

**THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORT
(VOLUME 7)**

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

94th Sitting

2 p.m.

Wednesday, 5th May, 1976

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

Cde. Sase Narain, O.R., J.P., Speaker

Members of the Government - People's National Congress (50)

Prime Minister (1)

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

Deputy Prime Minister (1)

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

Senior Ministers (9)

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

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

* Cde. H.O. Jack,
Minister of Energy and Natural Resources

* Cde. F.E. Hope,
Minister of Finance

***Non-elected Ministers**

*Cde. S.S. Naraine, A.A.,
Minister of Works and Housing

*Cde. G.A. King,
Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection

*Cde. G.B. Kennard, C.C.H.,
Minister of Agriculture **(Absent)**

*Cde. C.L. Baird,
Minister of Education and Social Development

*Cde F.R. Wills, S.C.,
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice **(Absent)**

Ministers (5)

Cde. W.G. Carrington,
Minister of Labour **(Absent)**

Cde. S. M. Field-Ridley,
Minister of Information and Culture

Cde. B. Ramsaroop,
Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House

*Cde O.M.R. Harper,
Minister of Health **(Absent)**

*Cde. C.V. Mingo,
Minister of Home Affairs **(Absent)**

Ministers of State (9)

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

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

Cde. P. Duncan, J.P.,
Minister of State - Regional (Rupununi) **(Absent)**

Cde. C.L. Nascimento, Minister of State,
Office of the Prime Minister **(Absent)**

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

*** Non-elected Minister**

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

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

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

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

Parliamentary Secretaries (6)

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

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

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

Cde. S. Prashad,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation **(Absent)**

Cde. R.H.O. Corbin,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Education and Social Development

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

***Non-elected Ministers**

Other Members (19)

Cde. L.M. Branco
Cde. E.M. Bynoe
Cde. E.H.A. Fowler
Cde. J. Gill (Absent)
Cde. W. Hussain
Cde. S. Jaiserrisingh
Cde. K.M.E. Jonas
Cde. M. Nissar
Cde. L.E. Ramsahoye
Cde. J.G. Ramson
Cde. P.A. Rayman
Cde. E.M. Stoby, J.P. (Absent)
Cde. S.H. Sukhu, M.S., J.P.
Cde. C. Sukhu, J.P.
Cde. H.A. Taylor
Cde. R.C. Van Sluytman
Cde. L.E. Willems
Cde. C.E. Wrights. J.P.
Cde. M. Zaheeruddeen, J.P.

Members of the Opposition (16)

(i) Liberator Party (2)

Leader of the Opposition (1)

Mr. M.F. Singh

Other Member (1)

Mrs. E. DaSilva

(ii) People's Progressive Party (14)

Cde. C.B. Jagan
Cde. Ram Karran, Deputy Speaker
Cde. Narbada Persaud
Cde. C. Collymore
Cde. J. Jagan (Absent)
Cde. S.F. Mohamed
Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P.

Cde. L. Lalbahadur
Cde. B. James
Cde. C.C. Belgrave
Cde. R. Ally
Cde. Dalchand, J.P.
Cde. Dindayal
Cde. H. Nokta

OFFICERS

Clerk of the National Assembly – F.A. Narain

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

PRAYERS**ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER****Appointment of a Minister of State**

The Speaker: Comrades and hon. Members, I have been informed that Cde. J.P. Chowritmootoo, who was the Parliamentary Secretary in the Minister of Education and Social Development, has been appointed a Minister of State - Regional (Essequibo Coast/West Demerara) with effect from 1st May, 1976. On behalf of Members of the Assembly and myself I extend to Cde. Chowritmootoo our congratulations and best wishes. (**Applause**)

Welcome to Assistant Secretary-General of the CPA

Cdes. and hon. Members, we have on a visit to Guyana, in connection with the arrangements for the Twelfth Regional Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association which will be held in Guyana in July, 1976, the Assistant Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Mr. Palitha Weerasinghe. Mr. Weerasinghe is present at our Sitting today and on behalf of Members of the Assembly and myself I extend a hearty welcome to him. (**Applause**)

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following Paper was laid:

Statement of Guarantees given the Minister of Finance under section 3 of the Guarantee of Loans (Public Corporations and Companies) Act, Chapter 77:01 for the quarter ended 31st March, 1976 (**The Minister of Finance**)

5.5.76

National Assembly

2.05 - 2.10 p.m.

PUBLIC BUSINESS MOTION

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL PAPER NO. 1/1976

"Be it resolved that the Committee of Supply approve of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 1/1976 - Advances made from the Contingencies fund on the Current and Capital Estimates during 1975, totalling \$7,240,612." (**The Minister of Finance**)

Assembly in Committee of Supply

The Minister of Finance (Cde. Hope) Cde Chairman, in accordance with article 80(2) of the Constitution, I signify that the Cabinet has recommended for consideration by the National Assembly the Motion for the approval of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 1 of 1976, being a supplementary provision on the Current and Capital Estimates totalling \$7,240,612 and I now move the Motion.

Motion proposed

The Chairman: We will not proceed page by page. Will Members please indicate items on which they wish to speak?

2.10 p.m.

Mr. Singh: I would like to make a general remark in respect of this entire Financial Paper No. 1 of 1976 and then speak on items 3 and 4 together.

In respect of this entire Financial Paper, the general remark I want to make is this: we debate the 1976 Estimates towards the end of December, 1975. On page 5 of the Estimates, as you will remember, there was set out very nicely the revised position in respect of 1975 Estimates. In the column showing the Revised Estimates for 1975 we have all the revised figures for Expenditure and Revenue and it ends up with a total deficit of \$17, 027,380.

Now this Financial Paper is in respect of advance made from the Contingencies Fund in 1975. One would think that these figures in the Financial Paper were not in fact taken into account when the 1975 revised figures were prepared for the Estimates. We say that because it is only now in the month of May that this paper is coming before us. On a minute examination of this Paper one would see that that is not in fact the position. One would have assumed that this sum of \$17,027,380 would be added to the amount being asked for, namely \$7,240,612, to make a total deficit of \$24,267,992 for 1975. Let us look at items (18) and (19) under Head 13 Public Service Ministry on page 3 of this Financial Paper and compare that with the Revised Figures on page 41 of the Estimates. There we will see that in respect of Transport and Travelling for the Public Service Ministry, the Revised Estimate was \$20,000, for 1975.

In this Supplementary Paper, the Voted Provision is shown as \$20,000 and the Supplementary now sought is \$2,000. That means that the Supplementary Provision of \$2,000, was not taken into account in the revised figures for 1975. According to this Paper the sum of \$22,000 is required for 1975 whereas in the Estimates for 1976, the sum of \$20,000 is shown in the column for Revised Estimates 1976. Therefore the sum of \$2,000, which is now being requested was not taken into account.

Let us see what is the position in respect of subhead 4 - Telephones. On page 3 of this Supplementary Paper the Voted Provision is shown as \$20,000; the Supplementary Provision now sought is \$17,000. So that the total expenditure reflected in this Supplementary Paper is \$37,000. That is exactly what is reflected as the revised figures for 1975 on page 41 of the Estimates presented to the House in December last year. So whereas in respect of telephones this amount of \$17,000 was taken into account in the revised figures presented in December, and amount of \$2,000 now being sought, was not taken into account in the case of Transportation and Travelling. That leaves us in a quandary.

What therefore is the present position of 1975? We go back to page 5 in the Summary of the Estimates as presented to the National Assembly in December last year. There was a deficit of \$17,027,380 in the 1975 Estimates. What is the position if we take into account this Financial

Paper No. 3 of 1976? We do not know because in one case the supplementary provision being sought has been taken into account and in another case it has not been taken into account. We would like somebody to tell us what is, in fact, the present position.

It is no point presenting Estimates to the honourable House and presenting Financial Papers when we cannot, in the final analysis, know what the deficit for last year is at the present time. That is the position in which we find ourselves. That is our quandary. Why take it into account in one case and exclude it in another. I think that if we in this House are to be guided by Estimates, the Government has an obligation to supply us with realistic figures and to let us know exactly what the position is. We are dealing with the taxpayers' money. We on this side of the House and indeed the Government and the Director of Audit, are the guardians of the taxpayers' money, we are all being paid to do a job and we must all do our jobs.

I wish to deal with items (3) and (4) together. The original amount voted for item (3), Supreme Court of Judicature, Transport and Travelling for 1975 was \$49,500. During the year Supplementary Provision was sought and Approved to the sum of \$8,500. One would have thought that that would have been the end of the matter but apparently towards the end of the year a request was made and a further additional amount of \$17,000 was advanced out of the Contingencies Fund. The legend says "to meet additional expenditure resulting from the payment of arrears and increases allowances."

Similarly for item (4) Magistrates, the sum of \$87,000 was voted. During last year an additional amount of \$12,000 was sought and approved. The amount advanced from the Contingencies Fund in 1975, as we see from this Paper is \$20,000 and we are now being asked to give approval.

2.20 p.m.

The legend states: "to meet additional expenditure resulting from the payment of arrears and increased allowances." One would have thought that if somebody was doing his home-work properly he would have seen that these significant amounts would have been required as

supplementary provision. Somebody does not seem to be doing his job properly. Surely, accounting officers would have foreseen this. A proper job should have been done in respect of these matters.

What it really means is that whereas the Supreme Court of Judicature had estimated that it would need \$49,500 for Transport and Travelling it has already been advanced from the Contingencies Fund and additional \$25,500. The Head, Magistrates, has received \$87,000 plus an additional \$32,000. That to my mind is not doing a proper job of estimating. If a Ministry of Department is going to ask for an additional amount of \$25,000 or \$32,000 something seems to be wrong somewhere. I think it has come to the stage where accounting officers should be called upon to do a more thorough and realistic job of estimating.

The Chairman: Cde, Minister Jack.

The Minister of Energy and Natural Resources (Cde. Jack): Cde. Chairman, the additional expenditure refers to the arrears and increased allowances which have to be paid. I did not frilly hear or grasp the gravamen of friend's contention, but it would seem that in the circumstances he could hardly complain about these having regard to what he knows himself to be the escalation of costs. I think we are all aware of the fact that there have been increases both in salaries and in allowances and that there have been necessary adjustments to be made as a result of these increases.

The Chairman: Pages 2 and 3, up to item 21 on page 3.

Mr. Singh: Mr. Chairman, I have no question on page 2, but I wish to speak on items 19 and 21 on page 3.

Item 19, Head 13 - Public Service Ministry, subhead 4, telephones. The voted provision is 20,000; the Supplementary Provision now sought is \$17,000, and the legend states: "To cater for installation of switchboard and additional lines." I should like to ask whether this switchboard and additional lines have in fact been installed. Has this been done? A request would normally have

had to be made a long time before the switchboard was ordered and installed so that one would have thought that the proper arrangements would have been made and request would have been put in to have the vote increased in order to cater for this installation of switchboard and additional lines. It does seem to permeate this entire paper, a case for a closer look at the way in which Accounting Officers do in fact estimate for expenditure in their various Ministries. This should have been put in the request originally when the Estimates for 1976 were presented in December 1975.

In respect of item 21, Head 13 - Public Service Minister, Electricity, the Voted Provision was \$3,000 Supplementary Provision now sought is \$8,000, and the legend merely states "Provision inadequate." I say that this legend is most unsatisfactory. If one takes a closer look at it one would realise that there must be something radically wrong when a Ministry can estimate \$3,000 for the year and then ask for Supplementary provision of \$8,000 to make it \$11,000 instead of \$3,000. What is responsible for this? Are arrears involved in this request for \$8,000? Is there increased space being utilised in the Public Service Ministry? Or is it just plain inefficiency in respect of estimating in respect of this Ministry.

The Chairman: Cde. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: Cde Chairman, with respect to item 19, the situation is very simple. Late last year I had a discussion with the Permanent Secretary of the Public Service Ministry and pointed out to him that both myself and other persons have difficulty in reaching officers by telephone. We pointed out that he had, in the interest of economy, not installed a full PABX and I then gave him instructions to do so. The Guyana Telecommunication Corporation asked for an advance which was paid to install a proper switchboard. The equipment has not yet arrived here. It is not the inefficiency of anyone in Guyana but the unsatisfactory state of deliveries of goods which we have had to import. The money has been paid and the installation will be made as soon as the equipment arrives.

Item 21: the fact is that last year was the very first year that the new system of each Ministry paying its own electricity bill was instituted. Previously this bill was paid by the Ministry of Works and - to be frank - the estimate of \$3,000 originally was a mere guesstimate. Now,

however, there is greater experience and I expect that there will be a more realistic estimate of the amount to be spent. This can never be accurate because one does not know the number of seminars that arise ex improviso, the number of staff meetings which go late into the nights, and things of that sort. That is the simple answer. It is not due to inefficiency and all these things suggested by my hon. And learned Friend.

The Chairman: Capital Estimates, Section "B". Page 1, Items 2 and 3.

2.30 p.m.

Mr. Singh: Item 3 deals with National Service. The voted provision for 1975 was 11 million. The supplementary provision now sought is \$400,000. The legend says "Voted provision inadequate." By all standards, \$11 million is a very significant amount of money particularly for a poor nation like Guyana. However, that was the amount which was estimated and one would have thought that the National Service personnel would have kept within the amount voted for them. They did not, and the amount of \$400,000 was advanced from the Contingencies Fund. One does not normally pay too much heed to rumours particularly in these days when there are so many rumours floating backwards and forwards but I have the fortune or misfortune to have an office just down the from one the National Service offices and, in addition to the rumours, I have been using my eyes. According to what we say in Guyana parlance money seem to be 'flowing like water' in respect of expenditure for the National Service.

I would like to ask, sir, whether the hon. Prime Minister is satisfied that a proper control of expenditure is being exercised in respect of National Service; whether there are efficient, qualified and capable accounting officers performing their duties in respect of this National Service. If this is not so, could expeditiously either recruit or second efficient, qualified, accounting officers to perform the duty of controlling expenditure in respect of National Service? I would hope that expeditiously the Director of Audit would also begin to audit the accounts of the National Service.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, the Leader of the Opposition having dealt with National Service, I do not wish to add anything to what he said except, of course, to support it but I would like to ask one question. As it does concern National Service, maybe the hon. Prime Minister

would take the opportunity to answer it. We all know about the rumours that are everlastingly around Guyana. That is one of the things we seem to indulge in. This however is not a rumour as I am reliably informed about it. Would the hon. Prime Minister tell this House what is the position at Papaya health wise?

The Chairman: Cde. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: Cde Chairman, the honourable Comrade, the Leader of the Opposition, is aware of the procedure. If I were not satisfied that the sum of \$400,000 was required, I would not, as Minister, have signed the application for the supplementary warrant, the money to issue from the Contingencies fund. Last year really was the first frill year of the operation of the National Service. It is noteworthy that so far the whole National Service vote comes under capital expenditure and is not always easy to anticipate what has to be procured or the costs. For instance, from my own knowledge there were cases where machinery and equipment were ordered and by the time there was a confirmation the price had escalated.

I am satisfied that there is a good financial control within the National Service and there can be; and, anticipating the proposals of my hon. And learned Friend, there have already been seconded to the National Service senior officers from the rest of the Public Service to assist in administration and accounting because of the continued expanding of National Service. At the moment there are three camps in operation and it is expected that by the end of this month there will probably be at least two more. One Principal Assistant Secretary has been seconded for a year and a Permanent Secretary has been seconded indefinitely. There are a few more officers, not because I am not satisfied as Minister with the financial control that exists at the moment, but because my colleagues and I anticipate that there will be much more work and much more responsibility.

With respect to the question asked by the dear lady, I would prefer to reply by asking her to look at me. I am, I believe and have been verily assured by my doctor, in perfect health. I have recently come back from spending a week-end at Papaya. It is a little disconcerting, if I may say so, to find members of this honourable House hypocritically - forgive me, inaccurately - saying that

there are rumours and then proceeding to perpetrate a rumour. There is nothing wrong with the health of the officers and members of the National Service at Papyia. They are in fine health and I am sure that they will beat any member of the Opposition in or out of this House in any physical exercise or undertaking.

The Chairman: The remaining items on page 3, Section "A", Current Estimates, and items 29 and 30 on page 4.

Mr. Singh: On page 3, I would have talked on items 24, 26 and 27 but it is merely to make some observations. I take the point in respect of last year having been the first year in respect of which electricity was being paid for by individual Ministries but I would have thought that the Ministry of Works would have been able to give each Ministry the average of what they had been paying over the years to get a more realistic figure for inclusion in the Estimates. That obviously has not been done from what appears from this entire Schedule of Supplementary Provision Advanced from the Contingencies Fund.

In respect of item 26, I am happy to see that the legend says that the amount which was advanced from the Contingencies Fund was "to provide for repairs and rebinding of Transport volumes and Property registers." I did, in fact, strenuously advocate this during last year and I am happy about it and, indeed, compliment the Government that a start has been made.

2.40 p.m.

But I happen to know from personally going to the two registries - (Interruption by the Prime Minister.) In my duties as Leader of the Opposition, it is necessary for me to keep abreast of what is happening within and without the Government, to visit Government offices to see what the complaints are. There are complaints among civil servants (Interruption.) Being a Leader of the Opposition does entail some social welfare work, and I am happy to say that my office is carrying that out efficiently, even though I say it.

The repairs and rebinding of transport volumes and property registers have commenced. The work has not progressed all that far, but what worries me is that the total sum voted in the 1976 Estimates for this subhead Miscellaneous is only \$1,160. It seems obvious to me that more money will be required to continue this work. I therefore urge the Government - it is not often that I advocate applications for supplementary provision, but this is one case in which I would support any application for supplementary provision - to continue the work of rebinding and repairing these transport and property registers.

Indeed, I want to add further that it is not only the transport and property registers that will be done. In the notarial branch, there are notarial registers that are literally falling to pieces. A start has been made. I would like this to be finished and for them to go on to repairing the transport and the notarial registers and, indeed, all the registers that need repairs in the Deeds and Supreme Court Registries. I would like to inform the Minister that I would welcome application for supplementary provision to continue this work. That is all on this page.

The Chairman: There are items 29 and 30 on the other page.

Mr. Singh: I have no question on items 29 and 30.

The Chairman: Cde Minister of Finance.

Cde Hope: Cde Chairman, I would agree with the hon. Leader of the Opposition that this expenditure was, infact, a necessary and useful one. I am speaking now about item 26, Miscellaneous. (Mr. Singh: "A lot of it lapsed.") Whether it has lapsed or not, I would not be able to say. The money was provided. Usually what happens is this: the orders are made, the work is given out but not necessarily completed, and the problem arises, I shall bear in mind the assurance the Leader of the Opposition gave that he would support any further application under this item

The Chairman : Page 4, item 31.

Cde Singh: Ministry of Information and Culture, Operation and Maintenance of Motor Vehicles. The voted provision was \$65,000. Supplementary provision sought and approved during last year was \$20,000. We are being asked for further supplementary provision for last year of \$16,000 which sum has in fact been advanced from the Contingencies Fund and presumably has been spent, so that the additional amount which would have been spent was \$20,000 plus \$16,000. If the Ministry estimated \$65,000 to be sufficient for last year, why does the Ministry has to come for such a significant additional sum as \$36,000?

One would not quarrel for a request of \$2,000 or \$3,000 for supplementary provision but this is a significant sum, particularly for the Ministry of Information and Culture. All the legend states is: "Voted provision inadequate due to expansion of services." Why is this? How is this Ministry being run on an ad hoc basis? Can it not plan its expenditure and keep within its estimates? What kind of expansion of service did the Ministry indulge in during 1976? Why was this not foreseen? One would expect that the Ministry would study its programme, map out its plan of activity, settle what it requires, and then keep within that. If it does over expend, it certainly should not be in the vicinity of over 50 per cent of what it had originally asked for. This seems to me to be very unsatisfactory.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister of Information and Culture.

The Minister of Information and Culture: (Miss Field-Ridley): Thank you very much, Cde Chairman. What has happened here is perhaps what can happen very frequently in our attempt to get as much as possible out of the money that has been voted us from the people of Guyana. Last year, as most people will remember, was a very active year for this particularly Ministry and for many other Ministries. We have officers based within all the regions in Guyana, in some cases acting Information Officers, in other cases Information Officers and projectionists. They all use vehicles and we have a situation where we do not have nearly sufficient vehicles, even now, to service the people of Guyana.

We also have a situation where we are using vehicles that are many years old. But there are people who need a service and that service must be provided, so the wear and tear on the vehicles

is really very great. At the beginning of the year, on an item like maintenance of vehicles, it is really very difficult to estimate precisely the kind of expenditure that will be involved especially when we take into account that we are dealing with vehicles, as I said, some a few years old. When you are really pressing them to the utmost, then the wear and tear upon them demand that there be frequent and significant maintenance. This is what happened to us last year.

As I said, we still do not have enough vehicles to give the kind of service we would like to give to the people of Guyana. There is a limit to how much money one can spend on buying new vehicles so one has to make serviceable but old vehicles as useful as they can possibly be. I think that the members of the Opposition must understand, and I urge them to understand, that this kind of estimating in relation to something like maintenance is a very difficult one. The pressures that arose last year, and probably will arise this year, make it impossible to have any precision in estimating. We did our best but there was need to keep vehicles going and this is why we had this kind of expenditure. We are providing a service and we have to continue providing that service.

The Chairman: Items 37 and 38. We will revert later on to items 32 to 36 (Pause.) Is there anything for items 32 to 36?

Mr. Singh: Yes.

The Chairman: We will revert to those items as soon as the Minister returns. Page 5.

Mr. Singh: Item 43, Head 31 - Ministry of Economic Development, I am sorry to keep harping on this but I do so in the interest of providing some working capital for the Telecommunication Corporation. This item concerns subhead 5, telephones. The voted provision was \$60,000. The supplementary provision now sought is \$22,000, and the legend states: "Being cost of the installation of an intercom telephone system as well as arrears."

2.50 p.m.

Time and again I have talked about Government paying up arrears to the Guyana Telecommunication Corporation in respect of telephones. The time is long past when the Government should either have made its accounting officers do their job properly and get their arrears of telephone bills sorted out and paid, or should have replaced those accounting officers. Frankly, I am tired of dealing with this question of arrears of telephone bills. I do not know what years these arrears are for, whether they are for 1971, 1972 or 1973. How far back do they go? Possibly, the hon. Minister will give us a breakdown. I am worried about the Telecommunication Corporation. We see where the Corporation had to come to Government for financial help. Members of this House will know that I have been talking about this for years. Let us get the accounting officers from all the departments to a meeting and tell them to assign personnel for this task and let them get down to the job of sorting out the arrears and pay the Guyana Telecommunication Corporation so that the Corporation may have working capital available for it.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, item 42, Head 31 Ministry of Economic Development, subhead 1 - Personal Emoluments. The supplementary provision for this item is \$525 which is a very small and insignificant amount compared with the thousands of dollars we have been asked to pass under some other Heads. The legend stated: "To provide for the payment of an outfit allowance to the Economic Adviser. I am questioning this, not that I object to the Economic Adviser having an outfit allowance if his duties requires it but I would like to know if he does require such an allowance. We would like to know what criteria are used. How do you arrive at a decision that an Economic Adviser should have an outfit allowance? A man in the position of Economic Adviser could surely afford to outfit himself.

Maybe there is a man working in the mines at Guybau or a cane-cutter on the East Bank or on the East Coast who needs an outfit allowance. Can the Minister tell us how one qualifies to receive an outfit allowance?

The Chairman: Cde Minister of Finance.

Cde Hope. Cde. Chairman, dealing first with the question of telephones, I think I agree that the hon. Leader of the Opposition has from time to time been raising the question of the delays in payment of telephone charges, the arrears, but I think we should be frank and say that the fact that we come here from time to time for arrears of payment does not imply that large sums are left long overdue owing to the Corporation concerned. Accounts have to be reconciled and delays are sometimes caused. I think it is important to observe that these requests are coming and this really represents the fact that urgent and continuous attention is being given to payment of telephone bills. As a matter of fact, urgent attention is given to payments to all the Public Corporations. I would advise and suggest to the hon. Leader of the Opposition that, in fact, this is a matter which is under constant review and constant efforts are being made to keep the payment up-to-date or to pay any accumulation of amounts due.

With regard to the payment of an outfit allowance to the Economic Adviser, I think it should be pointed out that the Economic Adviser, as part of his duties, is required to travel abroad, to negotiate on behalf of the Government from time to time. It is a condition of service that when travelling abroad he is entitled for obvious reasons to the same kind of status, or approximate, to that of an Ambassador, because he has got to represent the Government at high-level economic and financial discussions. Because of that particular circumstance that, like Ambassadors, he is given some allowance for outfit, an allowance which all Ambassador and representational staff get for obvious reasons. For one thing, all climates that he has to visit are obviously not the same as Guyana's and, from that point of view alone, it would seem necessary to reimburse him for unusual expenses to provide clothes which are more in accord with the climatic conditions of some of the countries that he has got to visit. That, I think, Cde. Chairman, represents the rationale for this item.

The Chairman: Page 6, items 47 and 48

Mrs. DaSilva: I wish to make a comment on item 47 under Head 32 - Ministry of Regional Development, subhead 8 - Land and Water Transport. We are asked to provide a supplementary provision of \$24,290. The legend states: "To provide for the increased cost of fuel, spares and also freight charges for goods sent to the interior." I merely want to say that we

talked about the accuracy of estimates and we have had various explanations as to why they cannot be accuracy of estimates and we have had various explanations as to why they cannot be accurate. We are very reasonable; we are not asking for estimates up to the last cent but we are asking that the figures stated should not be open to ridicule by virtue of not being reasonably accurate. Why do we need a supplementary to provide for increased cost of fuel? These Estimates were done at the end of last year. The price of fuel as far as I am aware, has not increased for quite some months and certainly not since the Estimates were drawn up. These words "increased cost of fuel" are surely misleading and should be deleted from the legend. It should read "to provide for spares and also freight charges for goods to the interior." Has the cost of fuel really increased or is it just a mistake? Why is it listed here if it is not correct?

The Minister of Economic Development (Cde. Hope): Cde. Chairman, the hon. Member has found herself is a semantic difficulty. This has nothing to do with the increased unit cost of fuel but it has to do with the increased over-all cost of these items resulting from increased activities in the hinterland and an increase in the number of locations served by the Ministry of Interior Development.

The Chairman: We will revert to page 4, item 32 to 36, both items inclusive.

Mr. Singh: Item 32, under Head 20 - Ministry of Home affairs - Police, subhead 1 - Personal Emoluments. The original amount voted was \$11,996,095. The supplementary provision granted during the year was \$27,500 and the supplementary provision now sought, and which was advanced from the Contingencies Fund last year is, \$139,000. The legend states: "To provide for the recruitment of Special Constabulary personnel for Toll Stations." Could the hon. Minister explain the reason for this? Is there going to be a special sort of Force for the toll stations? What personnel are involved here? How is this going to operate? I know the toll stations have had guards for some time and one would presume that this is some special system being introduced. Could the hon. Minister tell us about it?

The Chairman: Cde Minister of Home Affairs.

Cde Mingo: Cde. Speaker when the toll stations were introduced on the Corentyne on the 1st August, 1975 it was found necessary to appoint 97 Special Constables. The trouble is that we do not want to use the regular Police because it is a question of wasting time. We do not necessarily want to have the regular Police doing this type of duty. It was therefore felt that we should have recruited a special type of Constable. These persons have been specially trained for that type of activity. We did not cater for this at the beginning of the year. It therefore became necessary to have a Supplementary Provision to be able to provide these 97 men who guard the toll stations on the Corentyne.

The Chairman: We will conclude the items on page 6 as well as items 56, 57 and 58 on page 7.

Mr. Singh: Which items on page 6 are to be completed, sir?

The Chairman: All the items except items 47 and 48.

Mr. Singh: I should like to speak on items 50, 53, 54 and 55.

Head 34 - Ministry of Works and Housing (Works)

Mr. Singh: On page 6 item 50, Subhead 43, Re-activation of Quarry, N.W.D. the voted provision was \$1,800,000. Supplementary provision now sought is \$76,000. The legend states: "To meet expenditure in connection with the re-activation of the Quarry at Kaituma." This money was advanced towards the end of last year. I would like to ask whether this \$76,000 was really spent or did some of it lapse. Also what is the position with respect to this quarry at Kaituma. Is it fully operational at the present time?

Item 53, under Head 38 - Ministry of Works and Housing (Communications) Post-Office, Subhead 3 - Miscellaneous: The voted provision was \$19,000 and the supplementary provision now sought is \$7,000. The legend is most interesting. It states: "To meet wages of Charwomen etc." I should like to ask: Did the accounting officer not estimate for charwomen in the sum originally asked for? One would have thought that it was basic that in a

miscellaneous vote, as in all the other Ministries the accounting officer would estimate for charwomen. Is there some special reason why the wages of charwomen were left out in the \$19,000 estimated in the miscellaneous vote for the Post Office? If this is so someone seems to be showing some great degree of incompetence.

In respect of item 54, Head 38 - Ministry of Works and Housing (Communication) e, Subhead 4 - Telephones the voted provision was \$120,000. Supplementary provision now sought is \$127,300 and the legend states: "To provide for the payment of outstanding telephone accounts for previous years." The hon. Minister of Finance just a while ago said that the fact that Supplementary provision sought does not mean that very great amounts are owing. In this case we see that the Post Office amount outstanding for telephone accounts for previous years is \$127,300. That amount could help the Corporation with its expansion programme. I do not propose to talk on this again but my information is that the sum owing to the Telecommunication Corporation run into millions of dollars, not thousands.

Item 55, Head 38 - Ministry of Works and Housing (Communications) Post Office, subhead 5 - Lighting. Here again we are talking about another Corporation, the Guyana Electricity Corporation. The Voted provision is \$60,000 and the supplementary provision now sought is \$37,600. The legend states: "Voted provision inadequate. Are arrears included in this? This is a matter where as in all the other corporations, serious action is necessary. If you estimate \$60,000 to be spent and you are asking for an additional sum which is more than 50 percent than somebody is doing a bad job of estimating.

I repeat *ad nauseam* that we do not expect anybody to be precise. We understand that these are only estimates and there will be a requirement for several thousands of dollars here or there. There is either over-estimation or under estimation. The tendency is to under estimate to keep the figures down, but you do not under estimate to the tune of over 50 per cent, and sometimes, as in the case of telephones over 100 per cent. That is not estimating; those are *guesstimates*. Nobody is asking for an exact figure; nobody is asking for a figure so nearly

precise that one would clap a person's back and say "well done!" We expect a supplementary of a few thousand dollars but not over 50 per cent and over 100 per cent of the original sum voted.

In respect of item 56 under Head 38, Ministry of Works and Housing (Communication) Post Office - Upkeep of Motor and Water Transport, the voted provision is \$18,000. Previous provision granted was \$19,000. In addition to that \$19,000 supplementary provision now sought is \$16,400. So that what is sought is not \$18,000 but \$18,000 plus \$19,000 plus an additional \$16,400. Someone seems to be continuing to do a very bad job of estimating in the Post Office Department.

In respect of item 57 subhead 10 - Stores and Equipment under the same Head 38, the same thing applies. Estimated Provision for Stores and Equipment was \$45,000. Supplementary provision sought and granted was \$25,000. Supplementary provision sought is \$20,400 bringing the additional sum sought to \$45,000 which is in addition to the \$45,000 originally approved: it states: "To meet increases in cost of overseas supplies and stamp albums for revenue stamps". Here again my understanding is that when ordering is done the invoices would give an indication of what kind of commitment is being made. Surely the accounting officers would have realised what they were letting themselves in for. Why is covering approval now sought for this additional expenditure? Have we received supplies of stamp albums or are they merely on order?

Item 58, Head 40 - Ministry of Works and Housing (Communication) Civil Aviation Subhead 18 - (New) Electricity. The Ministry is asking for \$128,000 as a new item. The legends states: "To meet cost of electricity supplied as Timehri International cart port." Well, as the Minister who was responsible for the construction of that Timehri International Airport and facilities, I do know that facilities for lighting existed there from the very beginning.

(Mr. Singh continued)

But we are only now being asked to provide \$128,000. Who was paying for this electricity before? Is it that nobody was paying for it from the very beginning and it is only now that the request is made for \$128,000 to pay the Electricity Corporation? If some other Ministry was paying for it then there should be a corresponding savings somewhere. If there is a corresponding saving I should like to know. If it is that nobody was paying before, then that again is incompetence and something should be done about that.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister of Works and Housing.

Cde. Naraine: Cde. Chairman, item 50, Reactivation for Quarry, North West District. The money asked for, \$76,000, for the quarry was spent during last year. If it is spent exactly to the nearest zero I would not be able to say, but substantially this sum has been spent. I should like to explain for the benefit of the hon. Leader of the Opposition that this expenditure shown here, the total expenditure, is part of a programme of expansion of stone-crushing capabilities. We find at the present moment that all the quarrying facilities available for the production of quarry products is just about 60 per cent of the national needs.

It has become necessary, therefore, to expand the quarrying facilities available for the production of quarry products is just about 60 per cent of the national needs.

It has become necessary, therefore, to expand the quarrying facilities on the Mazaruni River, as well as in the North West area. The programme for the expansion of the North West will involve the use of about 60,000 to \$100,000 ton of stone per annum. Therefore the Government felt that the re-activation of the Kaituma quarry is justified and necessary equipment has been ordered. Some other items of equipment have been purchased and put into use. The quarry has not yet been put into operation, because before this can be done the crushing equipment would have to be erected. That equipment is not yet in the country; it has been ordered but has not yet been delivered.

Item 55, Miscellaneous. The \$7,000 asked for here is in relation to the increased cost of cleaning offices. Because of increased activities and new post offices it has become necessary to increase the number of charpersons. I think that what has also happened is that through representation on behalf this category of worker there has been some adjustment upwards in the daily wages and this resulted in increased moneys being necessary.

Item 54, Telephones. The Leader of the Opposition is perfectly right. The Government is trying to settle these outstanding accounts and apparently this one for \$127,000 has been outstanding owing to certain accounts being disputed for a few years. This has now been settled and I do not think there will be need for this kind of substantial increase in future.

Item 55. Lighting Cde Chairman: Lighting is a very difficult thing to really estimate and one would expect that with increased activities and expansion of services this item would probably always be underestimated. What has been happening in most of these offices is that there have been meetings, discussion groups, seminars and other things going on principally in the evening. These entailed the additional use of electricity. For these reasons it has become necessary that the light bills be increased.

With respect to item 56, Upkeep of Motor and water transport, there has been demand for increase in services up the rivers and in places like the Upper Mazaruni Road Project, the Upper Mazaruni Development Authority area and in some of the National Service Centres. Because of these general demand for postal services the expenditure on boats, the upkeep of boats, water transport and vehicles has increased. Therefore we have found it necessary to ask for this additional sum of money.

Item 58, Electricity: I should like to correct the legend. It is not "car port" it should be airport, the entire airport facilities. In previous years the electricity plant at Timehri used to be maintained and operated under the general vote for Timehri. That was discontinued and the Guyana Electricity Corporation is now supplying current to the Timehri airport, the building and all the facilities there. The plant at Timehri is only utilised occasionally as a stand-by equipment.

This change took place early in the year and therefore there has been need for this expenditure to be put separately for payment to the Guyana Electricity Corporation. I can check and let the hon. Leader of the Opposition know, maybe at a later date whether there has been a saving on the airport vote or whether in fact it was anticipated that the expenditure would not be required on that subhead but in fact, by error it was not shown on this new head. I will check that and let the hon. Member know later. This is the explanation for it.

3.20 p.m.

Mr. Singh: On page 7, item 62, Head 41 - Ministry of Education and Social Development, Subhead 47 - (New) Contribution to the Institute of International Relations for 1973 and 1974. I presume that the contribution for 1975 will be sought during this year because we have voted nothing for 1975. I look forward to seeing that.

All these items can be dealt with together with those on page 8. My colleague would want to supplement what I have to say. I would like to say here as a general remark for items 63 to 73, that all seem to be cases where guesstimates were indulged in, instead of estimates. Let us take item 67 as an example, Head 48, Ministry of Education and Social Development, Queen's College, subhead 14, National Insurance. We are dealing with National Insurance on all these Items. The voted provision was \$10,000; the supplementary provision now sought is \$9,500 and in all these cases the legend states: "Voted provision inadequate."

Queen's College has a known staff. If there is a variation in staff how significant would that variation be to go drastically affect their contributions to National Insurance? Unless there is some other explanation forthcoming, I fail to see how somebody could under-estimate the N.I.S. contribution for everybody. They would know the staff of Queen's College; they would know what each member of the staff would have to pay. So how then could they under-estimate this vote by approximately 100 percent? \$100,000 was estimated. The staff is "X" number; then- salaries are so much; we estimate that their N.I.S. contributions would be \$10,000. Now, they say that this was inadequate and it should have been \$10,000 plus \$9,500 more; an additional 100 per cent. I say that

this is gross inefficiency. Somebody is not really doing his job and this is what permeates all these heads. It is time that the Government as a whole takes some very serious action in having more realistic accounting and estimates presented to this honourable House.

Chairman: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, does that complete all your question?

Mr. Singh: Sir, that is up to page 9, item 73. I thought that you were dealing with items up to item 73.

Chairman: No, I asked for question up to page 10.

Mr. Singh: Item 74 on page 9, Head 56 - Ministry of Education and Social Development - Probation and Welfare Service, subhead 1 - personal Emoluments. The voted provision was \$377,073; supplementary provision requested and granted, \$1,882; supplementary provision now sought, \$32, 188 and the legend states: "To provide for the regrading of salaries with effect from 1st January, 1973." Salaries were revised in 1973 - I was in the House when we did the revision - and payment was effected in 1973, shortly before the 1973 elections. Is this a further upgrading other than the upgrading which took place in 1973? We are dealing with the Probation and Welfare Service and the legend states that this is to provide for the regrading of salaries from 1st January, 1973. If we are talking about the 1973 upgrading then somebody did not estimate properly in respect of the amount required to meet the regrading. If I remember rightly, this is the only Ministry where I have come across a legend dealing with regrading from 1973. I should like an explanation for it.

Item 78, deals with Head 56, Ministry of Education and Social Development - Probation and Welfare Service, subhead 7, Maintenance of Compound: The word "compound" is singular but one would expect that it might include the plural. The voted provision was \$3,300; supplementary provision now sought is \$1,400 and the legend states: "To provide for the hire of bulldozer and dragline for the preparation of land for rice cultivation". I am not attuned to the intricacies of Government expenditure at this particular time but in the days when I knew it - and I was a junior accounting officer when I was in the Civil Service - I would not have expected that

the hire of a bulldozer and dragline for preparation of land for rice cultivation would have found any place under a heading entitled "Maintenance of Compound." What has the maintenance of a compound to do with the preparation of land for rice cultivation? Maybe there is some explanation which would explain this apparent inconsistency. I would certainly like to have an explanation for this item appearing under this head and to find out what it is all about in respect of Probation and Welfare Service.

Page 10. Again, items 79 to 84 deals with Electricity. These all concern the Ministry of Education and all of them are in respect of schools. The legend against each item states: "Voted provision inadequate in respect of electricity." Let us take, for example, one of them, item 81. The Ministry of Education and Social Development estimated for electricity for the Bladen Hall Secondary School - Multilateral, the sum of \$3,000 as being sufficient for that school for 1975. The supplementary provision now sought is \$42,544. Now how in heaven's name do you estimate \$3,000 and then come and ask for an additional \$42,544? Surely it should be quite obvious to the layman's eye that a building such as that would require more than \$3,000 that what would be needed for 1975 and would be more in the nature of \$45,000 as it is here rather than \$3,00. Who was responsible for estimating these figures of \$3,000 or is there some reason? Is there some extra-curricula activities? Were there P.N.C activities in the building which accounted for this?

3.30 p.m.

If that is so and if the Government estimates that there would be such activities, well, the, for heaven's sake, put down an estimate for it. Instead of putting down \$3,000 so that we would know that that is the money that will be spent from the taxpayers in respect of electricity for the school. That is all for page 10.

Mrs. DaSilva: I wish to deal with item 63 on page 7, going right through page 8 to item 73 on page 9, on the question of National Insurance. It would be interesting to quote these figures in relation to the amount of money spent on National Insurance which, I wish to assure you, sir, as you well know, we support 100 per cent. We want the Ministry of labour to get the National

Insurance so that we can get the benefits. We may even get the old age pensions realistically increase. From items 63 to 73, we voted a sum of \$78,415. We have had a previous supplementary provision of \$21,000 and now we are being asked for supplementary provision of \$48,900 so the addition, since the Estimates were passed, amounts to \$69,900, an increase of well over 75 percent on the requirements for National Insurance.

As Leader of the Opposition explained, there is a card system and the staff of a school are well known, maybe there could be a few people more, but not to the extent that there will be 75 per cent increase required. The legend just says: "Voted provision inadequate." Now there may be two explanations why this has happened and I should like to get the Ministry of Education, or the Minister who will answer the question, to enlighten us in this House.

First of all, we know that for some time, I think it was year before the last, Government took over the handling of the stamping of the teachers' card, etc. we had cause to comment on this before. I have had to deal with the unsatisfactory condition that prevailed because the teachers' cards were all in arrears; they were not stamped up to date. I had even commented that if a private business employer had kept his employees' cards in the condition in which the Government is keeping the teachers', where they were way behind and in being stamped up to date, and an inspector came from the N.I.S., he would have been in a very serious trouble. But, of course, it is the Government, it is behind hand, the inconvenience caused to teachers if they were being transferred from one school to another does not seem to bother the Government.

What is the reason for this fantastic request for the stamping of the National Insurance cards? It is possible to estimate fairly accurately how much will be needed because the number of persons on the staff of a school is pretty well known. Is it the explanation that the Ministry is so behind hand in the stamping of the N.I.S. cards and still has not caught up? Does this figure represent the arrears of money plus the present money to bring the cards up to date?

For example, on page 6, item 48, there was a supplementary vote requested for National Insurance for the Ministry of Regional Development of \$5,700 and the legend states: "To provide for increased contribution due to additional posts approved." "There is a straightforward legend giving a fair and reasonable explanation. Is that the case here? And is it that it was not put in the legend accurately? I was speaking to the Minister of Regional Development a little while ago about the fuel costs. He went about it in a rather roundabout way, but what it boiled down to was that the legend really was not accurate. Is this legend inaccurate in that there have been additional posts? Or is it that the Ministry is behindhand, it is catching up, and it has arrears of N.I.S. stamps to put on cards? What is the explanation for this enormous increase in money requested for National Insurance?"

On page 9, item No. 78, subhead 7 - Maintenance of Compound, under Head 56 - Ministry of Education and Social Development - Probation and Welfare Services, I wish to use the legend to ask a question and to draw attention to a very serious matter before this House. The legend states: "To provide for the hire of bulldozer and dragline for preparation of land for rice cultivation." I am very pleased particularly that the hon. Minister of Home Affairs is in the House this afternoon because it is something that concerns his area, coming as it does under the question of Police.

I travel up and down the East Coast Road nearly every day. I live on the East Coast and it is the only road between Georgetown and Rosignol. It is heavily populated, and there is a great flow of traffic up and down. Since it is the only road we have on the East Coast, if anyone wants to move a bulldozer from Lusignan to, say, Blairmont, or if anyone wants to bring any machinery from Mahaica to Beterverwagting, he has to use that road.

About two weeks ago a huge dragline was moved along the East Coast Road. This was in the Triumph-Beterverwagting area. There was no fault to be found with that, the police were escorting the machine; nobody was getting in the way, there was no question of an accident involving vehicles. What was very serious was the risk. The Electricity Corporation has been

talking about the danger of kite flying. The overhead high-powered wires that are high but hang low in relation to this tall vehicle made the situation very dangerous. There was a man balancing very precariously on the top of the dragline with a pole in his hand. I think it has a piece of rubber, maybe that was the insulation, or the wheels were the insulation, I do not know. The vehicle was moving slowly down, the traffic policeman was diverting traffic and this man was balancing with this pole and pushing up the electrical wires. I was worried because I thought he could have been electrocuted. Sparks were flying in all directions. This was very unsatisfactory state of affairs and one day we are going to have a very serious accident. I think it is very worrying and I wonder if it is possible to do something, when these very big vehicles have to be moved, in order not to endanger the people whose duty it is to get them along. This man could not cope with what he was doing and, in view of the fact that we have had constant reminders of the dangers of high voltage wires and children flying kites, I think in this special care should be taken to make adequate provision when big vehicles have to pass.

The Minister of Home Affairs (Cde Mingo): With respect to item No. 62, I wish to inform the hon. Leader of the Opposition that there has been provision for 1976 of \$75,414 for this Institute of International Relations.

With respect to items Nos. 62 to 73, National Insurance, notification was received from the N.I.S. that with respect to the previous years, there had been certain arrears and so this provision is sought to pay these arrears. It is expected that this will not recur. The whole situation will balance itself out.

With respect to item 74 on the question of providing personal emoluments for the Probation and Welfare Service, the legend did say, "To provide for the regrading of salaries with effect from 1st January, 1973." What happened here is, as a result of the job evaluation reclassification scheme, there were some appeals made by certain personnel in this Department. The Tribunal which sat to hear these appeals gave a decision in favour of these officers so it was found that we had to pay all those arrears of salary because of the reclassifications a result of those appeals.

3.40 p.m.

With respect to the item 78, to provide for the hire of bulldozer and dragline for the preparation of land for rice cultivation, this compound is at the Essequibo Boys' School. What happened really is that a part of the compound was converted to rice field and it was necessary to do this preparation for rice cultivation. The crop has been reaped and only have been able to get very good results. With respect to electricity and all these items from **79** to **84**, if you notice Cde. Chairman, these are all new schools. They make up the six multilateral schools which were opened last year. An estimate was made as to the cost of electricity which was very inaccurate as a result of which these now are the true figures. So, the supplementary provision had to be sought to have this regularised. We hope that this will not occur in the future.

The Chairman: Page 11, items **85** to **89**.

Mr. Singh: Item **88**, dealing with Head **67**, Ministry of Health, Hospitals and Dispensaries etc., subhead **22** - Inmates Labour - Mahaica Hospital. The voted provision was **\$275,000**, the supplementary provision granted during the year was **\$53,000** and the supplementary provision now sought is **\$89,000**. The legend states: "To meet additional expenditure resulting from the revision of wages." We certainly have no quarrel at all with revision of wages for Inmate Labour - Mahaica Hospital. But if this revision of wages was as a result of the **1973** pay out and revision of wages, why then have we kept these poor people waiting until **1975** for the moneys in respect of the revision of wages? Apart from those cases dealt with by the Board of Review, the wages of civil servants and Government workers generally were revised and payment mad before the **1973** elections. So it alarms me to see that this very significant sum of **\$89,000**, was paid during **1975**. Could the hon. Minister explain why it is that these people had to wait so long for the revision of wages?

In respect of item **89**, Head **70** - Ministry of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation, subhead **8** - Maintenance and Operation of Vehicles, the sum of **\$20,000** was requested in **1975** for maintenance and operation of vehicles and \$20,000 is now sought as a supplementary provision. I would like to suggest to the hon. Minister that on the next occasion he should ask for **\$40,000** for the beginning and avoid this business of having to come to us in Parliament here asking for more money in respect of maintenance and operating of vehicles. We hear the same

explanation: cost have gone up, Guyana is on the move, there is more and more spending. If we know all of this, double the amount and let us be with it. We should not have to talk about it and deal with it here time and time again.

Mrs. DaSilva: Item 85, page 11, Head 63 - Ministry of Health, subhead 30. This is a new subhead - Contribution towards UN Fund for Drug Abuse Control. We have asked to provide \$1,250 and the legend reads "To meet Guyana's contribution for 1975." We would find it most interesting if the hon. Minister would give us a little run down on how Guyana will benefit. We have no objection to the provision being sought, but how will Guyana benefit from the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control? We are very fortunate in Guyana, unlike many countries of the world, that we do not have a drug abuse problem. We have the odd case here and there. May we always be in a position to keep that down. I was wondering what help we would get from the United Nations Fund from Drug Abuse Control. Can we have some information on this new contribution?

The Chairman: Cde Minister of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation.

Cde Minister of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation: (Cde. Green): In respect of item 85, the hon. member is accurate, we do not at the moment have a drug problem but we contribute to this Fund which is new. We feel that to maintain that position, we need to keep up to date with the techniques of prevention and the techniques of detection. We contribute and participate in the conferences and acquire literature so that we can maintain the happy position we have at the moment where there is no drug abuse in the Republic.

With respect to inmate labour, the Cde. Leader of the Opposition did not quite complete his research, Cde Chairman.

The Chairman: I think he likes to be referred to as "the hon. Leader of the Opposition."

Mr. Green: I apologise. The hon. Leader of the Opposition did not quite complete his research for if he had, he would have discovered that the particular group referred to here was the

subject of a special enquiry and subsequent negotiation and, therefore, they came after the period to which he refers. They did not come in the job evaluation exercise of the public service.

The question dealing with maintenance and operation of vehicles has been answered many times and the story is consistent. In this particular section, consistent with our ideological position and our national and political thrust, we need to ensure optimum mobilisation of our people, and hence, even though we gave an estimate at the beginning of the year, in this Ministry we need to respond to the demands and enthusiasm of the people in their respective communities.

The Chairman: On the same page 11, items 90, 91, 92 and 93; on the following page items 94, and 95 and on page 12, items 96 to 103.

Mr. Singh: Items 99 and 100. Item 99, Head 77 - Ministry of Finance - Accountant General, subhead 9 - Sundries: The voted provision is \$8,000. That was the sum which was estimated as expenditure for the whole of 1975. The supplementary provision now sought is \$60,000. This makes a total expenditure of \$68,000 for the year.

3.50 p.m.

The Legend reads: "Voted provision inadequate." I do think that the Government owes a duty to this honourable House. From a voted provision of \$8,000 which was thought to be sufficient, to a supplementary provision of \$60,000 is indeed fantastic and to merely put a legend which says "Voted provision inadequate", is, to my mind, an insult to the Opposition. Are we not entitled to some explanation other than that? There must have been something extraordinary to necessitate this request. This is an increase of nearly 800 per cent. Surely that should not be merely passed over by a statement "Voted provision inadequate." What was the particular circumstance that caused this to move from \$8,000 to a total of \$68,000?

On item 100, Head 77 - Ministry of Finance - Accountant General, subhead 15 - Leave Passage Public Affairs, I wish to make a general remark. I know of no Leave Passage Public Affairs. I think it should be "Public Officers". In the past, we have always had the greatest

respect for the efficiency of this particular Department and I am grieved that there seems to be a lessening of this high standard of efficiency to which we have been accustomed. I would therefore make an appeal that in the future there should be a resumption of this high standard of efficiency so that we do not get bald legends like "Voted provision inadequate" and "Leave Passage Public Affairs.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister of Finance

The Minister of Finance: (Cde. Hope) Cde. Chairman, I wish to agree with the hon. Leader of the Opposition that it is unfortunate that a typographical error appeared at this particular point but we have become accustomed to the diligence with which the hon. Leader of the Opposition searches out for typographical errors, no matter how detailed and complex the matter we are discussing. It is a typographical error and it will be corrected in due course.

On the question of "Sundries" Cde. Chairman, this is an item which is even more uncertain than miscellaneous. It is sundries, it is a catch-all and nobody pretends - certainly I will not pretend to be able to make an exact estimate of this particular item. Some years it goes below \$8,000. As a matter of fact in one year it was as low as \$4,000. Another year it went slightly higher \$11,000. This year, because of certain other circumstances the catch-all was a little bit greater. Next year it will be lower.

I am not in a position to detail the various sundry items which went into this item, Cde. Chairman. If it is important we can advise the hon. Leader of the Opposition at a later stage. If the hon. Leader of the Opposition wants a detailed inventory of what went into this item I shall get one of my efficient staff to prepare the long list of very small items I am sure went into this vote. It is an uncertain item and I am not in a position to promise that it will keep at a regular level all through.

The Chairman: Capital Estimates page 1 other than items 2 and 3. page 2.

Mr. Singh: page 2 item 10, 11, 14 and 15. Item 10 Division XXIV Ministry of Works and Housing (Communications), subhead 2 - Purchase of Equipment. The Voted Provision was \$79,000. Supplementary Provision now sought is \$398, 850 and the legend says "To carry out the telecommunication expansion programme in the N.W.D."

Telecommunication is dealt with by the Guyana Telecommunication Corporation. Normally, if there is some need for assistance, the Government would either guarantee a loan or, in some cases, would make a subsidy to the particular Corporation. What I do remember very vividly is that the Prime Minister had promised the inhabitants of the North West Region that by December 1975 they would have a telephone service, a direct dialling system. I wonder what happened - This promise was made early in the year - to cause this item not to have been put in the Estimates during this year or at some time before now.

This item is coming to us now under Ministry of Works (Communication) for nearly \$400,000 as a part of the Government's expenditure rather than a part of the corporation's expenditure as such. Obviously, this money was handed to the corporation and spent by the corporation. I wonder what was the reason for this. Maybe one of the reasons is that the Corporation did not have the liquid capital. Or probably it is because the Government had not been paying its telephone bills. Probably it is a twinge of conscience on the part of the Government because it has not been paying its telephone bills. It now feels a moral obligation to the Corporation and has advanced this money.

It does seem to be a departure from the regular pattern where the Corporation provides the service either on its own or with a subsidy from the Government. Here the money is coming out of the vote for the Ministry of Works and Housing - (Communications). Would the hon. Minister tell us about the programme? I think direct dialling was initiated in December, but the system has some teething problems; what is the position now and is this the end of the expenditure?

Item 11. This is a new item - Post Office Corporation, Expenses of Formation. The Supplementary Provision sought is \$15,000 to meet expenditure estimated for the year. We have

heard of this new Post Office Corporation for some time now. We asked about it in December last year during the debate on the Estimates and we were told that it was about to be formed, that plans were about to be finalised in respect of this. However, it has not materialised as yet. Could the hon. Minister bring us up to that in respect of this Post Office Corporation?

Item 14 Division XXIX - Ministry of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation Local Government, subhead 3 - Community Development. The voted provision was \$2,600,000. Supplementary provision now sought is \$200,000. The legend states "To meet expenditure in connection with Fish and other projects." We know of the great interest that the hon. Minister has in respect of fish. Information has filtered back to the Office of the Leader of the Opposition that, in fact within recent times the fish that is sold by the Ministry is being bought, to a large extent, by vendors who buy it at a cheap price and then sell it as a much higher price. This is wrong and we wonder what can be done to curb this practice.

But sir, we want to go further and suggest that this Ministry of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation and Local Government should not be dealing in fish. Fish should be dealt with by the specialised agency of the Government, the Guyana Marketing Corporation. The G.M.C. is equipped to deal with this sort of thing. It is therefore very easy for the G.M.C. to handle this fishy business and believe me there are those who suggest that it is fishy in more ways than one. I would suggest that the Guyana Marketing Corporation should handle this business. Let the Ministry of National Mobilisation, if necessary, hand over their staff, their vehicles, their equipment, to supplement those at the Guyana Marketing Corporation who, I say, have the expertise to deal with this business of selling fish.

Item 15 Division XXII, Ministry of Finance, Subhead 14 - External Loans. This is a new item. The Supplementary Provision being sought is \$800,000 and the legend states: "To provide for credits and other financial assistance to Commonwealth countries and regional institutions." I wonder whether for my benefit and for the benefit of all of us here, including the Press, you sir, the Hon. Minister can give this honourable House some background information on it, how it is

working and what our relationship with these colonial territories and regional institution are. If possible he could perhaps also give a breakdown of the credits and other financial assistance mentioned in the legend here.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister of Works and Housing.

Cde. Naraine: Cde. Chairman, item 10, Purchase of Equipment. This is for the North West Communication expansion. The Leader of the Opposition is quite right in that the sum sought is for the Direct Distance Dialling system. At first it was thought that a sort of radio system would have been adequate but it was afterwards decided to put in a Direct Distant Dialling system. Because of the very substantial cost and the present small number of customers that would be using the system, the Government decided to bear the initial cost of the system and therefore the money has been voted in the Estimate under Communication. In fact the money was transferred to the Guyana Telecommunication Corporation and the Corporation has carried out the work. The system was put into operation during last year but there are some initial teething problems and these are being looked at now. We hope that the system will be put back into operation by the end of the month and that the people in the area will benefit from these facilities which the Prime Minister promised some time ago.

Item 11, subhead 28, Post Office Corporation. The sum required here was to pay the auditors who have been employed in terms of working out the feasibility of the project. I know that the Leader of the Opposition has been asking when the Corporation is going to be established there will be need for certain legislation to be passed. These have now been drafted. But more importantly it is necessary to work out suitable arrangements with the staff and the Union so that when the Corporation is established there will be no malfunctioning or disruptive elements operating and preventing the smooth and efficient running of the Corporation.

We feel, therefore, that all administrative matters should be settled both with the staff and the two trade unions so that when we establish the Corporations we will be doing so with the full confidence and participation of all the parties concerned. I am not in a position today to announce

when this will happen but we are working on it and as soon as we can clear up these various points the Corporation will be established.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation.

Minister of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation: (Cde Green): Cde Chairman, I will resist the temptation to comment on the banal insinuations of the hon. Leader of the Opposition was speaking, we need to advise the hon. Leader of the Opposition what cooperatives and National Mobilisation really mean. **(Interruption)**

On this question of fish which the hon. Leader of the Opposition seems so interested in, I should like to advise that the Government and the Party did not see it as a Guyana Marketing Corporation exercise. We saw it, at this stage, as a community service for some of the rural communities and the urban centre. Because of the protein deficiency which is part of every developing country, we felt we should organise a system where we can get fish in fair quantities so that people in the respective and various communities could have a supply.

I will investigate the complaint made by the Leader of the Opposition that vendors are purchasing the fish wholesale and retailing it at much higher prices. But from the system we have in operation this is highly improbable through nothing is impossible. We have had to provide facilities for storage and distribution which costs are not passed on to the consumers. As you know we sell fish at 30c per lb. This is fresh fish and is the cheapest in the world. We feel that it is providing a service to improve the health of the nation. The sum requested was an additional amount which we did not anticipate because recently we started to supply this fish to only to areas contiguous to Georgetown but to the Mazaruni and to some of the wood cutting grants as far as Winiperu and other areas. This has sent the cost up.

4.20 p.m.

The Chairman: Cde. Leader of the House, I wonder if you would move the Motion for us to continue until the business is finished?

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 9

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leaders of the House. (Cde. Ramsaroop): Pursuant the provisions of Standing Order No. 9 I respectfully move that we continue discussion on the consideration of all the financial papers beyond the statutory hour of 4'o'clock until such time as the discussion is concluded.

The Chairman: Is this agreed?

Mr. Singh: I agree.

The Chairman: We will continue the business until we are finished. Cde. Minister of Finance. Item 15 on page 2 of the Capital Estimates.

Cde. Hope: Cde. Chairman, this item, External Loans, really represents a decision that the Government has come to, to assist certain of the less developed countries of the region who were and still are experiencing some financial difficulties. As a group, the more developed countries of the region have agreed, together with certain non-regional assistance, to help the LDC's in their financial problems. We had expected that this money would have been payable in December, 1975. We had provided the money by contingencies fund. But as it turned out there was a snag which has to do with some of the payments by one of the non-regional Governments so the payments was not made in 1975. The payments will still have to be made in 1976. So, although it was provided, I must admit, the money was not spent.

The Chairman: This completes consideration of all the items.

Question –

"That the Committee of Supply approve of the proposals set out in Financial Paper 1/1976 of supplementary provision of the current and capital estimate for the period ending December, 1975 totaling \$7,240,612."

put, and agreed to.

5.5.76

National Assembly

4.20 - 4.30 p.m.

Assembly resumed.

The Speaker: Cde. Minister of Finance.

Cde. Hope: I beg to report that the Committee of Supply has approved of the proposals set out in Financial Paper 1 of 1976 and I now move that the Assembly doth agree with the Committee in the said resolution.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

"Be it resolved that the Committee of Supply approve of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 2/1976 - Advances made from the Contingencies Fund on the Current and Capital Estimates during 1976, totaling \$2,185,032."

(The Minister of Finance)

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister of Finance.

The Minister of Finance (Cde. Hope): In accordance with Article 80(2) of the Constitution, I signify that the Cabinet has recommended for the consideration of the Assembly, the Motion for the approval of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 2 of 1976 - Advances made from the Contingencies Fund on the Current and Capital Estimates during 1976, totaling \$2,185,032, and I now move the Motion.

Question proposed.

The Chairman: We will now consider page by page the Schedule to the Financial Paper. Page 1 and page 2.

Mr. Singh: On page 2, item 8, Head 80 - Ministry of Finance, subhead 12, (New) Dissolution Expenses - Post Office Savings Bank. The sum sought is \$2,000. The legend states: "To provide for payment of salaries and miscellaneous expenses for January, 1976." I wonder whether the hon. Minister again would bring us up to date in respect of the Post Office Savings Bank. I was under the impression that the Post Office Savings Bank had in fact been completely taken over and had now been absorbed into the Guyana National Co-operative Bank. Is this the end of the dissolution expenses? What is in fact the situation at the moment?

The Chairman: Cde. Minister of Finance.

Cde. Hope: I would like to say that so far as I know this item would represent final expenses in relation to the dissolution of the Post Office Savings Bank. We are not aware of any dangling expenses anywhere else by this item, I think, is the final cost.

The Chairman: Capital Estimates. Page 1.

Mr. Singh: I will speak just briefly on items 1 to 4. Item 1, Division 1X- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, subhead 2, Acquisition of Overseas Offices and Residences: The supplementary provision now sought is \$45,000 "To provide for the purchase of High Commissioner's residence in Lusaka, Zambia." We had agreed that in these days it was a good thing to purchase residences rather than rent them. It was economically a sound proposition. Could the hon. Minister tell us what kind of expenditure is involved here? This sum of \$45,000 must be part of the total costs. How much did the residence cost and what are the terms of payment if they are available for our information.

Item 2, Division XIII - Ministry of Agriculture, subhead 13, North West Region. The supplementary provision now sought is \$802,000 and the legend states "To provide for station allowances to employees at Matthews Ridge." This is under the Ministry of Agriculture but I was hoping that the Ministry of Finance could reply to this and give us some information as to why we are only now making provision for \$802,000 which in fact has been advances from the Contingencies Fund for station Allowances for Employees at Matthews Ridge. This is a lot of money; it is nearly a million dollars as compared with the total voted provision for 1976 of only

\$467,938. There must have been a very generous increase in these station allowances or probably an introduction of station allowances for employees at Matthews Ridge. I am not sure whether they did have any station allowances before or whether this is something new. It is possible to give us the rate or comparable rate or scale on which these station allowances are paid? Are they retroactive? Do they date back further than last year in respect of this Matthews Ridge area? It is a lot of money, as I said.

Item 3, Division XXII - Ministry of Works and Housing (Works), subhead 18, Cultural Centre. The voted provision was \$250,000, Supplementary provision now sought is \$400,000 and the legend states: "To meet payments to the Contractor for works done." We all remember CARIFESTA in 1972 and the commitment that the Cultural Centre would have been completed in time for CARIFESTA.

4.30 p.m.

CARIFESTA has come and gone. It is now 1976. If we total up the various costs which have been appearing in the Estimates from year to year, it would appear that this Cultural Centre has cost us well over 100 per cent more than the amount originally estimated. There must have been a penalty clause in the contract with the contractor. Has this penalty clause ever been invoked against the contractor? Or is it a question where the penalty clause cannot be invoked because of some dereliction on our part, because of some snag, some responsibility on the part of the Government, some contribution by the Government in respect of the non-completion of this Cultural Centre by the contractors? If there was a penalty clause which was invoked, we would be very happy to hear exactly what happened. As far as my information goes, the Cultural Centre is now being completed by the Government itself - I see Government equipment there - and not by the contractors. If that is no so, I would be happy to hear otherwise.

Will it really be completed, as we have heard, for 26th May this year? It certainly would be an achievement of this Cultural Centre at long last to be completed for some important occasion, namely, 26th May this year, our tenth anniversary of Independence.

Item 4, Division XXII - Ministry of Works and Housing (Works), subhead 32 - Surveys. The original provision was \$25,000. Supplementary provision now sought is \$300,900. The legend says: "To provide for the purchase and renovation of vessels from U.S.A.I.D. Excess Property Department. Presumably we are still dealing with the capitalists and I wonder whether the hon. Minister would give us details of these vessels which are to be purchased from the U.S.A.I.D. Excess Property Department. Where are these vessels to be used? It would be interesting to know how these vessels would alleviate the present transportation problem in the country.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister of Finance.

Cde. Hope: The amount provided here, so far as I am aware, is to meet the cost of acquisition of a building in Lusaka for the High Commissioner as well as to do some minimal repairs, and to pay the legal expenses associated with the conveyancing of that building. The total sum is being paid in cash, that is why this sum of money was required to supplement what was originally provided in order to satisfy the needs of that particular building.

I must admit that originally, we had hoped that the fund would have been adequate to meet the cost of two buildings because we have to house not only the High Commissioner but also the Deputy High Commissioner in circumstances where rental premises are very difficult to come by, but we have proceeded to provide only for the High Commissioner. This sum of \$45,000 was required to supplement that original sum of \$300,000. It meets the whole cost associated with the acquisition of that particular building.

With regard to item 2, North West Region, this is a very long-standing matter. It dates back, as far as I know, to a number of years. The workers at Matthews Ridge particularly have been claiming allowances which were normally payable to officers working in the hinterland but resident say on the coast. Many of them, I am told, were people who, in fact, were resident in the area, but that particular area is one which attracts these allowances.

There has been a lot of disputation on this particular matter and the question has been going backward and forward for a number of years. Cabinet decided recently on the representation of the Public service Union to accord the workers these allowances dating back a number of years, it might be 1st January, 1976; the allowances will not be paid as the area has been fully developed. It has a certain amount of infrastructure which puts it out of the pale of a region to which these allowances should apply, particularly for workers who are normally resident in the area. But it is a commitment and the Government has decided to pay them the allowances dating back a number of years, hence this sum of money has now been provided.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister of Works and Housing.

The Minister of Works and Housing (Cde. Naraine): The Cultural Centre will definitely be ready for the 26th May. **[Interruption]** This Government always makes the impossible come true.

There may be a little incidental site works to be done in terms of the concrete drains but the Culture Centre is substantially finished. I would really be a structure that every Guyanese could be very proud of. Already, we have had many visitors from abroad who are experienced in the construction of centres like these and they have been in high praise of this building.

For instance, in the stage arrangements, there is provision for, I believe, forty background stage changes and these can all be done in maybe a minute or two and therefore the Guyanese public will be getting something that they have been waiting for for a long time, but something which I believe they richly deserve. My information is that it will be the best in the Caribbean, but, of course, I have not seen all in the Caribbean.

I do not think that it is right or that it should be allowed to be on record that this Cultural Centre would have been finished for CAIFESTA in 1972. It was started for something to be done there in 1972 and, in fact, for CARIFESTA, part of the stage was finished and a tent was erected and the site was used. But one would not expect even in the more developed countries to have a theatre like this completely air conditioned with all the facilities for sound, air-handling, stage arrangements, dressing room and other arrangements⁴³ where there can be broadcasting from

inside the building, where film shows can take place, and where you can have a hall that can orient itself not only for theatrical performances but for conferences and other functions like this, one would not expect such a building to be finished in less than about three years. We have taken a little bit longer but one must be understand that this has been done substantially for local resources. Except for the stage arrangements, the design, the construction and much of the materials including the chairs in the building have all been done out of local resources, utilizing local skills and local professional services.

4.40 p.m.

It is the first one we have done and I am informed that we are already getting invitations from neighbouring countries to perform in a consulting capacity, in assisting other nearby countries to put up similar facilities in their country and, therefore, we have benefited from a good building. We will also now become the experts on this particular type of construction for the Caribbean and even further afield because Guyana is making a name for itself in countries that are considered a lot more developed than we are.

As you probably know, Cde. Chairman, one of our Architects, George Henry, has been invited by the President of Mexico and he is now designing a monument for the World University that is being constructed in that country. I gather that that design is finished and is now being submitted.

This building depicts a lot of good things in terms of what this Government is doing and in terms of what we have been able to mould, utilizing local resources, I am sure the Opposition and the Government should be very proud of what has happened here. I am not in a position to say whether it is going to cost 50 per cent or 100 per cent more than what was estimated, but all I would like to point out is that the original estimate was not for a building as elaborate as the one constructed.

Furthermore, we have had fantastic escalation of costs between 1972 and now the prices of certain types of material have increased threefold. Therefore, if the cost is somewhat more than what was estimated, this is what we should expect in any case. In addition, we have, on this side,

provided a large tarmac area for parking because both streets on the north and on the east of the Cultural Centre are fast moving traffic routes and to park vehicles on these roads would be dangerous. Parking arrangements are, therefore, being provided now to take, I gather, as many as about 300 to 400 cars. The parking area would also be dual-purposed. It is not only to be used for parking vehicles, but will be marked off for playing basket-ball and net-ball. So the area will be in constant use all the time. It is good that the hon. Leader of the Opposition asks these questions, but I sometimes feel that he knows all the answers. As he said, he has to work to justify his position.

Cde. Chairman, in relation to the Surveys, Subhead 32, the two ships that are purchased, one is a tug that has been purchased from U.S.A.I.D. excess stocks and this tug is being renovated in California so that it can be used as a hydrographic survey board in Guyana. The other vessel is a barge and this will be utilized as part of the dredging operation. The facilities for the grab and the crane, part of the dredge, are already in the country and the barge for putting the crane and the grab is now being provided for this boat.

The reason why we have had to go back to what appears to be a rather substantial supplementary provision is that we thought, when framing the Estimates last year, that this sum might have been spent last year but, in fact, there has been a spill over into this year and provision was not made for the expenditure this year. So the equipment supplied will be utilized, one for hydrographic survey and the other one for dredging the channels for navigation. I would like the hon. Leader of the Opposition to know that we have no quarrel with capitalist countries. They can carry on with their capitalist way of living. All we say is that they should leave us alone to carry on our socialist way of living. We have no quarrel with anybody; we will continue trading with them.

The Chairman: This completes consideration of all the items. I will now put the Question.

Question –

That the Committee of Supply approve of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 2/1976 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates for the period totalling \$2,185,032.

put, and agreed to.

Assembly resumed.

Cde. Hope: Cde. Speaker, I beg to report that the Committee of Supply has approved of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 2 of 1976 and I now move that the Assembly doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL PAPER NO. 3/1976

“Be it resolved that the Committee of Supply approve of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 3/1976 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current Estimates for the period ending 30th April, 1976, totalling \$3,000,005.
[The Minister of Finance]

The Chairman: The Assembly will resolve itself into Committee of supply to consider Financial Paper No. 3 of 1976.

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

Cde. Hope: In accordance with Article 80(2) of the Constitution, I signify that the Cabinet has recommended for consideration by the Assembly the Motion for the approval of the proposals

set out in Financial Paper No. 3 of 1976 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current Estimates for the period ending 30th April, 1976, totalling \$3,005,005. I now move the Motion.

Question proposed.

The Chairman: We will now consider the Financial Paper page by page. Page 1.

Mr. Singh: Page 1, item 3, Head 20 – Ministry of Home Affairs, subhead 1 – Personal Emoluments. The supplementary provision is only \$1. The legend states: “To provide on the Permanent Establishment – Pensionable, for the creation with effect from 1st May, 1976, inclusive, of one Supernumerary Office of Permanent Secretary on salary range A40.” The question I would like to ask is what is the position in respect of the substantive office of Permanent Secretary. Is he going somewhere else? Is there some special assignment? If so, what is that? Since we are being asked to provide only \$1, presumably there would be some vote that would meet the salary of either the Supernumerary Permanent Secretary or the substantive Permanent Secretary or there would be savings in this same Personal Emoluments vote. I wonder whether the hon. Minister would enlighten us in respect of this Supernumerary Permanent Secretary post and the \$1 being asked for.

In respect of item 4, this is a new subhead, subhead 20, under Head 20, Ministry of Home Affairs and it is entitled Tenth Anniversary Celebrations. The sum being requested in 1976 as Supplementary Provision is \$3 million. “To provide for expenses in connection with the celebration of the 10th Anniversary of Independence.” And the note states: “An amount of \$1,000,000 has been advanced from the Contingencies fund.

4.50 p.m.

Sir, in these days \$3 million to be used for sport during the celebrations is a fantastic sum of money. Not only is \$3 million being asked for now but we were not even done the courtesy of putting it in the 1976 Estimates when we debated those Estimates last year December. I hear a murmur that we did not know what it would cost. I say that even now we do not know what it will

cost. If they can ask for \$3 million now could they not have asked for \$3 million in December last year. Let us not be hypocrites, let us not fool ourselves. Did we not know that we would celebrate the 10th Anniversary of Independence on the 26th May? Of course we knew. Since last year we were singing about the celebrations. Yet not one cent was voted in the 1976 Estimates. There was not even a token provision. Now shortly before the 26th May, we areas to vote \$3 million.

I would understand if I were told that this money or part of this money would be used, for example, to pay double the old age pensions during May. Why don't they pay the people who are receiving Social Assistance one and a half times more during the month of May. That would be a good thing, nobody could quarrel about that. What will this sum of money be used for? Will it be used for celebrations alone? What celebrations will cost \$3 million? I have looked at the celebrations we have had in the past. None of them has been any where near \$3 million.

Item 5, Head 30 – Ministry of National Development Subhead 1 – Personal emoluments and item 6, Head 32 – Ministry of Economic Development, subhead 1 – Personal emoluments. Both are asking for a Supernumerary Office of Permanent Secretary and both are asking for a token provision of \$1. Where would the substantive officer in these two Ministries be? Who will be paying their salaries? Will there be savings in this Vote?

The Chairman: Cde. Minister of Home Affairs.

The Minister of Home Affairs (Cde. Mingo): Cde. Chairman, with respect to item 3, the acting Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs has now been transferred to the Public Service Ministry on a special assignment. As a result of this a supernumerary Permanent Secretary has been appointed in the Ministry of Home Affairs so that he could perform the special functions he has to perform.

The Chairman: Is it possible Cde. Minister for you to answer the two questions dealing with the Permanent Secretaries. I think perhaps the hon. Leader of the Opposition is asking about

transfers and assignment. Maybe he would want to know where the Permanent Secretary from the Ministry of National Development has gone and who is taking his place.

Cde. Mingo: In the case of item 5, the acting Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of National Development has also been transferred. He is on a special assignment and so it became necessary for him to be appointed a Supernumerary from the 21st May. The same thing happened in the Ministry of Economic Development. The Permanent Secretary there has been transferred on special duties and so it was necessary to have this arrangement.

On the question of the 10th Anniversary celebrations, Cde. Chairman, it is felt that in the light of our many achievements over the last 10 years of independence that we should have special activities to celebrate our 10th Anniversary.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition seems to be concerned with the amount of money voted for this purpose which he said will be used for sport. I wish to assure him that this is far from the truth. Over 50 per cent of the money voted here is going to be used for developmental projects. These projects will be undertaken throughout the country, in every region, every sub-region and in every district. The majority of the money voted here is for developmental purposes.

We hope to have, as in any occasion of the sort, communicative issues, publication and to produce things. We are also going to have souvenirs which will be distributed to people, and exhibitions – For example there is to be a national exhibition at Sophia from the 21st to the 24th. Then there will be art and craft exhibitions by schools all over the country and things of that sort.

We hope to spend some of this money helping Guyanese citizens overseas to celebrate this grand occasion. We are going to have competitions and various cultural activities. These will be scattered throughout the country so that all the people can take part and enjoy the occasion. An occasion like this calls for enjoyment. The fact is that we have achieved a lot in the past.

This gives an idea of what we plan for the 10th Anniversary Celebrations. I want particularly to stress that it is not all for sport. Half of the money - \$1.6 million – is to be spent on projects.

The Chairman: This completes consideration of all the items. I will now put the question.

Question –

That the Committee of Supply approve of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 3/1976 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current Estimates totalling \$3,000,005 for the period ending 30th April, 1976.

Put and agreed to.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Hope: Cde. Speaker, I beg to report that the Committee of Supply has approved of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 3 of 1976 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current Estimates for the period ending 30th April, 1976 totalling \$3,000,005, and I now move that the Assembly doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, “That this Assembly do now adjourn to a date to be fixed.” [Cde. Ramsaroop]

Adjourned accordingly at 4.52 p.m.
