moneys expended for the Anti-Money Laundering/Combating the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) Secretariat.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** A follow-up question under the same line item. Could the Hon. Minister indicate the total amount of moneys from the \$95,660,000 that was already spent up to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020, so that we would know the remaining balance?

**Mr. Nandlall:** Are you asking if this was spent before August?

**Mr. Chairman:** He is asking how much was spent up to July.

**Mr. Nandlall:** The only money that had been spent would be for the continuation of the 25% payment for the law school students. It is because we did not want to disrupt the students’ education; everything else was spent before.

*Programme: 523 - Attorney General’s Chambers - \$375,158,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 523 – Attorney General’s Chambers – \$2,000,000**

*Programme: 523 – Attorney General’s Chambers – \$2,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 524 – State Solicitor – \$12,711,000**

*Programme:524 – State Solicitor – \$12,711,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Attorney General and Hon. Members, that concludes our consideration of the Estimate for Agency: 52 Ministry of Legal Affairs. Thank you very much, Attorney General and staff.

**Mr. Nandlall:** Thank you very much, Sir.

**Agency: 04 Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 041 – Development of Foreign Policy – \$1,238,070,000**

**Dr. Cummings:** Line items 6114 – Clerical and Office Support and line item 6115 – Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled: In terms of the staffing details, I have noticed that there is an increase from 27 to 35 employees under line item 6114, and 15 to 22 employees under line item 6115, but there is concomitant decrease in the budgetary allocation. Could the Hon. Minister give me the reason for that?

**Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation [Mr. Todd]:** I have been advised that two

Office Assistants, one Typist Clerk, one Receptionist and four Clerk II General were employed. One of the Typist Clerks was transferred from line item 6117 and a Clerk II General has resigned. The Office Assistant, Typist Clerk and Receptionist receive salaries of \$70,000 and Clerk II General’s salary ranges from \$72,000 to \$73,000. This is because we are dealing with 2019 which catered for 12 months and, so far, we are dealing with nine months.

**Dr. Cummings:** Line item 6322 – Subsidies and Contributions to Intl. Organisations: I am looking at the back, in terms of the details of Subsidies and Contributions to Intl. Organisations, and I have noticed that no mention was made of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), Association of Caribbean States (ACS), Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS). Initially, there was a Revised Budget of \$663,601,000, but it is \$421,525,000 and that is just for the CARICOM Competition Commission (CCC), and the Caribbean Regional Organization for Standards and Quality (CROSQ). The others have gotten zero. Is it that we do not owe them? What is the reason for the deletion?

**Mr. Todd:** I am advised that we have catered for each and every institution, and that there is an allocation for each and every one.

*Programme: 041 – Development of Foreign Policy – \$1,238,070,000 agreed to and orders to stand part of the Estimates.*

*7.24 p.m.*

**Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 041 – Development of Foreign Policy – \$16,821,000**

**Dr. Cummings:** Project code 1200500 – Buildings: This has been a rollover project in terms of the rewiring of the building. There is a duration and a time when it is to be completed. Are you on target for the completion of the rewiring of the building and what is the date of completion?

**Mr. Todd:** My understanding is that this is a rollover project. We have completed 99% of the work so far, and the remaining period, until December, is the retention period. There is a balance of \$7.4 million remaining to complete the total cost.

*Programme: 041 – Development of Foreign Policy – \$16,821,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 043 – Foreign Policy Promotion – \$2,396,152,000**

**Dr. Cummings:** Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I notice that there was a decrease in 2019 from 22 staff to now 18. What is the reason for the decrease?

Secondly, does this figure capture the ambassadors, the heads of missions and, of course, there are 20 missions. Or does it come under a new programme?

**Mr. Todd:** The decrease is due to the fact that contracts for six heads of missions were terminated; five of those contracts were terminated in December, 2019, and one in July, 2020. These ambassadors are from Beijing, Caracas, Ottawa, Trinidad and Tobago, London, and Geneva Switzerland. The breakdown for staffing details are as follows: 22 staff in 2019, minus five heads of missions’ contracts which was terminated in 2019. This equals to 17 staff plus one Accountant who was transferred to this line item. This equal 18 staff.

**Dr. Cummings:** Line item 6284 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister state what this entails? In terms of reports, does it include consultancy for the writing of reports?

**Mr. Todd:** I am guided that it caters for nine months of expenditure under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, as compared to 12 months in 2019. It caters for the payments of bank charges, legal fees, upgrades and maintenance to the website. That is our explanation.

*Programme: 043 – Foreign Policy Promotion – \$2,396,152,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 043 – Foreign Policy Promotion – \$13,696,000**

**Dr. Cummings:** Project code 1200500 – Buildings: The construction of the embassy in Brazil has commenced. I know that it is rollover project. What is the status? Because I know there were problems with the contractor and so forth,

could you bring us up to date with the status of that project in Brazil?

**Mr. Todd:** The project is ongoing at the moment. There seems to be a lot of issues with the contract based on the technical specifications and the contract that was awarded. According to information received, there is a conflict in the nature of the contract signed on whether the measure and value contract or fixed price contract would be the deciding factor. There is a change in the works based on the topography of the soil and there is a difference also between bills of quantities and drawings. These are the issues that are being considered.

I am also advised that the Ministry of Public Works is involve in this because, in some cases, it is beyond the scope of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

**Mr. Chairman:** Dr. Cummings, I see your microphone on; do you have another question?

**Dr. Cummings:** No, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much.

*Programme: 043 – Foreign Policy Promotion – \$13,696,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 043 – Development of Foreign Trade Policy – \$37,580,000**

**Dr. Cummings:** Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I notice that in 2019 there were three staff members, but now it is one. Is that one staff the Foreign Secretary, or could you say who the one person is?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, just help me a bit, is it line item 6113?

**Dr. Cummings:** It is line item 6116 – Contracted Employees.

**Mr. Chairman:** Okay.

**Dr. Cummings:** The number of staff has moved from three staff to one staff. Could you state who is the one staff and the emoluments? Is it the Foreign Secretary?

**Mr. Todd:** I am advised that the Director of International Cooperation resigned and that the one staff is a Foreign Service Officer II who was transferred to line item 6111 – Administrative. The Director’s salary was \$271,000 and the Foreign Service Officer II, \$110,000.

*Programme: 043 – Development of Foreign Trade Policy – \$37,580,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 121 – Development of Foreign Policy – \$604,924,000**

**Ms. Walton-Desir:** In relation to line item 6111, Administrative, I would like to draw the Hon. Minister’ s attention to Appendix Q, which sets out the approved position for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. I have scoured the entire volume and I was unable to find a similar item for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. So, I am wondering whether the Hon. Minister could indicate if I had missed that? I ask this question, please, because on the passage of the Appropriation Bill, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as, it were, cease to exist and the new Ministry will be formed. Of course, there is a requirement that the positions be approved and that it be approved by the Ministry of the Public Service.

I guess, my question is; Where I could find the position?

In case you missed it, I said line item 6111 which deals with administrative and staffing issues.

**Mr. Todd:** The structure of the Ministry remains the same. The name change is based on the scope and the vision of the Government of Guyana and that is why the ‘International Cooperation’ is added, but the structure remains the same.

**Dr. Cummings:** There was already a unit called International Cooperation.

**Mr. Todd:** If I might add, in keeping with the financial regulations of Guyana, we had to desegregate the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation for the remaining three months of the year. So, you will see Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation being reflected for the last three months because that is consistent with good procedure and practice.

**Ms. Walton-Desir:** I thank the Hon. Minister for his explanation. And I would ask that he be so kind as to layover a copy of that structure for us.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister, would you be so kind to layover a copy of the structure?

**Ms. Walton-Desir:** As I am on my feet, line item...

**Mr. Chairman:** Would you allow the Hon. Minister to answer first?

**Ms. Walton-Desir:** Sorry, Sir.

**Mr. Todd:** Could I get the question, again?

**Mr. Chairman:** Could the Minister layover the structure of the new Ministry?

**Mr. Todd:** Certainly, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much, Hon. Minister.

Hon. Member Ms. Walton-Desir, you could proceed.

**Ms. Walton-Desir:** I am continuing under line item 6111, Administrative, and I note that, under the staffing details, there is a reduction in staff from 50 persons to 43 persons. What I notice is that, when we add the total budgeted sum for the last three months and for the first nine months, and it is compared to 2019, the difference is marginal. We have seven less members of staff. I am wondering whether the Hon. Minister could indicate, therefore, the members of staff who have been retained, the list of their designations and emoluments?

**Mr. Todd:** The explanation for the request is based on a decrease of one Senior Legal Officer to Programme: 02. In addition, one Foreign Service Officer’s salary ranges from \$117,000 to \$303,000. That staff was promoted to Accountant and transferred from line item 6113 with a salary of \$131,000.

*7.39 p.m.*

There were also the two employment of three Foreign Service Officers with a salary ranging between \$102,000 to \$110,000. Thank you.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Line item 6284 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister explain this line item and break it down for us? Also, as I am on the floor, Mr. Chairman, line item 6294 – Other, both are others...

**Mr. Todd:** Mr. Chairman, in response to that, the projection for 2020 is based on the current spending. The line item caters for the payment of consultancy services on border issues, bank charges and software licenses.

On 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2020, Guyana appeared before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in its case against Venezuela. The

Ministry anticipates that the Court will render its decision on the question of jurisdiction by the end of the year. Thank you.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** If I heard correctly, that was line item 6284, Other, and I asked about line item 6294, Other.

**Mr. Todd:** Mr. Chairman, the reduction is due to the COVID-19 pandemic which caters for transportation and visiting delegations, promotional items for the missions, stipends for work-study students and the University of Guyana attachment, purchase of drinking water and other miscellaneous items. Thank you.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Mr. Chairman, a follow-up please.

**Mr. Chairman:** You know you have to give me a chance to acknowledge the Minister...

**Mr. Mahipaul:** My apologies. Line item 6294 – Other: If I heard the Hon. Member correctly, he said that this is for visiting delegations. Is this the line item where moneys were spent for the visit of Mr. Pompeo?

**Mr. Todd:** Mr. Chairman, the answer to that is no.

**Ms. Walton-Desir:** I just have a few more questions for the Hon. Minister. Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I am wondering, Sir, whether the Hon. Minister could provide the categories of employees, their designations and the emoluments of the persons in this category?

**Mr. Todd:** Mr. Chairman, if I may go through the designations: Principle Foreign Service Officer I – we have 10; there is also a Registry Supervisor; Confidential Secretary; Foreign Service Officer III; another Confidential Secretary; an Accountant; Legal Officer; and Deputy Head of Mission. Those would sum up the designations.

**Ms. Walton-Desir:** I wish to draw your attention to line item 6261, Local Travel and Subsistence. There is local travel and subsistence in the sum of \$18 million. I was wondering whether the Hon. Minister would be so kind as to give us the breakdown...*[Inaudible]*

**Mr. Todd:** Mr. Chairman, could I ask the Hon. Member to repeat please? It was not very clear.

**Ms. Walton-Desir:** Line item 6261 – Local Travel and Subsistence: The sum of \$18.9 million, we were just asking for a breakdown of that expenditure.

**Mr. Todd:** Mr. Chairman, in response to that, the 2020 budgetary allocations cater for nine months, from January to

September, and expenditure under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation as compared to 12 months in 2019. This caters for staff postings at head of office to the missions, reposting from missions to head of office and cross-postings from missions to missions and expenses resulting from the cost of transportation, hotel accommodations, meals and excess baggage, which are catered for under this line item. Thank you.

**Ms. Walton-Desir:** Mr. Chairman, not to seem granular, but line item 6265, Other Transport, Travel and Postage. also deals with other transport, travel and postage. There is an allocation of \$29 million. I am wondering whether Hon. Minister will be so kind as to tell us the breakdown of that.

**Mr. Todd:** Mr. Chairman, this caters for the payment of airfare, shipping in containers as well as reposting and cross-posting of staff.

**Ms. Walton-Desir:** I wish to draw your attention to line item 6292, Dietary. Mr. Chairman, I think that my Colleague had already dealt with that.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** I am not sure if I heard correctly. Line item 6261 – Local Travel and Subsistence: Did I hear the Hon. Minister saying that local travel and subsistence, the sum of \$18,900,000, caters for the first nine months of the year?

**Mr. Todd:** If I could go over this again, Mr. Chairman, it caters for the postings of staff of head office to missions. Is that clear enough? It is for three months.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Is that for three months, Mr. Chairman?

**Mr. Todd:** Yes.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Okay. I just wanted to clarify because I heard him saying the first nine months.

**Ms. Walton-Desir:** I wish to draw your attention to line item 6241, Rental of Buildings. Could the Hon. Minister just clarify for us the buildings that are being rented and the costs of each building, if there is more than one?

**Mr. Todd:** Mr. Chairman, we are catering for the Secretary-General of the CARICOM and the posting of staff.

*Programme: 121 – Development of Foreign Policy – 604,924,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 121 – Development of Foreign Policy – \$12,431,000**

*Programme: 121 – Development of Foreign Policy – \$12,431,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 123 – Development of Foreign Trade Policy – \$16,017,000**

**Ms. Walton-Desir:** Mr. Chairman, a clarification: did we cover Programme 122 – Foreign Policy Promotion? I believe that you have gone to Programme: 123. That would be page 112, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Sorry, you are correct. Yes. we missed one page.

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 122 – Foreign Policy Promotion – \$1,038,638,000**

**Ms. Walton-Desir:** I would like to draw the Hon. Minister’s attention to line item 6116, Contracted Employees. There is an allocation for \$116 million. We are wondering whether the Hon. Minister could indicate the designations and the remunerations of persons catered for under this head?

**Mr. Todd:** Mr. Chairman, is the Hon. Member asking for the designations only?

**Ms. Walton-Desir:** No. I am asking for the designations and the remunerations of the persons who are catered for under that line item.

**Mr. Todd:** Mr. Chairman, I have a list here with all of the designations and the salaries. Could I submit it to the Hon. Member, instead of going through it?

**Ms. Walton-Desir:** Certainly.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, Hon. Member; you can lay it over.

**Ms. Walton-Desir:** Sir, as I am on my feet, line item 6133 – Benefits & Allowances: I am wondering whether the Hon. Minister could provide a break-down of that? I am willing to accept that being laid over at a later date. I understand it might be quite substantial. If you want to read it out loud, I have no difficulty with that.

**Mr. Todd:** Mr. Chairman, yes. I could give a break down to the Hon. Member.

**Ms. Walton-Desir:** Mr. Chairman, I have one other question.

**Mr. Chairman:** Go ahead, Hon. Member.

**Ms. Walton-Desir:** Line item 6241 – Rental of Buildings: There is an allocation of \$300 million. I am wondering whether the Hon. Member could be so kind as to tell us what that allocation covers?

**Mr. Todd:** Mr. Chairman, that amount will be for the rental for embassies and residencies.

**Ms. Walton-Desir:** As a follow-up, I wonder whether the Hon. Minister could, in this instance as well, provide us with the details of that or he could read it out. It is up to him.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister, before you start reading, I think we would need to resume the Assembly so that the Hon. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance and Government Chief Whip could move the suspension of the Standing Order so that we could proceed beyond 8 o’clock.

*7.54 p.m.*

**Mr. Todd:** Mr. Chairman, I have a list here, may I lay it over?

**Mr. Chairman:** I am just watching the time, yes. Hon. Member, Ms. Walton-Desir, can he lay it over?

**Ms. Walton-Desir:** Absolutely, Sir, no problem.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much. Can we resume the Assembly so that we can move the suspension of the Standing Order?

*Assembly resumed.*

**SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 11**

BE IT RESOLVED:

“That Standing Order No. 11 be suspended to enable this sitting of the National Assembly to continue with its business beyond 8.00 p.m.”

*[Minister of Public Works]*

**Bishop Edghill:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move the motion that the National Assembly continues to sit beyond 8.00 p.m., until the conclusion of our business listed

in the Schedule that was adopted by this National Assembly for today’s work. We will sit to allow for the Ministry of the Public Service to continue tonight, then we will conclude. That is the motion on the floor, Sir.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Standing Order suspended.*

*In Committee of Supply.*

**Ms. Walton-Desir:** I just have two other questions and I will, maybe, put them into one.

**Mr. Chairman:** Do you want to put them both together?

**Ms. Walton-Desir:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you.

**Ms. Walton-Desir:** Line items 6284 – Other and 6294 – Other: I wonder whether the Hon. Minister could detail the breakdown for those allocations?

**Mr. Todd:** Mr. Chairman, those totals are for the payment of bank charges, legal fees and upgrade and maintenance to the website.

**Ms. Walton-Desir:** I have one follow-up. Are the legal fees catered for under line item 6284 or 6294? What is the nature of that re-engagement that you had? Is it the International Court of Justice matter?

**Mr. Todd:** These are for Legal Officers at the missions. It is line item 6284.

*Programme: 122 – Foreign Policy Promotion – \$1,038,638,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 122 – Foreign Policy Promotion – \$67,871,000**

**Dr. Cummings:** Could you state the number of vehicles and the specifics? It comes under local, so I am wondering if they are to be used in Guyana or is it really to be used overseas? If so, for which level of staff are these being purchased for?

**Mr. Todd:** The vehicles are to be used for transportation for the staff at the embassies. Do you want the specifics and everything as well? In Toronto, it a 2020 Hyundai Palisade; in Washington, it is a 2020 Toyota Highlander.

*Programme: 122 – Foreign Policy Promotion – \$67,871,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 123 – Development of Foreign Trade Policy – \$16,017,000**

**Ms. Walton-Desir:** I want to draw our attention to line item 6111 – Administrative. Maybe I can roll the questions into one question, Sir. Line items 6111 – Administrative and 6116 – Contracted Employees: I want to ask the Hon. Minister if he would be so kind as to advise us on the designations of staff and their remunerations.

**Mr. Todd:** We have a Foreign Service Officer III; Principal Foreign Service Officer I; Senior Foreign Service Officer I; Senior Foreign Service Officer I; Foreign Service Officer III – there are three of those; there is a Foreign Trade Officer; a Foreign Service Officer II – one, two, three, four; and a Foreign Service Officer III. Their salaries range from \$103,000 to \$280,000.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Line item 6294 – Other: There is \$1 million there, could the Hon. Minister give us a breakdown of that?

**Mr. Todd:** This is for workshops on Guyana’s National Trade Strategy.

*Programme: 123 – Development of Foreign Trade Policy – \$16,017,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 123 – Development of Foreign Trade Policy – \$750,000**

*Programme: 123 – Development of Foreign Trade Policy – \$750,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Mr. Chairman:** The National Assembly thanks the Minister and staff for assisting us through these Estimates. Thank you very much.

**Agency 14: Ministry of the Public Service**

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 141 – Policy Development and Administration – \$52,712,000**

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister state whether any contracted employee has been designated to look at how the COVID-2019 pandemic has affected the outlook of public servants and procedures?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, could you just repeat the line item?

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** It is line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister state whether any contracted employee has been designated to look at how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the outlook of public servants and what procedures should be put in place to ensure the safety of our public servants, even as the deaths and new cases are increasing steadily?

**Minister of the Public Service [Ms. Parag]:** Hon. Member, we do have the Principal Personnel Officer within the Personnel Department who is assigned to the COVID-19 response for the Ministry. While I am on my feet, may I also bring to your attention that an erratum was circulated from the Ministry of Finance in relation to the staffing details for the Ministry.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Thank you, Hon. Minister. I have received that. Line item 6223 – Office Materials and Supplies: The budget for the remaining three months of this year, if I got it right, is \$1.5 million. However, for the period January to September, it was \$1.3 million. The average expenditure was \$144,000 per month. However, you are requesting \$1.5 million which would require you to spend approximately \$500,000 per month, an increase of almost 246%. Could the Hon. Minister give us an explanation and state what office materials and supplies are being procured under this line item?

**Ms. Parag:** Hon. Member, in keeping with our plans to have online scholarships, we need to print applications at a speedy rate. We need to ‘up’ the equipment that we have to print for those and increase the paper and printing materials for that.

8.09 p.m.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** If I understand the Hon. Member correctly, this would be used primarily for printing, so I will move to line item 6224, Print and Non-Print Materials. Could the Hon. Minister explain what print and non-print materials mean in this instance, what would be procured and the reason for requesting these sums?

**Ms. Parag:** Line item 6224, Print and Non-Print Materials, deals with cash book, ledgers, payment vouchers and those items, as opposed to line item 6223, which deals with the office materials for printing, *et cetera*.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Line item 6242– Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister please say which buildings have to be maintained under this line item?

**Ms. Parag:** There are three locations where we have to do maintenance work and there are four buildings at the staff college where requests have been made for maintenance.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister say what other infrastructure is expected to be maintained under this line item?

**Ms. Parag:** That specifically speaks to weeding and gardening in the context of maintenance for the Bertram Collins Staff College of the Public Service, the Training Division and the Head Office.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Line item 6284 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister state what constitutes ‘Other’ that requires the sum of \$2.4 million under this line item?

**Ms. Parag:** Hon. Member, ‘Other’ refers to the procuring of blinds, washing of tablecloths, curtains, purchase of water and miscellaneous items for various departments.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** If I am to understand the Minister correctly, we are spending \$2.4 million to wash blinds and to buy curtains. Line item 6294 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister state what constitutes ‘Other’ under this line item?

**Ms. Parag:** Am I to understand that you are disregarding your first question and asking about line item 6294? Are you now asking about line item 6294? “Other” is referring to the procuring of sanitisers, face masks and other items for the Ministry during the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Programme: 141 – Policy Development and Administration – \$52,717,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 141 – Policy Development and Administration – \$1,800,000**

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Could the Hon. Minister indicate what equipment and furniture are being procured for which department?

**Ms. Parag:** Hon. Member, can you please repeat your question?

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Project code 2506200 – Furniture and Equipment: Could the Hon. Minister indicate what equipment and furniture are being procured for which department?

**Ms. Parag:** We are dealing with programme one, which is 141 – Policy Development and Administration. It is for one Dell laptop, two desk computers, three executive leather chairs, four printers, five filing cabinets and six lamination machines.

*Programme: 141 – Policy Development and Administration – \$1,800,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, we will now turn to pages 162 and 163. I think we may have a misprint on the schedule.

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 142 – Human Resource Development – \$1,012,484,000**

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister state the designations and the remunerations of the five highest grade persons under this line item?

**Ms. Parag:** We have Senior Director, Executive Director, Director of Training, Manager Administration, Facilities Manager, Study Coordinator, Training Manager, Information and Communications Technology Manager, Administrative Assistant, two Typist Clerks, two Cleaners, one Handyman, one Accounts Clerk II, Typist Clerk I and Typist Clerk I.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Hon. Minister, line item 6241 – Rental of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister please state which building is being rented under this line item and how is the building being utilised?

**Ms. Parag:** Hon. Member, if I got you clearly, you are asking...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister, can you please address this way...

**Ms. Parag:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, thank you. Hon. Member, if I can clarify, you are asking which buildings...

**Mr. Chairman:** ...’Hon. Chairman, could the...’

**Ms. Parag:** Hon. Chairman, may I clarify from the Hon. Member, as to her question before.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Line item 6241 – Rental of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister please state which building is being rented under this line item and how is the building being utilised?

**Ms. Parag:** It is a building at Ogle for the accommodation of the students at the staff college.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** If I get what the Minister is saying correctly, maybe I am wrong, but as far as I am aware, there are no persons who are actually being trained at this point because of COVID-19. Is the building still being rented at this stage?

**Ms. Parag:** They were being trained, so they were being accommodated. They were supposed to come back for attachment. While they are coming back for attachment, they will be using the building as accommodation, as I am advised.

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Line item 6302 – Training (Including Scholarships): Could the Hon. Minister say how many scholarships would be awarded over the next few months and to which institutions and to which areas of study?

**Ms. Parag:** Hon. Member, with respect to scholarships, I am certain that you would know that, in a three-month period, you would be unable to estimate given that there would be scholarships coming in from everywhere. Given also that we are looking to have online scholarships, the number cannot be estimated, but we already have in excess of 200 slots for the University of Guyana (UG); we have 40 slots for Guyana School of Agriculture (GSA); and 50 online slots for the University of the West Indies (UWI), Cave Hill Campus, but we are also looking. It is difficult at this point and time to tell you the exact figure.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** From line items 6111, Administrative to line item 6117, Temporary Employees, there is a total of 52 staff in this programme, but under line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies, there is no allocation for drugs and medical supplies. Is there any consideration for COVID-19 and the staff in terms of providing them with vitamins and the likes?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, did you say that there is a zero next to it?

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Pardon me, Sir?

**Mr. Chairman:** Is there a zero next to the line item?

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Yes, and I am inquiring if there is no consideration for COVID-19.

**Mr. Chairman:** If there is a zero next to the line item, there is no question.

**Mr. Mahipaul:** Sir, I am guided.

*Programme 142: – Human Resource Development – \$1,012,484,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Capital Expenditure**

**Programme 142: Human Resource Development- \$1,000,000**

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Could the Hon. Minister indicate the same as last – the equipment to be procured and to which department?

**Ms. Parag:** The equipment and items, total value being \$1 million, allocated under this programme, is for one Dell laptop, two high back chairs, three power strips, four project travel file, five public address (PA) systems, six computer speakers, seven wireless presenter pointers, eight lamination machines, nine wireless mouses with pads, 10 guillotine cutters, 11 shredders, 12 binders and 13 surge protectors.

8.24 p.m.

I beg your pardon, those were the numbers as in sequence. In quantity, it is one Dell laptop, two high back chairs, two power strips, two projectors (travel size), one public address (PA) system, four computer speakers, two wireless presenter pointers, one lamination machine, two wireless mouses with pads, two guillotine cutters, one shredder, three binders and two surge protectors. Total value: \$1,000,000.

*Programme: 142 – Human Resource Development – \$1,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 143 – Human Resource Management – \$11,955,000**

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Could the Hon. Minister state for us the designation and emoluments of the two technical persons under this line item?

**Ms. Parag:** There are two Senior Personnel Officers. Is that what the Hon. Member is asking?

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Under the same line item, 6116, could the Hon. Minister share with us whether these technical persons would be focusing on any form of human resource assessment survey to ensure that we are training persons in the areas that are most needed?

**Ms. Parag:** Hon. Member, yes, that is the plan.

*Programme: 143 – Human Resource Management – \$11,955,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 143 – Human Resource Management – \$2,000,000**

**Ms. Sarabo-Halley:** Project code 2506200 – Furniture and Equipment: There is a 100% increase in the allocation for equipment and furniture that will be procured under this line item, in comparison to what will be procured under Programmes 141 and 142. Could the Hon. Minister please inform the Committee what equipment and furniture are being procured and for which department?

**Ms. Parag:** Hon. Member, there is one item here valued at \$2 million and that is a rack-mounted server. It is a server for the Information Systems Division to host its human resource management and related software in keeping with modernising the public service’s system.

*Programme: 143 – Human Resource Management – \$2,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Mr. Chairman:** The Committee thanks the Minister and her staff for the assistance provided during this process.

*Assembly resumed.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, this concludes our business for today. Hon. Prime Minister, you may move the adjournment.

**ADJOURNMENT**

BE IT RESOLVED:

“That the Assembly do now adjourn to 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2020.”

*[Prime Minister]*

**Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips:** I move the adjournment of the Assembly to 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2020.

*Motion put and agreed to.*

**Mr. Speaker:** The Assembly now stands adjourned to 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2020.

*Adjourned accordingly 8.31 p.m.*