

Official Report

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION (2006-2011) OF THE NINTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA HELD IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BRICKDAM, GEORGETOWN

148TH Sitting

Wednesday, 2ND February, 2011

The Assembly convened at 2.08 p.m.

Prayers

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS, INCLUDING POLICY STATEMENTS

CLARIFICATION ON COST OF LAPTOP UNDER GOVERNMENT'S (OLFP) PROGRAMME

The Minister within the Ministry of Finance [Ms. Webster]: I would like to make the following statement on the One Laptop Per Family Project (OLFP) in view of certain reports carried today by some sections of the media, following yesterday's consideration of the 2011 Estimates of Expenditure by the Committee of Supply under agency 01 – Office of the President-Line Item 1212000 – Information and Communication Technology.

It would be recalled that a question was asked about the unit cost of the laptops. I now wish to clarify that the Budget assumes a unit cost of \$US295 per laptop and not \$G295, 000 as was previously stated, inadvertently. I would further be recalled that I elaborated clearly in this House yesterday that the Budget provides a total of \$G1.8 billion for the procurement of laptops and that 27,000 laptops will be obtained this year. Simple arithmetic would confirm that this implies an average cost of just over \$60,000 per laptop. Contrary to some media reports, the laptops are being procured in accordance with applicable procedures and rules. I wish to further clarify that

the sum of \$G2.5 billion of specific financing sourced from China is meant to finance the component of the Information Communications and Technology (ICT) Project which pertains to the construction of wireless and terrestrial networking systems from Moleson Creek to Anna Regina.

Further, in response to the questions on the amount of vehicles sourced pertaining to the Office of the President's fleet, I had said that it was 71. But it is 71 vehicles under the umbrella of the Office of the President. Thank You.

Mrs. Backer: I know that I cannot ask questions. The Opposition looks forward for a similar statement on another matter by the Hon. Minister responsible. Although the Estimates have not been approved, it is being advertised in both the electronic and print media that the old age pensions have been approved by this National Assembly which is inaccurate. Nobody is questioning whether we agree or will approve, but it is being circulated in the Government's print and electronic media that the old age pension has been approved which is misleading. It makes me wonder why we are here. Why are we here seeking to approve Estimates when the public is being told that it has already been approved?

Mr. Speaker: The public has not been told by the Government, Parliament or me. The public is being told by the media and I hope that that is corrected wherever it appeared. I have not seen it.

Mrs. Backer: We look forward to the Hon. Member Ms. Manickchand to make a statement tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker: Did Ms. Manickchand make the statement in the press?

The Minister of Human Services and Social Security [Ms. Manickchand] I did.

Mr. Speaker: Just a minute, Hon. Member. Did Ms. Manickchand make the statement in the press?

Mrs. Backer: I do not know who made the statement. I said I hope that as the Subject Minister, she would correct that impression.

Mr. Speaker: I would think that if the Minister made the statement, she would want to correct it. The National Assembly is collectively advising the press, here and now, that no such decision

was taken by the National Assembly and we look forward and expect the press to responsibly carry that correction.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTIONS

APPROVAL OF THE ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2011

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

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

AND WHEREAS Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of Guyana for the financial year 2011 have been prepared and laid before the Assembly on 2011-01-17;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly approves the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 2011, of a total sum of one hundred and forty-six billion, eight hundred and seventy-nine, six hundred and fifty-four thousand dollars, (\$146,879,654,000) excluding fourteen billion, five hundred and fifty million, five hundred and two dollars (\$14, 550,502,000) which is chargeable by law, as detailed therein and summarised in the undermentioned schedule, and agree that it is expedient to amend the law and to make further provision in respect of finance. *[Minister of Finance]*

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members we can now resume our consideration of the Estimates and for that purpose we will resolve ourselves into Committee of Supply.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply

In Committee of Supply

Agency: 13 – Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 131 –Main Office - \$76,799,000

Mr. Ernest Elliot: Line Item 6116 – Contracted Employees. I notice a vast increase of \$10 million and that one employee has been budgeted for. Could the Hon. Minister say what is the position and salary of this employee?

The Minister of Local Government and Regional Development [Mr. Lall]: This increase is to cater for the increase in salaries and also the employment of my Permanent Secretary.

Mr. Elliot: Line Item 6281 – Security Services. I also notice here that there is a vast increase in the amount budgeted for security service. Could the Hon. Minister say if it is the same security service providing security as was for 2010 and why this cost?

Mr. Lall: This is to cater for security services for the new Permanent Secretary (P.S.) and the Hon. Member Mr. Harripersaud Nokta.

Mr. Norton: My question relates to the same line item. Is the Minister suggesting that approximately \$7 million plus will be the cost of security for the two people he mentioned and could he say why is it that security for the two of them costs more than security of the entire Ministry? This is based on what he has just said.

Mr. Lall: I am not suggesting anything. I am saying, definitively, that this increased cost is to cater for security services to the P.S. and former minister, Mr. Harripersaud Nokta. The other provision is for security personnel in my office for a very brief period – an eight hour shift.

Mr. Norton: The Minister still did not say to me why the security for these two persons and him costs more than security for the entire Ministry. That is the question I am asking.

Mr. Lall: I just answered the question. I said previously, there was one eight-hour shift security outside of my office. Now there are three shift securities for the two persons that I have mentioned so it will cost more.

Mrs. Backer: Line Item 6116 – Contracted Employees. Given that sharp increase of \$10 and as there are only 13 employees in that section, Hon. Minister, could you share with us the positions of those thirteen employees and the salaries of the highest and lowest paid.

Mr. Lall: The lowest paid is \$46,000 and the highest is \$445,000. The positions are: Three Confidential Secretaries, two Personal Assistants, Advisor to the Minister, four vehicle drivers, two Coordinators and the Permanent Secretary.

Mr. Norton: For the same Line Item, could the Hon. Minister say if he is concerned that the use of contract labour is widening the gap between the highest and lowest paid when equality was a principle which Dr. Jagan fought for all of those years?

Mr. Lall: I am being asked to give an opinion; I do not think so. The highest paid is the Permanent Secretary. Permanent Secretaries are hard working people and they attract good salaries.

Mrs. Holder: May I re-direct the Hon. Minister's attention to Line Item 6281 – Security Services? I would like the Hon. Member to give us the name of the security service and an indication of the quality of service provided. Does it include armed guards and dogs? What is special about the security service?

Mr. Lall: The Ministry intends to go to tender for this service.

Mrs. Holder: Is the Hon. Member saying to us that this service is to be provided in the future and he anticipates that it is going to be of this magnitude?

Mr. Lall: Yes.

Mr. Norton: We note that the Minister has said that this amount budgeted is for personal security. Am I to understand that the security firm that he is talking about is specialised in providing personal security or is it going to be the general security services that are used by ministries? In other words, are the same people who are protecting buildings protecting bodies?

Mr. Lall: It is residential security. I suppose that when the Ministry goes to tender that the specifications will be put out to the public and that is what it will get.

Programme: 131 –Main Office - \$76,799,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 132 – Ministry Administration - \$35,487,000

Mr. Elliot: Line Item 6281 – Security Service. There is also a large increase under this line item. Could the Hon. Minister explain why there is this increase?

Mr. Lall: The Permanent Secretary, due to certain unfortunate circumstances over the past years, has seen the need for us to have an armed guard in the compound of the Ministry. This amount will cater for that armed security guard.

Mr. Elliot: Line Item 6284 – Other. Could the Hon. Minister specify the projects or items under this head for the large sum of \$1.2 million?

Mr. Lall: This is basically for us to secure internet services.

Mrs. Backer: I have a supplementary question. Is the internet the only expense under that head? \$1,234,000 is a lot of money for administration.

Mr. Lall: It is basically ICT, Mr. Chairman. It is for creating a website, creating databases and paying for the internet connection and so forth.

Mrs. Backer: I know that if I searched for it in Google I would probably find it, but could the Minister be kind enough to share the name of his Ministry's website with us?

Mr. Lall: The Ministry does not have the money to create it as yet. As soon as this Budget is passed we will create it.

Mr. Norton: Line Item 6281 – Security Services. Could the Hon. Minister tell us how many security guards are envisaged there and what is the average cost per guard that the Ministry pays?

Mr. Lall: I am at a loss. The sum here is for an armed guard. The Ministry has one unarmed guard and we will have another armed security guard. It is simple mathematics.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman I want to be clear. Is the Minister saying to us that the Ministry is paying for two armed guards?

Mr. Lall: It is one armed guard.

Mr. Norton: What is the cost for one armed guard and one unarmed guard?

Mr. Lall: I can give you the specific cost when we would have awarded the contract. At the moment we are budgeting. Subtract \$483,000 from \$1.2 million and you will get the amount we are budgeting for. I would not be able to say at the moment what is the actual cost.

Mr. Norton: Would the Hon. Member agree that there is a great disparity between what he is suggesting under this programme and what he suggested under the previous programme for the cost of an armed guard?

Mr. Lall: One is unarmed and one is armed. It is two different costs. I do not know how much more detail I can give. It is two different costs for two different levels of services.

Mr. Norton: Unless I am mistaken, the Minister suggested in the first programme that they were now putting armed guards, for himself and others, in that Ministry. Then he came to the second programme and said, "An armed guard." I am asking a simple question. When one looks at the two programmes, the disparity is great. Does the Minister see it and what is responsible for it?

Mr. Chairman: I think that the Minister has answered that question.

Mr. Norton: No, he has not.

Mr. Lall: There are two different services. One is residential for 24 hours and the other is for an eight-hour period during the working day at my office.

Mrs. Backer: Just one other question.

Mr. Chairman: Is it on the issue on armed guard as well?

Mrs. Backer: It is not on that issue. Mr. Minister, given the statements by your Home Affairs Minister on the enhanced security, why did your Ministry see the need to move from unarmed

guards to armed guards when we are being told that the security of this country is at its best and is enhanced? Why would your Ministry now need an armed guard?

Mr. Lall: I suppose this is exactly what the Minister of Home Affairs meant when he said we will be having enhanced security. We should assist him in providing ourselves with security.

Programme: 132 – Ministry Administration - \$35,487,000 agreed to and ordered to stand Part of the Estimates.

Programme: 133 – Regional Development - \$145,079,000

Mr. Elliot: Line Item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships). Could the Hon. Minister tell us the reason for the large increase and who would be benefiting from that training?

Mr. Lall: The Ministry is going to have increased training for personnel and elected officials in the municipalities and Neighbourhood Democratic Councils (NDCs). As a matter of fact, only the other day the Hon. Member, Mr. Corbin, and I went to Linden and there, also, we saw the need. On the encouragement of Mr. Corbin, the Ministry has actually programmed some enhanced training for the staff and the Councilors of the Linden Municipality. This money will cater for that.

Mrs. Holder: I would like to again refer the Hon. Member to Line Item 6281 – Security Services. I am sorry, my eyes misdirected me.

Mr. Elliot: Line Item 6284 – Other. There is a vast increase in money. Could the Hon. Minister state the purpose for this increase?

Mr. Lall: The Ministry has a landfill site in Lusignan and there will be some increased cost. We will need to close that landfill site during the course of the year because under the Haags Bosch programme, we will be having several transfer stations and we will be going out to bid for those transfer stations soon. There will be no need for the Lusignan landfill site any longer. Apart from paying the contractor to do the day to day operation, the closure of that site will cost some money.

Programme: 133 – Regional Development - \$145,079,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 132 – Ministry Administration - \$15,600,000

Mr. Elliot: Line Item 2400100 – Land Transport. Could the Hon. Minister say how many vehicles and what types of vehicles will be purchased? And will any of these vehicles be assigned to the administration of Region 4?

Mr. Lall: The answer to the latter question is no. Regarding the first question, the Ministry will be buying two vehicles. One will be a land cruiser and the other a double cab pick-up. The costs are \$9 million and \$5 million, respectively.

Mr. Norton: Line Item 1906000. Could the Hon. Minister tell us how much money is allocated for the completion of the building, the market and market tarmacs? Specifically, I am interested in the cost of market tarmacs.

Mr. Lall: The Plaisance Tarmac will cost \$17.5 million, while the Buxton Tarmac will cost \$4.2 million, Tipperary Hall at a cost \$36 million, Haslington Tarmac will be \$20 million. For your information, the Mahaica Market will cost \$134 million.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Minister in the context of climate change and all that is happening, do you think that investment in tarmacs, when the world is moving in the direction of modern malls, is a wise investment? Have you considered the implications for the market at Plaisance when the mall is erected there and how much have you allocated for drainage when the tarmac is finished to save the market?

Mr. Lall: Here again I am being asked my opinion. I really do not have an opinion in this matter. I do take the suggestion that while the Ministry is building the tarmac it also needs to look at the drainage. What the Ministry has done in that particular area is to repair the culvert across the main road which had collapsed. The Ministry is going to look at the drainage this year.

Mr. Norton: Saying that you are going to look at it is suggesting that having done what you did with the tarmac and the Ministry has not catered for drainage.

Mr. Lall: Through the regional system, the Ministry does cater for drainage and minor works for places like markets.

Mr. Norton: If it is that you have catered for drainage, how much money has the Ministry allocated for drainage of this tarmac?

Mr. Lall: The area where the Ministry is building the tarmac is already drained. It needs some work but it is already drained. It is next to the road and the roadside drain is there already.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman it is not good for me to accuse anybody of misleading. But anybody who checks the project like I did would see that there is absolutely no drainage and how it is being built, the water will go into the market. If the Ministry is planning properly, it needs to cater for drainage.

Mr. Lall: When the project is completed in a few weeks time, I will have a look at it and see if there is any point in what the Hon. Member is saying. Of course, if it needs draining, the Ministry will drain it.

Mr. Norton: Is the Kitty Market slated for work under this allocation?

Mr. Lall: In this Budget, under my Ministry, there are no moneys for the Kitty Market. I do know, however, that the City Council has some expressions of interest from the private sector and it is considering those. Very soon, I suppose, it will make a proposal to me.

Mr. Elliot: My question is regarding the same line item. Could the Hon. Minister say what the timeline for the completion of the Tipperary Hall at Buxton is?

Mr. Lall: It is August of this year.

Mr. Elliot: The Minister made mention of the tarmac at Haslington. I understand that sometime last year there was a problem with the residents there for the proposed site of this tarmac. I know that the Minister visited and had meetings with the NDC. Could the Hon. Minister say at what part of Haslington will the tarmac would be constructed?

Mr. Lall: Yes, I met with the residents in the NDC Office in Golden Grove. The Ministry has some different ideas from the residents about where it should place this tarmac. Eventually, they did make a suggestion to me for it to be placed by the roadside next to the Guyana Water Incorporated (GWI) facility. Subsequently, late last year, Minister Benn informed me that that would not do because his Ministry intends to expand that roadway to the public road. That four-

lane roadway would actually take over part of the tarmac if the Ministry was to build it there. I have another location in mind but I do not want make it public as yet because I want to talk with the NDC first.

Mr. Norton: Line Item 1902100. Could the Hon. Minister state what portion of this money is for consultancy and what portion is for training. Could he also identify the target audience of the training?

2.38 p.m.

Mr. Lall: The Community Services Enhancement Programme (C.S.E.P.) has actually come to an end. There is just a soft part of that loan agreement remaining and it is mainly training and community awareness, some evaluation or properties and some amount of assistance in strengthening the management of our urban centers-the councils.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, you would agree that none of the two questions were answered. I asked: One, how much money is for consultancy and how much is for training and secondly, I asked who the target audience is. None of the two were answered.

Mr. Lall: I am sorry about that, Mr. Chairman. The consultancy aspect will cost \$10.8 million and the actual training will cost \$33 million.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, you would agree that if this is a community enhancement project it must have a target audience. I ask, again, how, as Members of Parliament, are we going to say to people this is what is going to happen if we do not know the target audience?

Mr. Lall: I have seen some documentation of this matter. It involves members of the various communities, and the elected officials and staff of the various communities.

Mrs. Latchmin Budhan-Punalall: Line item 1900600-Infrastructural Development. I would like to ask the Mr. Minister if a provision is made for improvement of the Mon Repo market.

Programme 133 – Ministry Administration - \$1,346,800 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the estimates.

Agency 71

Programme 711 – Region 1- Regional Administration and Finance - \$25, 300, 000

Desmond Fernandez: Mr. Chairman, I know that security has some attention here. There are some difficulties in Region 1 in the area of security and payment to security officers at Mabaruma, Port Kaituma. I notice here in line item 6281 that there is no money to pay security

personnel. There are some concerns at with the Ministry of Labour, whereby persons worked for the last two years and they were not paid. I would like to know how these people will be paid.

Mr. Lall: The security under the Regional Administration has been handed over to the Public Works programme.

Mr. Fernandez: Line item 6291, National and other events. There is \$2.1 million budgeted. I would like to know what the events are that this money will cover.

Mr. Lall: This is for Flag raising, Mashramani, and other usual national events.

Mr. Fernandez: Mr. Chairman, Region 1 has always participated in a number of national events. The Region seems not be making full contribution to these areas. If you have \$2.1 million and cannot tell us the events that you are participating in, you just tell us Flag raising and other events. I think you should name all of the events.

Mr. Lall: I do not have a breakdown of the events but the Region will participate in all national events and contribute to those activities.

Mr. Norton: Line item 6312. Could the Mr. Minister give a breakdown as to how much money will go to each of the local authorities in Region 1?

Mr. Lall: This is to pay the local authorities \$3 million dollars each, but in addition to that there is some built-in stipends, village councilors travel expenses, and so forth.

Mrs. Holder: Line item 6302, training. There is a significant increase. I would like the Mr. Minister to give us a sense of the type of training and the purpose of the training.

Mr. Lall: They will do some enhance training that will cost a bit more; not a lot more. There are also some new recruits that will need to be trained this year.

Mrs. Holder: Recruits for what?

Mr. Lall: It has to do with the Region and the NDC's staff.

Mr. Fernandez: Line item 6115, Semi-Skilled operators and Unskilled. There is a reduction of workers from 19 to 14, but you have an increase in the amount of money budgeted. Could you say, Mr. Minister, why you have an increase in this amount?

Mr. Lall: There has been a reduction in staff because of resignation, and, I think, there has been upward movement of one person. There were three resignations and one upward movement.

Mrs. Holder: Line item 6312. I noticed that the amount is really static from 2009. Could the Mr. Minister indicate how this money is to be distributed, which local authority will receive the subventions, and the purpose of it?

Mr. Lall: The stipend to the Council remains the same. The \$1.4 million is to take care of that. There are two NDCs in that location. We pay the Chairmen and we also pay the expenses of the councilors when they have to attend meeting or go out in the field to do inspections.

Mrs. Holder: Has the Minister considered increasing this to a more realistic sum? What is the procedure to get to that point of consideration?

Mr. Lall: I have not had any request to that effect as yet. If I receive a request then I will consider it, Mr. Chairman.

Programme 711- Regional Administration and Finance - \$25,300,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the estimate

Programme 712 – Region 1- Public Works - 70, 000,000

Mr. Fernandez: Line item 6242-Maintenance of buildings. Could the Minister say whether the building next to the Administration building has its steps and window falling off will it be maintained this year?

Mr. Lall: Yes, we will fix it this year.

Mr. Fernandez: Line item 6231. There is an increase for fuel and lubricants. Could the Minister say how much extra hours of power we will get. At the moment we are getting 90 hours of blackout a day, so I want to know how much extra power we will be receiving given this additional money.

Mr. Lall: The amount of hours will remain the same this year, Mr. Chairman. I should say that the Prime Minister is considering some proposals, on a short and medium term basis, for us to put electricity in Region 1. It so happens that we have given priority to Lethem because of the circumstances there.

To provide the Member who asked the question of Minister Benn yesterday, the new generator that is going there is 750 kilowatt. We have already installed a 500 megawatt and a 1.2 megawatt in Lethem. We are, now, adding to that, so there is more than 1.2 mega watt in capacity in Lethem. That will suffice.

We are, now, considering Mahdia and Mabaruma. We are dealing with that issue of electricity in Mabaruma very soon, this year.

Mr. A. Norton: Mr. Chairman, now that the Minister has gone into the area of policy, could he say to us what factors inform the decision to make Lethem a priority over Region 1?

Mr. Lall: There is a rapid increase in the population. We have two new housing schemes: Tabatinga and Culvert city. Due to developments in that area people are populating it. They were given house lots quite some time ago because of new developments in roads, water etc. The

creation of the commercial zone: - large businesses are now operating there. There is also a bank being built. Due to the bridge across the Takatu River there has been some urgency for us to increase our capacity in Lethem.

Mr. A. Norton: Mr. Chairman, I thought Mocomoco was meant to solve the problem. Let me now turn to line item 6242-Maintenance of building, and ask the Minister to give us a breakdown of the buildings and the costs that each would incur, so that at the end of the year we can double check it.

Mr. Lall: This is, basically, some Regional offices and buildings that we will carry out some minor works on. We have the living quarters of the (Assistant Regional Executive Officer (AREO) in Mattachai, that will cost \$2million; the office of the AREO in Mattachai, that will cost another \$2million dollars; the Kumaka and Moruka multi-purposes buildings, \$4million; the guest house in Mabaruma, \$2 million; the Regional Chairman's office, \$2 million; some repairs need to be done to the kitchen at Matthew's Ridge Amerindian hostel which will cost \$1.5 million dollars; and repairs to the living quarters of the superintendent in the works department which will cost \$1million.

Mrs. Holder: Line item 6255-Maintenance of other infrastructure. There is a significant increase. I would be grateful if the Mr. Minister would give us an indication of where and what this pertains to.

Mr. Lall: This is to capture minor works that need to be done on the fence of the Regional Vice Chairman's office, the Sub-Treasury Officer's quarters and the Kumaka recreational ground.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, in the figures the Mr. Minister gave me, unless my mathematics has gone awry, he needs to account for \$1.5 million more.

Mr. Lall: I think I missed a guest house. There is a guesthouse at Port Kaituma and one at Mabaruma. This will bring it up to \$4million.

Mr. Fernandez: Line item 6321. I wish to return to fuel and lubricant. Mr. Chairman, the Guyana Oil Company (Guyoil) was closed down some time ago. I would like to know where the Region will be sourcing this fuel from.

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, the comrades in the Region has worked out some very creative methods of acquiring fuel. One of them is to have relationship with the Wauna oil Palm facility where they produce diesel. The Region has been utilising bio-diesel.

Guyoil has been closed, yes, and I am inviting the Chairman to send in a request to open a gas station. I will, probably, assist him. We have spoken to many operators in this sector and they do not want to operate there because of the peculiarity where fuel supply is concerned. There are several authorised dealers which our accounting system accepts. The Accountant General's office allows us to purchase from these authorised dealers.

Mrs. Holder: Mr. Minister, bearing in mind that GuyOil is a State agency, do you not consider it appropriate that they should, indeed, provide the service in view of the circumstance you described? If not, why?

Mr. Lall: There is no shortage of fuel in Region 1. The Government buys from legally authorised dealers. GuyOil, regardless of the fact that it is owned by the State, it is also a business and I do not know if they are willing to subsidise an operation in Mabaruma. What I do know is that there is not fuel shortage in Mabaruma.

Mrs. Holder: Is the Minister aware of fuel smuggling in the area?

Mr. Lall: I do not have a comment to make on that matter.

Mr. Fernandez: Mr. Chairman, the Minister is right there is no shortage of fuel in the area. I would like the Minister to give us the name of these persons who supply legal fuel and where they get the fuel from. Because, if the MV Kimbia is a passenger cargo vessel and it cannot take in fuel, these people have to get the legal fuel from somewhere. We would not want to know that the Government is involved in illegal transactions, especially in the area of fuel.

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, the Guyana Energy Agency (GEA) has provided license for persons to operate in Mabaruma. I can supply those names based on a letter given to me by the GEA. I can supply the Member with it. There are authorised dealers. As I said before, these people are audited by our Accountant General. They accept those persons as legitimate suppliers of fuel hence they have been given licence to operate by the GEA.

Mrs. Holder: Will the Mr. Minister be prepared to give us the names of these legitimate suppliers?

Mr. Lall: I just said I will do that.

Agency 71, Region 1 Barima Waini – Project Code & Title: 712, Public Works- \$70,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Programme 713 - Education Delivery- \$597, 335, 000

Mr. Fernandez: Line item 6254-Maintenance of Sea and River Defences. I would like to know where the Ministry of Education will be doing these works.

Mr. Lall: There have been some problems at the St. Dominic's school at the lower Waini River. There is need for us to do some revetment to secure the compound of that school.

Mr. Fernandez: Line item 6253-Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation works. I would, also, like to know where the Ministry of Education will be doing those irrigation works.

Mr. Lall: These works will be carried out by the Region. The Region has a works programme that always comes under education, dealing with the protection of schools and their compounds.

Mr. A. Norton: Could the Minister agree that it is untidy to place things that should be under the Ministry of Works under education delivery?

Mr. Lall: It may seem so but the way the Region budgets their expenses... We have five different programmes in the Region. I think the Regional Administration sees it fit to put it under Ministry of Education because it is directly related to the delivery of education in securing the compound and putting in revetments.

Many schools in the interior, especially the riverain areas, were built some time ago along river beds. After some time they suffer from erosion. That is the rationale behind putting it under the education budget because it is directly related to the maintenance of schools.

Mrs. Amna Ali: Line item 6242-Maintenance of Buildings. Could the Mr. Minister list the schools that would be dealt with during this year and, specifically, say if the Hosororo Primary school is identified for any kind of work to be done? If so, what exactly will be done to that school?

Mr. Lall: I need the Mr. Member to tell me exactly what is wrong with the Hosororo School. I was there recently and I did not see that there was need for any work to be done there. It probably needs a facelift. I have been there recently; I do not know when the Mr. Member was there.

These moneys are for maintenance work on the staff quarters in Mabaruma; the teacher's quarters in Waramuri; teacher's quarters in Manawarin; the primary school in the township; the Ridge Nursery school in Port Kaituma; the primary school in Yarikita; the primary schools in White Water; two buildings in Santa Rosa, a wooden old building and a concrete building; the Kumaka Secondary school; the male dormitory at the Mabaruma compound; and the primary school in Hotoquai.

Mr. Fernandez: Line item 6262-Maintenance of equipment in various areas of advanced science and technology. I would want to believe that other than the computers given out by the Office of the President, there are many computers in different parts of the Region. Mr. Minister, can you tell us which equipment will be repaired with this \$500, 000, because to my mind this is inadequate?

Mr. Lall: This is a paltry sum to repair copiers, printers etc.

Mr. Fernandez: Line item 6281-Security Services. Can the Minister say whether all of the schools will have security services?

Mr. Lall: No, this security arrangement that we have does not cover all of the schools, but we do ensure that all of the schools are secure. There are many schools that are taken care of by various communities, by the Parent teacher's Association's (PTA), they raise money, etc. We encourage those sorts of initiatives for the communities to actually take possession of these State assets. I believe this is a far better arrangement. The communities take possession and they secure these facilities much better.

Mr. Fernandez: Line item 6116-Contrated Employees. We have two additional employees contracted, could the Minister say what their position is?

Mr. Lall: These are some personnel in the education department. A typist clerk, the Superintendent of the dormitory.

3.08 p.m.

Agency 71, Region 1 Barima Waini – Project Code & Title: 713, Education Delivery – \$46,700,000; stand part of the Estimates, put and agreed to

Agency 71, Region 1 Barima Waini – Project Code & Title: 714, Health Services – \$39,000,000

Mr. Fernandes: Mr. Chairman, Acct Code 6254 Maintenance of Sea and River Defences in the Ministry of Health, could the Minister say in which area this work will be done?

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman it is to do with earth and dam revetment at Fathers Beach and Black Water to protect the two health huts.

Mr. Fernandes: A next question Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister say in which area he will be maintaining bridges?

Mr. Lall: These are Bridges in Maridawa, in the Lower Waini, in Saint Alsiem and Black Water. These are minor repairs and are all below \$1 Million each.

Mr. Fernandes: Mr. Chairman, Acct Code 6282 Equipment Maintenance, can the Minister say whether the X-ray which is not functioning properly will be maintained with this \$2 Million.

Mr. Lall: Under this line-item there is nothing to do with the piece of equipment mentioned by the Mr. Member. This is to do with maintenance work to the vaccine fridges, the computers, photocopiers and other pieces of equipment in the health department.

Mr. Norton: Could the Minister say, with all the modern hospitals et cetera, where can we find the money to maintain the biomedical equipment?

Mr. Lall: Mr. Speaker, there is a kind of division of labour where these health services in the Region are concerned. We take care of those minor repairs to the buildings and the offices and so forth, but the more technical job of maintaining and repairing of highly technical and complicated equipment is done under the Ministry of Health where there are the technically qualified people to do so.

Agency 71, Region 1 Barima Waini – Project Code & Title: 714, Health Services – \$39,000,000; stand part of the Estimates, put and agreed to

Agency 71, Region 1 Barima Waini – Project Code & Title: 711, Capital Expenditure – \$39,000,000

Mr. Fernandes: Mr. Chairman, line item 1901100 Empoldering of Farm Lands. There are the Waini, the Barima and the Aruka River; these are very long rivers. Could the Minister say what part of the Waini, Barima and Aruka Rivers will this \$8 Million be spent?

Mr. Lall: The locations for these works are: Three Brothers Community, Unity Square in Black water and Arukamai in the Sacred Heart Community.

Mr. Fernandes: Mr. Chairman, line item 1400400 Roads – Construction and upgrading of roads. Could the Minister say how much money will be spent on the _____ road and when that work will be done?

Mr. Lall: The \$15 Million for the construction of gravel surface roads from Coco to Haimarakabra; the construction of gravel surfaced roads from Eleven Miles to Manawarin, \$10 Million; Construction of gravel surface roads from Kamwatta to Parakise \$4 Million; and the upgrading of the Kook Rite Hill Housing Scheme in Dernel Roads in Mabaruma, the cost of \$3 Million.

Mr. Fernandes: Mr. Chairman, line item, 2601400 Power Supply. Could the Minister say where this generator will be installed and if it is part of his programme to have additional power when this generator is installed?

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, last year mention was made of the age and the almost dysfunctional position of that generating plant in Mabaruma, so this year we are purchasing a new 800 KVA generator set to replace that one. But, we are not going to increase right now, the amount of hours given.

Ms. Ally: Mr. Chairman, line item 2502600 Furniture and Equipment Education. I am speaking specifically to desks and benches for children; could the Mr. Minister say, with this sum budgeted here, what percentage of the needs for Region 1 will be achieved.

Mr. Lall: Mr Chairman, if members are aware of the budget process and how it operates, these Estimates were given to us based on inspections late last year, so I will not know what is the current positing in each and every school. What we know of up to the end of last year is that these pieces of furniture; desks, benches, teachers tables, lunch-kits racks, tools, filing cabinets, chalkboards, book cupboards etc, in the North West Secondary Schools, Santa Rosa, Waiakabra, Manawarin, Hosororo, Kamwatta, Whitewasher, Warapoka, Yarikita....

Ms. Ally: I did not ask you that.

Mr. Lall: That is what the money here is for. I really cannot answer the question of what percentage of the furniture this will take care of.

Mr. Norton: The question may be asked differently. What do you consider to the needs of the Region at this stage for desk and furniture? You must know the needs if you are going to estimate.

Mr. Lall: I am advised Mr. Chairman, to give you a fairly good answer, that is, at the moment the schools are fairly well serviced with furniture, but I must admit that practically every week we have broken furniture and all these kind of things. We also have a programme through the Ministry of Education, from this year, for us to have those schools with woodworking departments and/or where we have... Mr. Chairman, I get distracted quickly by some annoying noises about the place. We have a programme in place to deal with shortage of furniture, the replacement of furniture and so forth.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, with all due respect. Can we know in this House, or can the Region not tell us how many students they have, how many desk and benches they are short by, and if

they do five percent this year over a five year period that they will take up twenty five percent. Is that a difficult question?

Mr. Chairman: That might be a very difficult question if we are discussing Estimates. If you want a policy issue and you ask a specific question.

Mr. Norton: That is not Policy, it is....

Mr. Chairman: Mr. Member that does not fall within the Estimates that we are discussing. If you want such information you place a question with the Clerk and you will get an answer, but that is not a question that concerns the Estimates. Anything else?

Mr. Fernandes: Yes Mr. Chairman. Line item 2502800 Purchase of Equipment.

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman I need your assistance. I cannot really hear the Member.

Mr. Chairman: Mr. Members, I would ask that while these questions... This is a different time to when Mr. Members are making speeches. When Mr. Members are making speeches and they have either their speech in their hand or I presume their notes, it is a little easier for them to overcome noise, but when a Member has to listen to a question and then concentrate on an answer which he does not have in note form and try to articulate an answer, I can understand that such a Member is distracted by noise. I am therefore asking members to please keep the noise level and the heckling down so that we can get through. I want to point out that we are only at Region 1, and the schedule has been circulated some days before, I just want to point out to Members who are asking questions that we are still at Region 1. Yes Mr. Member, you were asking.

Mr. Fernandes: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chainman, Line item 2502800 Purchase of Equipment, Mortuary Freezers. Mr. Chairman, this amount of \$8.5 Million, could the Minister say what is the cost of one of these freezers and to install it in one of these locations.

Mr. Lall: It averages for what we are budgeting for, an average of \$2.5 Million, give or take a dollar here or there.

Agency 71, Region 1 Barima Waini – Project Code & Title: 711, Capital Expenditure – \$39,000,000; *stand part of the Estimates, put and agreed to*

Agency 71, Region 1 Barima Waini – Project Code & Title: 712, Public Works – Capital Expenditure – \$70,000,000

Agency 71, Region 1 Barima Waini – Project Code & Title: 712, Health Services – Capital Expenditure \$70,000,000; stand part of the Estimates, put and agreed to

Agency 71, Region 1 Barima Waini – Project Code & Title: 713, Education Delivery – Capital Expenditure – \$46,700,000

Agency 71, Region 1 Barima Waini – Project Code & Title: 713, Education Delivery – Capital Expenditure \$46,700,000; stand part of the Estimates, put and agreed to

Agency 71, Region 1 Barima Waini – Project Code & Title: 714, Health Services – Capital Expenditure – \$39,000,000

Agency 71, Region 1 Barima Waini – Project Code & Title: 714, Health Services – Capital Expenditure \$39,000,000; stand part of the Estimates, put and agreed to

Mr. Chairman: We can now move to Region 2 please Mr. Members.

REGION 2 – CURRENT EXPENDITURE

Agency 72, Region 2 Pomeroon/Supenaam – Project Code & Title: 721, Regional Administration & Finance – Current Expenditure – \$314,500,000

Mr. Scott: Mr. Chairman under staffing details, Acct Code 6112, there is no allocation for 2010, but in 2011 there is one staff. Yet, under the programme details, in 2010 there is an amount of money that was budgeted under the revised \$1,194,000, could you say what the difference is and what is the reason for that difference.

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman there was a re-designation of a staff, Clerk 2, to the Management section.

Mr. Scott: Could he say whether the preparation of this budget was done by the Finance Committee of the Region?

Mr. Lall: I really cannot answer that question Mr. Chairman. The staff being shifted and everything, there is a personnel department and it is done by the administration. I do not know exactly which body would have taken the decision, it is difficult to know that but generally these movements of employees, going below, dismissals, is done by the personnel department.

Mr. Scott: Acct Code 6114 Technical Staff, there is a decrease of four in terms of the staffing, from 35 down to 31, could you say what is the difference in terms of the money being more for four staff less?

Mr. Lall: One staff member is no longer with us, one was transferred to the Supreme Court, and there is one staff member that was again appointed to the E.P.M.A. management section, and one checker was appointed as the Senior Superintendent of Works.

Mr. Scott: Why pay more?

Mr. Lall: If those positions to which they are transferred attract higher salaries they will get that. I do not have that detail here.

Mr. Scott: Acct Code 6231 Security Services, there is a great difference of resulting in \$423,000 this year as against \$179,000 the previous year. Under security, could you explain that difference?

Mr. Lall: You said Acct Code 6231; that is not Security.

Mr. Scott: Acct Code 6281, Security.

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman this increase is to secure the services of armed guards during payday at the main office.

Agency 72, Region 2 Pomerook/Supenaam – Project Code & Title: 721, Regional Administration and Finance – Current Expenditure \$314,500,000; stand part of the Estimates, put and agreed to

Agency 72, Region 2 Pomerook/Supenaam – Project Code & Title: 722, Agriculture – Current Expenditure – \$116,000,000

Mr. Chairman: You do not have to ask a question you know Mr. Elliot. If there is now question to ask, you do not have to ask for the sake of asking. We have a lot of Regions to complete.

Mr. Elliot: I give way to my colleague.

Mr. Scott: Acct Code 6253 Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works, could he say where the areas are and whether it includes lower Pomeroon.

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, this is for the routine – if you look over the years, we have been budgeting almost a similar sum – it is for routine maintenance in practically all the trenches and main canals, irrigation and drainage, throughout Region 2.

Mr. Scott: Could you say whether the Hakmilik Canal has been completed irrigated, drained and looked after?

Mr. Lall: I do not know how we are irrigating a canal.

Mr. Scott: It is blocked up.

Mr. Lall: We will check it out.

Mrs. Backer: Mr. Speaker, Line item 6281 Security Services, we see that in the two previous years there had been nothing for security services and now we a figure of \$10,190,000. Could the Mr. Minister say which areas or what facilities are being manned by the security?

Mr. Lall: This charge was being made every year, but it is shifted from programme three to programme two.

Mrs. Backer: Could the Minister, for my education, be a little more expansive. It has been shifted from one programme to another? So, where was it last year Sir?

Mr. Lall: Programme three is Public Works, and programme two is Agriculture. There are five programmes under all the Regions. It was shifted from one programme to the next.

Agency 72, Region 2 Pomeroon/Supenaam – Project Code & Title: 722, Agriculture – Current Expenditure \$166,000,000; stand part of the Estimates, put and agreed to

Agency 72, Region 2 Pomeroon/Supenaam – Project Code & Title: 723, Public Works – Current Expenditure – \$97,500,000

Agency 72, Region 2 Pomerook/Supenaam – Project Code & Title: 723, Public Works – Current Expenditure \$97,500,000; stand part of the Estimates, put and agreed to

Agency 72, Region 2 Pomerook/Supenaam – Project Code & Title: 724, Education Delivery – Current Expenditure – \$49,500,000

Ms. Ally: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Line Item 6242 Maintenance of Buildings, could the Minister say whether the schools in the Lower Pomerook are down for repairs or any sort of maintenance?

Mr. Lall: There are quite a number of schools that will attract some work, but for the Pomerook area we have identified some general repairs; \$600,000 for the Jackelo Nursery School.

Mr. Scott: Line Item 6221 Drugs and Medical Supplies, is this for students in the schools?

Mr. Lall: It is first aid kits for students.

Mr. Scott: Could you say whether Food for The Poor also gives drugs for the students.

Mr. Lall: The modern era, if the schools will accept that, but we do provide kits and change the contents of the kits every now and then.

Mr. Scott: Well then you will probably find that \$700 plus million might be too much to allocate in view of the fact that you may be getting adequate supplies of drugs.

Mr. Lall: What \$700 million.

Mr. Scott: \$783,000.

Mr. Lall: Is that too much?

Mr. Scott: I am asking if in view of the fact that *Food for the Poor* is giving you drugs.

Mr. Lall: It is a paltry sum Mr. Chairman, and as I said this is to replace kits and all other things in the various schools. If in fact Food for the Poor is assisting schools in drugs, we welcome that and encourage it, but I really cannot say how much they are providing, but we have to cater for these schools.

Agency 72, Region 2 Pomerook/Supenaam – Project Code & Title: 724, Education Delivery – Capital Expenditure \$49,500,000; stand part of the Estimates, put and agreed to

Agency 72, Region 2 Pomerook/Supenaam – Project Code & Title: 725, Health Services – Current Expenditure – \$47,700,000

Agency 72, Region 2 Pomerook/Supenaam – Project Code & Title: 725, Health Services – Current Expenditure \$47,700,000; stand part of the Estimates, put and agreed to

REGION 2 - CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Agency 72, Region 2 Pomerook/Supenaam – Project Code & Title: 721, Regional Administration & Finance – Capital Expenditure – \$314,500,000

Agency 72, Region 2 Pomerook/Supenaam – Project Code & Title: 721, Regional Administration and Finance – Capital Expenditure \$314,500,000; stand part of the Estimates, put and agreed to

Agency 72, Region 2 Pomerook/Supenaam – Project Code & Title: 722, Agriculture – Capital Expenditure – \$116,000,000

Agency 72, Region 2 Pomerook/Supenaam – Project Code & Title: 722, Agriculture – Capital Expenditure \$116,000,000; stand part of the Estimates, put and agreed to

Agency 72, Region 2 Pomerook/Supenaam – Project Code & Title: 723, Public Works – Capital Expenditure – \$97,500,000

Mr. Scott: Line item 440080 Other Equipment “Purchase of Equipment”, the profile says that you are buying a bitumen distributor. Can you say whether the region has had one before, and if so what has happened with it.

Mr. Lall: We never had one; we are purchasing one this year.

Agency 72, Region 2 Pomerook/Supenaam – Project Code & Title: 723, Public Works – Capital Expenditure \$97,500,000; stand part of the Estimates, put and agreed to

Agency 72, Region 2 Pomerook/Supenaam – Project Code & Title: 724, Education Delivery – Capital Expenditure – \$49,500,000

Agency 72, Region 2 Pomeroon/Supenaam – Project Code & Title: 724, Education Delivery – Capital Expenditure \$49,500,000; stand part of the Estimates, put and agreed to

Agency 72, Region 2 Pomeroon/Supenaam – Project Code & Title: 725, Health Services – Capital Expenditure – \$47,700,000

Agency 72, Region 2 Pomeroon/Supenaam – Project Code & Title: 725, Health Services – Capital Expenditure \$47,700,000; stand part of the Estimates, put and agreed to

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much. We can move now to Region 3 Essequibo Islands/West Demerara.

REGION 3 – CURRENT EXPENDITURE

Agency 73, Region 3 Essequibo Island/West Demerara – Project Code & Title: 731, Region Administration and Finance – Current Expenditure – \$5,500,000

Mr. M. Williams: I take it that the Minister is ready Sir. Mr. Chairman, will the Minister advise the National Assembly whether there is a shift from line item 6114 to 6116, and whether that is in fact responsible for the change in numbers from 2010 to 2011, and if it is, could he say in what capacity these persons have become contract employees and at what emolument please.

Mr. Lall: The additional contract employees would be one cleaner, one typist clerk and one driver.

Mr. M. Williams: I am just trying to find out respectfully whether these were persons on the establishment as clerical and office support staff in 2010 who have now become contract workers in 2011.

Mr. Lall: These are additional staff.

Mr. M. Williams: Thank you Sir. Line item 6264 Vehicle Spares and Service, could the Minister tell us what is the size of the fleet of vehicles assigned to this particular accounting head (Regional Administration and Finance)?

Mr. Lall: Twelve vehicles Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Mervyn Williams: I am grateful Sir. Could the Minister with respect to line-item 6281 Security Services tell us whether there are less premises now being covered by security services or if there is a reduction in the rate of security services now covered by regional administration.

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, last year our R.E.O. passed away, so there is no security at that residence any longer.

3.38 p.m.

Mr. Williams: On to Line Item 6291 – National and Other Events – could the Minister say whether included in this \$1.9 million there is any provision for any special activity dedicated to the celebration of the “Year of Persons of African Descent”, and if so how much?

Mr. Lall: No, Mr. Chairman, we have not made provision for that. As far as I understand it, listening to the Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture, the Central Government is making a substantial contribution to these activities.

Mr. Williams: The Hon. Minister would agree, I am sure Sir, that Central Government does that every year with respect to Mashramani celebrations, but still there is always provision for regional Mashramani celebrations. I am wondering whether that is a departure from the norm.

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, as we go along we will see what contribution the Region could make given this very small sum that is allocated here.

Mr. Williams: Appreciated, Sir.

Programme 731 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$129,592,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme 732 – Agriculture - \$219,282,000

Mr. Williams: Mr. Chairman, Line Item 6265 – Maintenance of Bridges – could the Minister say how many bridges will benefit from this provision, and would he be kind to supply us with a list at some convenient point?

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, I am sorry but I really cannot supply the details, but there are four bridges we are maintaining. I do not have the finer details that you are asking for at the moment.

Mr. Williams: Sir, I understand that is why I did not insist on it now, but for some time in the future I am asking. Maybe tomorrow, Mr. Minister, we could get a list.

Line Item 6264 – Vehicle spares and services – could the Minister tell us how many vehicles are in the fleet assigned to agriculture in Region 3.

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, of the twelve vehicles I mentioned, they are actually used by three programmes – Agriculture, Works and Administration.

Mr. Williams: Very well. So there is no dedicated vehicle to agriculture.

With respect to contracted employees at Line Item 6116, would the Minister say whether included in this provision - I think it is \$20.5 million – is there any provision that takes into account emoluments for persons in the Water Users Association and the Farmers Field School setting.

Mr. Lall: No, this sum does not cover that, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Williams: Thank you, Sir.

Programme 732 – Agriculture - \$219,282,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme 733 – Public Works - \$85,168

Mr. Williams: Maintenance of Roads under Public Works. Could the Mr. Minister say how many roads are provided for, and would he undertake to supply a written list of those roads so we can involve the residents of those communities to look out for those roads.

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, I will supply the names of the twelve community roads to the Member. There are twelve in all.

Mr. Williams: Appreciated, Sir. Maintenance of Other Infrastructure at Line Item 6255 - would the Hon Minister care to shed some light with respect to what is considered other infrastructure specific to this line item at \$6 million.

Mr. Lall: Sorry, Mr. Chairman, can I get the question again, please.

Mr. Williams: I am just trying to find out what constitutes Other Infrastructure; that is Line Item 6255.

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, this sum is to take care of fences, but there is no specific line item for that so it is captured under ‘Other’.

Mr. Williams. Very well, Sir. Again, at Security Services, Line Item 6281, while not significant there is a reduction in security. I find there has been some emphasis on increasing and beefing up security. Would the Minister care to suggest what might be responsible for the decline. Are we getting the service cheaper? Are we moving from armed guards to baton guards?

Mr. Lall: There is one less person. One sluice attendant has been shifted from this Programme to Programme 2, so that is why less is catered for this year.

Mr. Williams: So the sluice attendant is security?

Mr. Lall: Yes, security.

Mr. Williams: Alright. With respect to Vehicle spares and services at Line Item 6264, would the Minister advise whether the vehicles provided for here are also the same twelve vehicles provided for in the administration and finance and agriculture sector.

Mr. Lall: Yes, provision is made under this Programme for the maintenance of those twelve vehicles.

Programme 733 – Public Works - \$85,168,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme 734 – Education Delivery - \$1,356,992,000

Mr. Williams: Mr. Chairman, Line Item 6222 – Field Materials and Supplies - would the Minister say what constitutes field materials and supplies for the benefit of the House.

Mr. Lall: These are teaching aids such as - television, VCRs and accessories, tape recorders, blank cassettes, audio cassettes, that sort of things.

Mr. Williams: Would the Minister advise whether there is a specific programme for which these electronic equipment are designed to flow into for the benefit of our students.

Mr. Lall: Generally they assist the teachers in delivering education – the TVs, VCRs

Mr. Williams: Any specific programme?

Mr. Lall: I suppose it is used generally in whatever they have to teach. There is no specific programme.

Mr. Williams: I move on to Line Item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings. Would the Minister say how much of this \$38 million is provided for rehabilitation of the Philadelphia and the Bagotville Primary Schools? How soon does the Minister believe that the rehabilitation of these schools could be completed?

Mr. Lall: The Philadelphia Primary School is listed here. We will be spending \$8 million on that school to do repairs to the head teacher's office which is kind of congested. There are also some repairs to be done to the roof, the floor and some painting.

Mr. Williams: Before I come back to Philadelphia, would the Minister please say how much is allocated to the Bagotville Primary School.

Mr. Lall: There is no allocation for maintenance there this year.

Mr. Williams: That is truly regrettable, Sir, but with respect to Philadelphia School, on a visit to the school today, I believe that \$8 million might very well be inadequate for what I saw as a lay person. There are main beams to be replaced. Would the Minister be willing to revisit the question of rehabilitation of the Philadelphia Primary School should it be determined by professional engineers that the sum voted is insufficient for the proper rehabilitation of this school. And, secondly, I repeat part of the first question. How soon does the Minister believe this rehab work could be done on that school?

Mr. Lall: If there is need for additional work upon inspection, Mr. Chairman, we will consider that. We want to complete these works before the beginning of the next school year.

Mr. Williams: Very well, Sir. With respect to Line Item 6255 would the Minister undertake to provide a list of these other infrastructure which would benefit from the \$25.7 million and, perhaps, say when he would be so inclined?

Mr. Lall: I will do so but in the interest of time it is a very long list, I will supply the Member.

Mr. Williams: Line Item 6284, – Other – again a similar request for information to be supplied by the Minister, through you Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Lall: Yes.

Mr. Williams: When?

Mr. Lall: During the week.

Mr. Chairman: Anything else?

Mr. Williams: Not on this one, Sir.

Programme 734 – Education Delivery - \$1,356,992,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme 735 – Health Services - \$507, 596

Mr. Williams: Mr. Chairman, Line Item 6242 – maintenance of Buildings. Would the Minister say how much of this \$21.5 million is allocated to remedying the plumbing defects at the West Demerara Regional Hospital and the Leonora Cottage Hospital? And would the Minister care to set a time line by which these assignments could be completed?

Mr. Lall: There is no provision made specifically for plumbing but there are some funds allocated for some works to be done at the surgical ward at the West Demerara hospital.

Mr. Williams: I am hopeful, Sir, that the Minister will be flexible with respect to addressing the question of the plumbing defects from the available resources, recognising of course – and I am sure my friend Neendkumar does not understand because this has to do with water –The facility

at Leonora Cottage Hospital had to be closed and every patient discharged during the last year, and all the professional medical service providers went home on account of the absence of that very important commodity- water.

With respect to Line Item 6292 – Dietary – does the Minister have at his disposal an average number of admissions for any recent year – preferably last year – and an average time that a patient who is admitted is required to remain at the hospital. They have to eat if they are in the hospital, have they not?

Mr. Lall: Minister Ramsammy could probably help me out, but we do cater for about 180 persons for the entire year, 365 days for the year.

Mr. Williams: Very well, Sir that is useful information.

Mr. Chairman: What are you going to do with it Member?

Mr. Williams: Sir, we are in a better position to understand whether the provision of \$20.6 million is adequate to feed the people who are sick in the hospitals in the Region. That is what we can do with it. Thank you very much, Sir.

Programme 735 – Health Services - \$507,596 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Capital expenditure

Programme 731 – Regional Administration & Finance - \$5,500,000

Mr. Williams: Sir, Line Item 2401700 – Land and Water Transport, Profile Page 277. Would the Minister tell us the type of vehicle to be procured, and to which of the programmes would it be exclusively assigned.

Mr. Lall: It is one open back pick-up to be used for administration, and mainly for field visits to check with NDCs and assist them and so forth.

Mr. Williams: Is this specifically to replace the one that was crashed and written off recently, Hon. Minister.

Mr. Lall: I do not know of any vehicle being written off; so we are not replacing anything. It is just simply purchasing a new one to add to the fleet.

Mr. Williams: Very well, Sir. Line Item 2503200 – Purchase of Equipment and furniture, Profile Page 278. Could the Mr. Minister say whether the GPS replaces one that has gone non-functional, or whether it is a new acquisition, and where would it be placed?

Mr. Lall: We never had a GPS in Region 3. We are purchasing one for the first time.

Mr. Williams: Sir, I move on in the interest of time. Line Item 1300800 – Agriculture Development...

Mr. Chairman: It is your time Hon. Member, not mine.

Mr. Williams: Very well, Sir. Profile Page 279. It is clear that the profile is not complete because it says that the project includes, and goes on to list four items. Could the Hon. Minister say whether in this provision of \$50 million there is anything for river defence in the area from Nouvelle Flanders to the Best Foreshore, which takes in Plastic City and Crane Village, and if so how much of it?

Mr. Lall: No, no, that is not covered in my budget.

Mr. Williams: Line Item 1100400 – Bridges – Profile Page 280. Could the Minister say how much of the sum provided here would be for the reconstruction of the bridge to Uitvlugt Community Centre Ground? I gather the Guyana sugar corporation is not in a position to replace it and it is now in a state of disrepair and closed.

Mr. Lall: That item is not listed for any works under this programme.

Mr. Williams: Could the Minister say whether to the best of his knowledge there could be some provision someplace else? This is just for information, please.

Mr. Lall: We will keep pressing GuySuCo to repair that bridge Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Williams: Community Roads, Line Item 1400600. How much of the voted provision of \$52 million will be used to fix roads in Meter – Meerzorg, West Stewartville, Kastive, for example – three communities in dire need of such attention.

Mr. Lall: Those communities are not listed under this programme for repairs this year.

Mr. Williams: Very well, Sir. Upgrading Existing Housing Schemes – Line Item 1901300 The profile says it includes upgrading roads in housing schemes. Would the Minister say whether this means moving from loam surfaces in one year, to crusher run surfaces in another year, and then to bituminous surface in another year after three contracts in three years? Is that what we mean by upgrading roads?

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, I hope I can answer that question. The roads that we are doing this year: upgrading to crusher run in the Ruimveldt area; upgrade to DBST in Vergenoegen, repairs to DBST in Patentia, and upgrade to DBST in De Willem.

Mr. Williams: Yes, I do know what DBST means Hon. Friend. Sir, could the Minister say whether there was any study done to determine the economic value of doing these roads in three phases over three contracts, over a minimum of three years, as opposed to doing one road

properly from start to completion? Is there any study that has been commissioned? And if so would the Minister make the study available please.

Mr. Lall: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Williams: How soon could the Minister make that available, Sir. I have a serious interest in it.

Mr. Lall: I will ask the regional administration to provide the Member with the information.

Mr. Williams: I know a lady who is a contractor now, connected to a presidential hopeful.

Mr. Chairman: Would that be me Hon. Member? I am a presidential hopeful. Or would it be Mr. Basil Williams? He is a presidential hopeful.

Mr. Williams: Sir, the General Secretary of the PPP/C is aware of that person.

Line Item 240700 – Land and Water Transport, Profile Page 283 Hon. Minister I am happy that a boat and engine is being acquired for the Region. I am wondering whether it is an addition to an existing fleet, and if it is what number would that fleet be at now with this new addition? Finally on this one, whether there is any arrangement with the Region and the security keepers in the Region to facilitate easy access since the police are limited in this area.

Mr. Lall: This complements the other boat and engine we have in the Region. Mr. Chairman, we are always willing at the regional level, on the coast and in the hinterland, to make our equipment accessible to all Government departments, be it police or any others.

Mr. Williams: Thank you very much, Sir.

The final issue I want to address is at Line Item 1203000 – Buildings - Education. First of all could the Minister say whether any provision is made in this vote for the Bagotville Primary School? That is the first question.

Mr. Lall: No, Sir,

Mr. Williams: Given that Cornelia Ida Primary School very recently benefitted from an annex, to remove the roof from that annex to send another floor up will inconvenience the students and teachers alike. Would it not be useful to consider putting a temporary hold on the CI development which is necessary, but not immediate, in my estimation, and paying some attention to... *(Interruption)* Hon. Rohee to remove a roof no one can occupy the building... would the Minister be willing to consider putting a temporary hold on the CI job and let us pay some attention to the urgent need that obtains at the Bagotville Primary School.

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, we are going ahead as planned.

Mr. Williams: Well, Sir, we are here wasting time because the Members of the Government benches have told us over and over that we are not coming with suggestions.

Mr. Chairman: This is not the time for suggestions Hon. Member. At some other time you can make suggestions. We are dealing with the estimates.

Mr. Ramson: I agree with you, Sir, you tolerated him too long.

Mr. Williams: In which case Sir would the Minister say how much of the sum voted here is allocated for rehabilitation of the Den Amstel PIC.

Mr. Lall: Zero sum, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Williams: Thank you very much Sir. I am impressed with the Minister's honesty and the Government's abandonment of key places.

Mr. Chairman: No, *ad hominem* please.

Ms. Ally: Mr. Chairman, 2503300 – Furniture and Equipment. I would like to ask the Minister if he can provide - not only for Region 3 because I do not want to get up for other regions on this same item of Furniture and Equipment – a list of the schools that will receive – I am particularly interested in desks and benches, accommodation for the children – furniture, and how many of each type, how many desks, how many benches. This is for all the regions, the schools and the quantity of each type.

Mr. Lall: I will do that Mr. Chairman.

4.08 p.m.

Programme: 731 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$5,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 732 – Agriculture – \$50,000,000

Programme: 732 – Agriculture – \$50,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 733 – Public Works – \$98,500,000

Programme: 733 – Public Works – \$98,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 734 – Education Delivery – \$50,000,000

Programme: 734 –Education Delivery – \$50,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 735 – Health Services – \$51,000,000

Programme 735 –Health Services – \$51,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 74 Region 4: Demerara/Mahaica

Current Expenditure

Programme: 741 –Regional Administration and Finance – \$114,978,000

Mr. Danny: Line item - 6114 Clerical and Office Supply: Under Staffing Details, there is a reduction from twenty-five to twenty-four but an increase from \$12 million to \$14 million. Could the Minister say what is responsible for this?

Minister of Local Government and Regional Development [Mr. Lall]: There has been a promotion into another category, so that reflects in a reduction. The increase under wages and salaries is catered for the five per cent increase.

Mr. Danny: Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees: Under Staffing Details, there is an increase from eight to eighteen. However, under Contracted Employees, the difference between \$7.2 million and \$9 million does not seem to have any kind of ratio when look at the numbers eight, compare to \$7.2 million and \$9 million, and eighteen. Could the Minister explain this and give us the emolument, the highest and the lowest?

Mr. Lall: The new staff would be for some new appointments - three Accounts Clerk, two Permanent Secretaries, four Security Guards and one Typist Clerk. When those are added to the salary increase...

Mr. Danny: What are the highest and lowest salaries?

Mr. Lall: The highest salary is \$46, 879 and the lowest salary is \$31,000.

Mr. Danny: Line item 6131 - Other Direct Labour Cost: There is an increase from \$642 million to \$958 million. Could the Hon. Minister explain this line item, Other Direct Labour Cost, and the reason for the increase?

Mr. Lall: This amount here caters for overtime and responsibility allowances.

Mr. Danny: Line item 6211 - Expenses Specific to the Agency: There is an increase here from \$9. 892 million to \$11 million. Could the Hon. Minister explain this line item and give reasons for the increase?

Mr. Lall: There is increased cost due to additional travelling for the Regional Chairman and for the Vice-Chairman. The Region has planned more community outreach programmes and contribution to various schools because, as you know, the regional system now is also engaged with the National Disaster Preparedness Scheme and the Ministry also makes a contribution there. Then there is a programme, I think, perhaps, with the assistance of Minister Priya Manickchand for the Women Affairs Committee of the Region 4, to make some contribution to the various gender and equity organisations in the Region.

Mr. Elliot: A follow up question on the same line item. Could the Hon. Minister say if those councillors, for the Regional Democratic Council (RDC), who have outstanding travelling will be paid out of this amount? There are some councillors who still have to collect their travelling.

Mr. Lall: Yes, some of the travelling expenses will be taken care of through this vote.

Ms. Selman: Line item 6302 - Training (including Scholarship): What this training entails? How many people will be trained?

Mr. Lall: This is to train ten persons in the administration, throughout the five programmes, in Information Technology (IT).

Mr. Danny: Line item 6281 - Security Service: Could the Minister say who or where will be benefiting from this increase?

Mr. Lall: What has happened is that this may note several increases in several other Regions where, because of some observations by the Accountant General, the Accounts Department, of the Region's monitoring of those security guards or the managing of the security services that are

supplying the service to it, and there will be an increased cost of the monitoring of the security service because it believes that in some areas it is short-changed by some of the operators.

Mr. Danny: Line item 6284 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister explain, here, “Other”?

Mr. Lall: The “Other” is some minor works in the offices, including accommodating a fairly large amount of work study students that come throughout the year to the Regional Office.

Mr. Danny: Line item 6291 - National and Other Events: Could the Hon. Minister say what are the other events?

Mr. Lall: They are the Mashramani celebration, Independence Day, Flag raising observation, Remembrance Day.

Mr. Danny: It is not the national events; it is the other events. Mashramani will falls under national events.

Mr. Lall: No. The Region prepares its own contingent. Well, we do have... every Region... You should know that every year our Ministry, our Region, brings first, top of the list. I am also advised that Region 4 has made provision to celebrate Emancipation Day celebration in a particular way this year.

Mr. Danny: Line item 6294 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister explain “Other” here?

Mr. Lall: Yes. I just said it is for the work study students.

Mr. Danny: But there are two line items.

Mr. Lall: These are petty expenses in the office - refreshments, and so forth.

Programme: 741 –Regional Administration and Finance – \$114,978,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 742 –Agriculture – \$186,091,000

Mr. Danny: Line item 6115 - Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled: There is a decrease, from 2010, from forty-seven to forty-four, but there is an increase here, in allocation, from \$25.7 million to \$26.7 million. Could the Hon. Minister explain the increase?

Mr. Lall: Under line item 6115, there is indeed a reduction. One person was dismissed; one person resigned, and there has been one ranger who was shifted to the Public Works Division, or programme, and also the five per cent increase in salary.

Mr. Danny: Line item 6281 - Security Services: There is an increase here from \$8.7 million to \$10.9 million. Could the Hon. Minister explain this and tell the Committee of Supply where those security services will be provided for?

Mr. Lall: Some additional facilities are catered for which the Regions would have taken over: some more sluices, power stations and all these...and also in this increased cost there is an enhanced monitoring, as I said before.

Ms. Selman: Line item 6114, according to the Staffing Details, Clerical and Office Support, there is one in 2010 and one in 2011. What is responsible for the increased sum that is allotted?

Mr. Lall: Sorry, I do not understand the question. I did not hear it properly.

Ms. Selman: Okay, what is responsible for the increase in the budgeted sum, 2010 to 2011? Having regarded to the fact that, according to the Staffing Details, in 2010 there was one clerical and office support staff and in 2011 there is the same one clerical and office support staff.

Mr. Lall: What is the question?

Ms. Selman: What is responsible for the increase?

Mr. Lall: It is the salary increase.

Ms. Selman: Yes.

Mr. Lall: That is it.

Ms. Selman: It could not have been the five per cent increase.

Mr. Lall: It is for salary and other related benefits. It is not only the five per cent, everything else goes up - overtime increase. It is not the basic salary only.

Programme: 742 –Agriculture – \$186,091,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 743 –Public Works – \$133,289,000

Mr. Danny: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees, moves from two in 2010 to four in 2011. Contracted employees, here, the allocation, from \$4.6 million to \$4.9 million, does not give a ratio, like my first question, in terms of the emoluments.

Mr. Lall: Did the Member ask a question just now?

Mr. Danny: Yes.

Mr. Lall: What is it?

Mr. Danny: Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees: There is \$4.6 million and \$4.9 million here, but in the Staffing Details there is a double in number from two to four and the salary does not double here. Could the Hon. Minister explain this: What are the highest and lowest emoluments?

Mr. Lall: I think that the Hon. Member is assuming that all those people – the two before and the two now – will get the same salary.

Mr. Danny: That is why I am asking for the lowest and the highest emoluments.

Mr. Lall: That suggestion is bad. The lowest paid persons out of those four now will be for the vehicle Drivers, \$36,000 and the highest paid person will be the Regional Engineer, \$196,000. Those are the two new ones.

Mrs. David-Blair: Line item 6252 - Maintenance of Bridges: I would like to ask the Hon. Minister to say if the maintenance of the Mahaica old bridge is included here, since the road users continue to use that bridge.

Mr. Lall: That is still a public bridge and it would fall under Minister Benn's Ministry. He has assured me that there is an ongoing programme to maintain that bridge. This year some more will be done because of that fact that bridge will be built, the Mahaica Hospital and a new tarmac, and that will improve the facility for the farmers coming out of the river. That bridge is part of that programme.

Mrs. David-Blair: Thank you.

Mr. Danny: Line item 6281 - Security Services: From \$992,000 to \$1.7 million: There is almost a double here. Could the Hon. Minister explain this?

Mr. Lall: There will be an increase in hours, in guards and also increase in the monitoring.

Mr. Elliot: Line item 6255 - Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister explain this line item and where the projects will be located?

Mr. Lall: This sum \$10.5 million will cater for maintenance of fence at Cane Grove, the Joyce Phillip's Pump Station and repairs to the guard hut. In Triumph, the fence will be repaired at the compound of the Region Administration Office. In Cane Grove also some land development will be done in the compound. Some repairs will be done to the Buxton pump station fence and also to the Victoria pump station fence.

Mr. Elliot: Line item 6251 - Maintenance of Roads: Could the Hon. Minister provide a list of the roads in the communities and the cost to those roads?

Mr. Lall: In Clonbrook - \$2.5 million, Kurukururu - \$5.2 million, Craig - \$2.7 million, Little Diamond - \$3.1 million, Soesdyke - \$6.5 million, Nabaclis - \$3.5 million, that is in Ward Street and the *crush run* is the West Sideline Dam Road, again in Nabaclis - \$6 million and the maintenance to the second to last street in Haslington - \$2.7 million.

Programme: 743 –Public Works – \$133,289,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 744 –Education Delivery – \$1,865,815,000

Mr. Danny: Line item 6113 - Other Technical and Craft Skilled: Could the Hon. Minister explain this? There is also an increase from \$202 million to \$221 million. Could the Hon. Minister also explain the increase?

Mr. Lall: The change here sometimes will reflect some movements of people. Remember we are dealing with teachers and Headmasters, and so forth, and they are paid by the Regions. So, whenever there is movement various categories will show the differences, from year to year. The increase in the amount reflects the increase in wages and salaries.

Mrs. Punalall: Under line item 6283, Cleaning and Extermination Services, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister if he can explain to this Committee of Supply if provision has been made to cut the grass in all one hundred and thirty-five school compounds in Region 4, and if the amount allocated is enough.

Mr. Lall: Yes. But it is not only this provision that is made here. The Neighbourhood Democratic Councils (NDCs) are asked to assist; the Ministry of Education is also asked to assist. The Hon. Member may have noticed recently that my Ministry has purchased, specifically for that purpose, a tractor with a *slasher* and it has been working on the East Coast for the last three weeks.

Mrs. Punalall: Thank you.

Mr. Danny: Under Staffing Details, in 2010 to 2011: In 2010 there was one person and in 2011 there are six persons. However, the contracted employees allocation here differs from \$1.9 million to \$2.6 million which, as my previous question, I would like the Hon. Minister to explain because it does not have the ratio as of last year.

Mr. Lall: I am a bit amazed, Mr. Chairman, the increase here will be for two Library Assistants, one Laboratory Technician, one Typist Clerk, one Office Assistant and one Systems Development Officer. But I must agree with the Comrade, the increase seems not to mesh with this. Perhaps there is a slight arithmetical mistake somewhere.

Mr. Danny: Could the Hon. Member give us the highest and lowest emoluments?

Mr. Lall: The lowest emolument is \$37,000 and the highest emolument is \$61,000.

Mr. Danny: Line item 6133 - Benefits and Allowances: Here, there is the increase from \$31.2 million to \$36.8 million. Could the Hon. Minister explain Benefits and Allowances, who are the beneficiaries here?

Mr. Lall: It is basically...I cannot identify who it is exactly at the moment, but it is teachers basically and people in the Education Department.

Mr. Danny: Line item 6281 - Security Services: There is an increase from \$119 million to \$125 million. Could the Hon. Minister explain the increases here?

Mr. Lall: Yes. My colleague has answered the question - new schools, new staff...

Mr. Danny: Line item 6284 - Other: Could the Hon. Minister explain "Other" here?

Mr. Lall: These are basically stipends to take care of work study students, one hundred and fifty-eight schools. It cost a lot.

Mr. Danny: Line item 6302 - Training (including Scholarships): Could the Hon. Minister say who are the beneficiaries here?

Mr. Lall: It is various programmes for different categories of teachers. That is what basically it is for, training. There is no scholarship although the line item states scholarships. There is a one-day literary workshop with teachers, Grades 1 and 2; one-day parental skill workshop for teachers; five-day orientation, workers and newly appointed school administrators; one-day training on multi-grade teaching for teachers in riverine areas, and such like.

Programme: 744 – Education Delivery – \$1,865,815,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme : 745 – Health Services – \$255,623,000

Mrs. Punalall: Line item 6242 - Maintenance of Buildings: I would like to ask the Hon. Minister if provision is made for repairs of the Diamond Diagnostic Centre - maintenance.

Mr. Lall: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Programme: 745 – Health Services – \$255,623,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 741 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$13,000,000

Programme: 741 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$13,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 742 – Agriculture – \$33,000,000

Programme: 742 – Agriculture – \$33,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 743 – Public Works – \$48,000,000

Programme: 743 – Public Works – \$48,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 744 – Education Delivery – \$44,500,000

Programme: 744 – Education Delivery – \$44,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 745 – Health Services – \$38,000,000

Programme: 745 – Health Services – \$38,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

4.38 p.m.

Agency: 75 Region 5: Mahaica/Berbice

Current Expenditure

Programme: 751 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$62,489,000

Mrs. Punalall: Under the line item, Contracted Employees, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister if a doctor or Medex is being allocated for the Mora Point Health Centre in the Mahaicony River.

Mr. Lall: We have not reached that page as yet. This is Administration.

Mrs. Punalall: Sorry.

Programme: 751- Regional Administration and Finance - \$62,489,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 752 – Agriculture - \$112,128,000

Ms. Wade: Line item 6253 - Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works: Minister, could you supply me with the list of the areas and the costs per areas under this line item?

Mr. Lall: There is no provision here for that item. This is dealing with Administration, the Region's Administration.

Ms. Wade: We are finished with that.

Mr. Chairman: We have moved on to Agriculture.

Mr. Lall: Sorry, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: It is Programme 752, pages 304 to 305.

Mr. Lall: Gelderland, Zeelugt, Woodlands, Bath, those are the areas. Rosignal, Bel Air, Woodley Park, Union, Temple, Profit, Rising Sun, Mahaicony...

Ms. Wade: I was making it much easier, Mr. Minister, asking that you supply me with the list.

Mr. Lall: Sorry.

Ms. Wade: Thank you.

Programme: 752 – Agriculture - \$112,128,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 753 – Public Works - \$113,747,000

Ms. Wade: Line item 6251 – Maintenance of Roads: Could the Minister say whether the street next to the Belladrum Bridge - if he wants to call it the Coco Cabaña Street - is listed for works this year? If it is yes, what is the amount that will be spent? If it is no, why?

Mr. Lall: That road is not listed on the list we have, but Minister Benn is listening.

Ms. Wade: It is regrettable, Sir.

Programme: 753 – Public Works- \$113,747,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 754 – Education Delivery - \$807,449,000

Ms. Wade: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: I have noticed here that there is an increase. I would like to know, Mr. Minister, what additional buildings are there for maintenance that caused this increase?

Mr. Lall: I can provide the list, but there has not been an increase; it is a decrease, in fact.

Ms. Wade: Is it Maintenance of Buildings? There is an increase here.

Programme: 754 – Education Delivery - \$807,449,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 755 – Health Services - \$225,759,000

Ms. Wade: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Building, also: I would like to know if the police and doctors' living quarters in the Government compound at Fort Wellington are included in the maintenance works here.

Mr. Lall: Those are not catered for under this programme.

Mrs. Punalall: May I ask the Hon. Minister the question I asked before, in line item 6116, Contracted Employees, if a Medex or a doctor is included here for the Mora Point Health Centre, in Mahaicony River.

Mr. Lall: On the 14th January, a Medex will be posted there.

Mrs. Punalall: Is it on the 14th January?

Mr. Lall: Sorry, it is in February. Mr. Chairman, excuse me, I am under some severe pains.

Mrs. Punalall: Thank you.

Programme: 755 - Health Services - \$225,759,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 751 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$8,700,000

Ms. Wade: Project 1400800 – Roads: I know that there are some roads listed here, but I would like the Minister to supply me with the list of the amount of moneys to be spent in each area.

Mr. Lall: I would be please to do that.

Ms. Wade: Thank you.

Programme: 751 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$8,700,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 752 – Agriculture - \$73,200,000

Programme: 752 – Agriculture - \$73,200,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 753 – Public Works - \$92,000,000

Programme: 753 – Public Works - \$92,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 754 – Education Delivery - \$40,000,000

Programme: 754 – Education Delivery - \$40,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 755 – Health Services - \$29,000,000

Ms. Wade: “Purchase of ambulance”: Could the Minister say whether the ambulance will be assigned to the hospital in Sub-Region 2?

Mr. Lall: Yes, it will be assigned there.

Programme: 755 – Health Services - \$29,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 76 Region 6: East Berbice/Corentyne

Current Expenditure

Programme: 761 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$82,632,000

Programme: 761 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$82,632,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 762 – Agriculture - \$377,682,000

Programme: 762 – Agriculture - \$377,682,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 763 – Public Works - \$148,545,000

Programme: 763 – Public Works - \$148,545,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 764 – Education Delivery - \$1,714,187,000

Programme: 764 – Education Delivery - \$1,714,187,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 765 – Health Services - \$860,795,000

Dr. Austin: Line item 6221- Drugs and Medical Supplies: I put it to the Hon. Minister that the figure of \$17 million allocated is not enough because there is a chronic shortage of medication in Region 6, in all the hospitals: the New Amsterdam Hospital, the Port Mourant Hospital, Mibikuri Hospital, and the Skeldon Hospital. Patients regularly have to go to purchase these drugs. My point is that I am saying this amount is not enough.

Mr. Lall: I do not know how you will determine that, because, for us, in the Division of Labour, in our Ministry, and the Ministry of Health, this is what we are catering for. This is basically to supplement what is being done by the central Ministry of Health. But the central Ministry of Health does not do certain things, such as the provision of small amounts of things, maintenance and repairs; we do those. So these sums here have catered for this, but the bulk of the basis medicines are being supplied by the Ministry of Health. One can always argue that there is more, but if in the event that there is additional demand for drugs by the population, wherever there are health facilities, we are always willing and ready to supply those drugs.

Programme: 765 – Health Services - \$860,795,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 761 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$7,900,000

Dr. Austin: Project 2504200, Furniture and Equipment- Administration, profile page 314, “...global position system”: I would like to ask the Hon. Minister, what this system would be used for?

Mr. Lall: It will be used by the Engineering Department to do surveys.

Programme: 761- Regional Administration and Finance - \$7,900,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 762 – Agriculture - \$117,500,000

Dr. Austin: Project 2402000, Land Transport, profile page 316: I would like to ask the Hon. Minister, where will the tractor and trailer be based?

Mr. Lall: It will be in Whim.

Programme: 762 – Agriculture - \$117,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 763 – Public Works - \$106,000,000

Programme: 763 – Public Works - \$106,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 764 – Education Delivery - \$50,000,000

Programme: 764 – Education Delivery - \$50,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 765 – Health Services - \$47,500,000

Dr. Austin: Project 2402000, Land Transport, profile page 323, “Purchase of ambulance”: I would like to ask the Hon. Minister, where would the ambulance be based?

Mr. Lall: It will be in Port Mourant.

Programme: 765 – Health Services - \$47,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members we will move on to Region 6 in a moment. But before I do, I just want to advise Members that I had intimated that I would be prepared to, without consulting anyone, of course, but I am sure that you would support my decision, be flexible with this section of the Estimates, because it is very long. I must say that I am not impressed by the time management by Members of the Opposition; nevertheless, I did agree to be flexible. So what we will do, and I also agreed to have a certain closing time at the request, is that we will go up to 5.30 p.m. with the Regions, hoping that we can conclude them. I hope that the Opposition Members will try to manage their time within the half an hour a bit better so that they can ask only the important questions, and they would, at least, be able to get in some questions for each of the remaining Regions. Then we will suspend for tea, a short break, hopefully, and return to complete the rest of our work. In the meantime, I would like to suspend for five minutes.

Assembly resumed.

Sitting suspended at 4.56 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 5.04 p.m.

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

Agency: 77 Region 7: Cuyuni/Mazaruni

Current Expenditure

Programme: 771 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$87,102,000

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, could I interrupt you, we have not voted on the Capital Expenditure for Region 6 as yet, if you would not mind.

Mr. Chairman: We did. I have ticked off all the items.

Ms. Teixeira: Accept my apologies.

Mrs. David-Blair: Line item 6114 – Clerical and Office Support: I see that there has been a decrease in clerical and office support by four, but there is still a little increase in the budget allocation. Can the Minister explain this for me, please?

Mr. Lall: There has been one dismissal and a few removals from that category because of promotion. There is a minimal increase; I think this is due to the increase in salaries.

Mrs. David-Blair: Line item 6117 – Temporary Employees: Can the Minister say who is the temporary employee for this year?

Mr. Lall: This is a relieved cleaner. The permanent cleaner has gone on leave. This is done normally.

Programme: 771 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$87,102,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 772 – Public Works - \$149,383,000

Mrs. David-Blair: Line item 6272 – Electricity Charges: I see it has been double. Can the Minister explain?

Mr. Lall: This is for increased street and security lighting and the purchase of air conditioning units, computers and photocopiers. Those have caused that increase.

Ms. Hastings: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister tell us which buildings, more so, in the Upper Mazaruni, will benefit from this allocation?

Mr. Lall: I will give you the names of all the buildings: The administration building in Bartica - \$2 million, the administration building Kurupung - \$1.5 million, the District Regional Administration (DRA) quarters, Bartica - \$3 million, regional guest house, Bartica - \$4 million, guest house, Waramdong - \$2.5 million, regional stores, Bartica - \$2 million and the administration building, Kamarang - \$3 million.

Ms. Hastings: Line item 6251 – Maintenance of Roads: Could the Hon. Minister say if the roads from Waramdong to Kamarang and Waramdong to Kako are included? And how much is allocated?

Mr. Lall: Yes Madam.

Programme: 772 – Public Works - \$149,383,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 773 – Education Delivery - \$667,555,000

Mrs. David-Blair: Line item 6112 – Senior Technical: There is an increase of sixteen senior technical officers. Can the Minister state the positions and the emoluments?

Mr. Lall: The Ministry has two graduate Headmasters and fourteen Assistant Mistresses.

Sorry about that, Hon. Member, the costs for those roads are \$1.5 million each.

The emoluments: the District Education Officer - \$147,000, Education Supervisor - \$125,000, Deputy Education Supervisor - \$117,000, Heads of Department - \$119,000, Education Officers - \$154,000, Graduate Senior Masters - \$123,000, Non-Graduate Seniors - \$75,000, Graduate Masters - \$109,000, Non-Graduate Masters - \$86,000, Trained Graduate Masters - \$89,000 and the Assistant Mistresses - \$53,000.

Mrs. David-Blair: Can the Minister say to us how many of these Officers are for the Bartica area and how many for the Upper Mazaruni and Middle Mazaruni areas?

Mr. Lall: I will supply you with that information later.

Programme: 773- Education Delivery - \$667,555,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 774- Health Services - \$261,228,000

Programme: 774 – Health Services - \$261,228,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 771 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$2,000,000

Ms. Hastings: Project 1204100 – Buildings – Education: “Construction and extension of primary schools, teachers’ quarters and sanitary block.” Could the Hon. Minister give me a breakdown of the allocations for those buildings?

Mr. Lall: The St. Anthony’s Primary School, the Annex - \$20 million, increased enrolment has to be catered for; the teachers’ quarters in Philippi, in the Upper Mazaruni, and that is the construction of new teachers’ quarters because of the distance; the sanitary block at Jawalla Primary School, and that is also in your area, and the primary school in Paruma.

Ms. Hastings: You did not answer the second part of my question. What are the allocations for each of the buildings?

Mr. Lall: Sorry. Philippi is \$7 million, Jawalla - \$4 million and Paruma - \$7 million.

Ms. Hastings: Project 2402100 - Land and Water Transport: I see here “Purchase of vehicle and outboard engine.” Could the Hon. Minister say if an outboard engine will be bought for the Department of Education at Kamarang since there is none?

Mr. Lall: I am advised by the REO that there is an outboard engine at Kamarang. This outboard engine here is a fairly powerful one and it costs \$2.5 million.

Programme: 771 –Regional Administration and Finance - \$2,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 772 – Public Works - \$38,616,000

Programme: 772 – Public Works - \$38,616,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 773 – Education Delivery - \$58,300,000

Programme: 773 – Education Delivery - \$58,300,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 774 – Health Services - \$23,000,000

Ms. Hasting: Project 2402100 – Land and Water Transport: I notice the Region will be buying a boat for Phillip Health Post. Could the Hon. Minister say, what is the size of the boat and the horsepower to be purchased?

Mr. Lall: It is a one thousand five hundred-horsepower engine and a fifteen-foot aluminium boat.

Programme: 774 – Health Services - \$23,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 78 Region 8: Potaro/Siparuni

Current Expenditure

Programme: 781 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$49,272,000

Dr. George Norton: On Staffing Details, I would be happy if the Minister can explain that while there has not been an increase in Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled, there has been an increase in the wages and salaries. Could the Hon. Minister kindly explain this?

Mr. Lall: The five per cent increase is reflected here.

Dr. G. Norton: Could the Hon. Minister tell us the designation of the one contracted worker in the Staffing Details?

Mr. Lall: The worker is a Radio Operation at the salary of \$39,000.

5.15 p.m.

Dr. G. Norton: Could the Hon. Minister tell us the designation of the one contracted worker in the Staffing Details?

Mr. Lall: The worker is a Radio Operator at the salary of \$39,000.

Dr. G. Norton: Under line item 6251 – Maintenance of Roads: Could the Hon. Minister say if the branch road to Maraikobai and the road from Kanapang to Itabac are included in this?

Mr. Lall: Those are expenses for Administration. We have not reached that as yet. You have gone to Programme 782.

Programme: 781 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$49,272,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 782 – Public Works - \$92,210,000

Dr. G. Norton: Mr. Chairman, it is the say question again. Could the Hon. Minister say if the branch road to Maraikobai and the road from Kanapang to Itabac are included in the maintenance of roads here?

Mr. Lall: Yes. The cost of the road to Maraikobai is \$2.1 million.

Dr. G. Norton: What about the road from Kanapang to Itabac?

Mr. Lall: That is \$2.2 million.

Dr. G. Norton: Mr. Chairman, under line item 6252 – Maintenance of Bridges. Could the Hon. Minister name a few of the bridges which are earmarked for this category?

Mr. Lall: The bridges are Amung Creek, Tuzeneng, Handrail, Mahdia, Tumong, the bottom side of Maraikobai, Maruwa and 7 Miles.

Dr. G. Norton: Staffing Details: While there has been a decrease by two, there has been an increase in wages and salaries for line item 6115. Could the Hon. Minister explain this to us?

Mr. Lall: Here again, the five per cent increase in wages and salaries is reflected.

Programme: 782 – Public Works - \$92,210,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 783 – Education Delivery - \$350,006,000

Programme: 783 – Education Delivery - \$350,006,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 784 – Health Services - \$124,029,000

Dr. G. Norton: There has been an increase by \$5 million in the Staffing Details of line item 6113 – Other Technical and Craft Skilled. While there has been an increase of just two, could the Hon. Minister give us the designation of these two staff?

Mr. Lall: The staff are midwives.

Programme: 784 – Health Services - \$124,029,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 781 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$14,230,000

Dr. G. Norton: Under project 1209000 – Buildings – Administration: Could the Hon. Minister say, specifically, for whom these living quarters are being constructed?

Mr. Lall: It is for the administrative staff. I think the Accounts Clerk and some other staff members of Administration Department.

Dr. G. Norton: Under project 2402200 – Land and Water Transport: Could the Hon. Minister say where that boat and engine will be?

Mr. Lall: It will be stationed in Mahdia to work in the Potaro River.

Programme: 781 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$14,230,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 782 – Public Works - \$40,000,000

Dr. G. Norton: Under project 1100800 – Bridges: Could the Hon. Minister say what materials will be used for the construction of these bridges - whether it is wood or concrete?

Mr. Lall: It is a mixture of wood and concrete. The main beams, and so on, will be built with greenheart.

Programme: 782 – Public Works - \$40,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 783 – Education Delivery - \$47,500,000

Dr. G. Norton: Taking into consideration what happened recently in one of the interior locations with respect to sanitary blocks – somebody falling into a pit latrine – could the Hon. Minister say what type of sanitary blocks will be constructed?

Mr. Lall: Concrete washrooms will be constructed.

Dr. G. Norton: Will there be flush-toilets?

Mr. Lall: Yes.

Programme: 783 – Education Delivery - \$47,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 784 – Health Services - \$27,600,000

Dr. G. Norton: Under project 2402200 – Land and Water Transport, “Purchase of vehicles”: Could the Hon. Minister say how many vehicles and where they are earmarked for?

Mr. Lall: There is a 4x4 which will be used for medical outreach and two All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) which will assist us in the anti-malaria programme. As I said earlier, in this particular area, we have been going out to the various mining areas because a lot of the employers are not releasing their employees on time, so when they get to the centre in Mahdia they are very sick. Those ATVs will be assisting in going to the more difficult areas where the normal vehicles cannot go.

Dr. G. Norton: Under project 2504800 – Furniture and Equipment – Health: Could the Hon. Minister say which village is earmarked for dental chairs?

Mr. Lall: They are Paramakatoi Cottage Hospital and Kato.

Programme: 784 – Health Services - \$27,600,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 79 Region 9: Upper Takatu/Upper Essequibo

Current Expenditure

Programme: 791 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$86,143,000

Ms. Selman: Line item 6272 – Electricity Charges: What has created such a large increase of \$3.3 million?

Mr. Lall: As we all know, because of the new developments in Lethem and the building of the Takatu Bridge, a multi-purpose building had to be put in, so the operation, maintenance and the general care of that building now falls under Regional Administration. That increase in charges is reflected here.

Ms. Selman: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): What does this include? Is it scholarships or just training?

Mr. Lall: I think I did mention, quite recently, that a brand new computer lab was installed in the lower flat of the Amerindian hostel and training of Amerindian children and adults will be starting very soon.

Programme: 791 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$86,143,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 792 – Agriculture - \$14,325,000

Ms. Selman: Line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants: What has occasioned the almost fifty per cent increase?

Mr. Lall: There is increased surveillance. As you know that is an extremely huge territory, so there has been an increased cost in surveillance. Perhaps you can also recall that I said that motorcycles specifically for the monitoring of the security guard services and also with the more aggressive agricultural drive in Region 9, field visits will be increasing.

Ms. Selman: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): Could the Hon. Minister say what training includes?

Mr. Lall: This will be directed to Amerindian farmers.

Programme: 792 – Agriculture - \$14,325,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 793 – Public Works - \$96,860,000

Ms. Selman: Line items 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings, 6251 – Maintenance of Roads and 6252 – Maintenance of Bridges: Could the Hon. Minister supply us with the list of buildings which will be maintained, the list of roads which will be maintained and the list of bridges which will be maintained?

Mr. Lall: I will do that, Mr. Chairman. I will provide that information.

Ms. Selman: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: It is whether moneys have been allotted for the running of pipelines at the Aruwau Health Hut.

Mr. Lall: I do not know about that specific item, but a proper water system will be put in there this year and I am sure it will include provision of water to the Health Hut.

Programme: 793 – Public Works - \$96,860,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 794 – Education Delivery - \$493,228,000

Ms. Selman: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: It is whether pipelines will be connected or have been connected at the teachers' living quarters at Kurupukari.

Mr. Lall: Yes. That is included in our programme for this year.

Ms. Selman: Under the same line item, were any moneys allocated for the maintenance of the Tiger Pond or the Achiwuib schools?

Mr. Lall: Those are included in our capital programme.

Programme: 794 – Education Delivery - \$493,228,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 795 – Health Services - \$201,257,000

Ms. Selman: Line item 6112 – Senior Technical: What is the complement of staff nurses?

Mr. Lall: I can provide that. The figure I have includes midwives and so on.

Programme: 795 – Health Services - \$201,257,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Ms. Selman, I can do one of two things. We have reached 5.30 p.m. now, as I indicated, half an hour. I can give you six more questions. We have the Capital Expenditure under Region 9 to complete. I will allow, for Regions 9 and 10, six questions. You can either take all or some of the six. Whatever you do not take up of the six I will allow for Region 10.

Mrs. Backer: I respect what the Speaker is saying, as always, but I rise as a Member of that Committee that set these times and I want to remind the persons who were on the Committee that the PNC had drawn to the Committee's attention its concern about the ten Regions being only allocated three hours. My clear understanding – I may have been mistaken – was that there

would be flexibility. I drew attention to the fact that seven days have been, in our Standing Orders, granted for the Estimates. I drew to the Committee's attention the fact that sittings of the National Assembly normally end at 10.00 p.m., and I was assured that there will be flexibility. What has happened is that we started at 2.15 p.m. There was also a five-minute break, so all that we have been given so far is twelve minutes extra. I do not think, most respectfully, that twelve minutes is sufficient flexibility for ten Regions. In fact, each Region gets about twenty minutes or less. So, Sir, I would respectfully ask for you to reconsider. We are towards the end of Region 9 and I ask that my colleague be allowed to ask her questions. We understand what you are saying but to actually say beforehand that we will only be allowed six questions...If, Sir, you maintain that position then...

Mr. Chairman: You speak as if you are entitled to this time. The manner of your approach to this matter is as if you are entitled, but you are not entitled. I started at 2.10 p.m. and I start late at every sitting because there are not enough Members in the House to form a quorum. That is why I come out late. I am not to be blamed for losing ten minutes. Members of the Assembly are to be blamed for that; so do not lay that at my feet. I undertook, with the support of the Government side, to exercise discretion. I have given you half hour extra. What more do you suggest that I do? We have passed the half hour and I said I will offer you six more questions. What more flexibility do you wish of me? I warned you when we were doing Region 1. I said that you are not utilising your time properly. We spent at least thirty minutes of the time talking about office assistants and security guards. That may be something that the nation is interested in, but I am not too sure about that.

Do you have any more questions, Ms. Selman?

Ms. Selman: Sir, I have eight questions.

Mr. Chairman: Well, you either take the six questions and we will not allow any questions for Region 10. I will proceed.

Ms. Selman: Against the foregoing and having regard to Region 10, I have no questions.

Mr. Chairman: I do not know who is supposed to be asking questions on Region 10. I do not know whose mandate is for Region 10.

Ms. Selman: I have no questions. Thank you.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 791 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$21,860,000

Programme: 791 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$21,860,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 792 – Agriculture - \$14,600,000

Programme: 792 – Agriculture - \$14,600,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 793 – Public Works - \$104,500,000

Programme: 793 – Public Works - \$104,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 794 – Education Delivery - \$74,385,000

Programme: 794 – Education Delivery - \$74,385,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 795 – Health Services - \$24,175,000

Programme: 795 – Health Services - \$24,175,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 80 Region 10: Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice

Current Expenditure

Programme: 801 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$121,778,000

Programme: 801 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$121,778,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 802 – Public Works - \$141,330,000

Programme: 802 – Public Works - \$141,330,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 803 – Education Delivery - \$1,106,822,000

Programme: 803 – Education Delivery - \$1,106,822,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 804 – Health Services - \$231,455,000

Programme: 804 – Health Services - \$231,455,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 801 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$2,000,000

Programme: 801 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$2,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 802 – Public Works - \$111,175,000

Programme: 802 – Public Works - \$111,175,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 803 – Education Delivery - \$46,800,000

Programme: 803 – Education Delivery - \$46,800,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 804 – Health Services - \$28,300,000

Programme: 804 – Health Services - \$28,300,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Assembly resumed

Sitting suspended at 5.40 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 6.24 p.m.

Assembly in Committee of Supply

Agency: 45 Ministry of Housing and Water

Current Expenditure

Programme: 451 – Housing and Water - \$474,692,000

Mr. A. Norton: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister tell me what are the categories of contracted workers that correspond to Bands 10 and 9 of the public service bands?

Mr. Ali: Contracted Employees, line item 6116: The increase here is as a result of the five per cent increase in the cost of meeting the increase in salary for the year, and in the list of contracted employees there are a Researcher and an Expenditure Planning and Management Analyst added.

Mr. A. Norton: Could the Hon. Minister tell me why, in this expenditure, there is allocation for an engineer and there is none according to his list. Under Band 9, his Ministry is entitled to an engineer, and something like Ministry of Housing and Water, I would assume, requires an engineer.

Mr. Ali: As you are aware, there is the Central Planning and Housing Authority which has a pool of engineers. Under this head, there is a vacancy for an engineer but the Ministry does not budget for engineers.

Mr. A. Norton: Could the Hon. Minister say to this house how many engineers they have serving the housing sector at this stage?

Mr. Ali: There are six engineers in the Central Planning and Housing Authority.

Mr. A. Norton: Line item 6281 – Security Services: Could the Hon. Minister tell this Committee of Supply what is responsible...First of all, let us note the actual in 2009 was \$2,162,000 and the actual in 2010 was \$1,825,000. What is it that is responsible for the increase

to \$10,950,000, having acknowledged that the previous year he budgeted for this and it was not utilised?

Mr. Ali: The Ministry has to tender for this service. There is no a contract for this year as yet. There are some additional locations. There is the Parliamentary Secretary, Minister's residence, and now the Ministry has to cater for armed as well as unarmed security. This is as a result of the One Stop Shops it has around the country where the business involves completion of transactions of a monetary nature.

Mr. A. Norton: Could the Hon. Minister indicate to this Committee of Supply, specifically how much we pay for each of the categories he would have identified?

Mr. Ali: First of all, the contract is not done by category. It is a lump sum contract that goes out for the service of security. We do not have that figure now because we are at the stage of tendering for that service.

Mr. A. Norton: The Hon. Minister will agree that a critical element of budgeting is estimation. An estimation is premised on history or projected reality. Therefore, it would follow, logically, that the Minister must have an estimated amount for each. Could the Hon. Minister say to this Committee of Supply how much is estimated for each area to be able to arrive at the figure he has there?

6.30 p.m.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, as I explained earlier, it is one service. We do not have a category. It is a lump sum contract and that service is indeed done based on historical costing of the present market.

Mr. Norton: If it based on the historical costing of the present market, then the benchmark would be \$1.825 million. Could the Hon. Minister say, in the historical context that he is talking about, how he arrived at \$10,950,000?

Mr. Ali: As I explained earlier, we went out to tender late last year. Based on the tender prices that came in, we were not able to contract out the service and now, that is what informed this estimation and we are going out to tender now to see what price...

Mr. Norton: Could the Hon. Minister tell us what the exact estimation is for the security for the One-Stop-Shop?

Mr. Ali: I cannot give that estimation.

Mr. Norton: Are we saying that we estimated for the One-Stop-Shop, but we have no figure as to what we estimate? How then did we arrive at \$10.95 million?

Mr. Ali: As I said we estimated for security services. This estimation is for security services covering the entire operation of the Ministry so it is a lump sum contract that is for security services covering the operations of the Ministry. Thank you.

Mr. Norton: One last question and then I will give up on this. Could the Minister say what the factors are that informed the estimation that they have here, \$10.95 million?

Mr. Ali: The factor that informed the actual contract is based on the tender that was received. The factors that inform the estimation are based on historical pricing and I explained that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Capital Expenditure

Agency: 45 – Ministry of Housing and Water

Programme: 451 – Housing and Water – \$5,280,000,000

Programme: 451 – Capital Expenditure – \$5,280,000,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, Line Item 1900900, could the Hon. Minister indicate to this House which are the new housing schemes that are being dealt with here?

Mr. Ali: Some of the new housing schemes that would be dealt with here include...

Mr. Norton: No. Not “some”, “all”.

Mr. Ali: Some of the new housing schemes that will be dealt with here include Zeelugt, Leonora, Mahdia, Enmore, Bath and Culvert City.

Mr. Norton: Could the Hon. Minister tell me, in the new housing scheme area, what the actual cost is for infrastructural work done at Sparendaaam?

Mr. Ali: I have not mentioned anything about Sparendaaam. I am dealing with the capital estimation for 2011 and I have just outlined the expenditure for 2011 and the actual cost of all expenditure under this head in 2011 would be determined based on the contract sum that the tender is awarded at.

Mr. Norton: Would the Hon. Minister agree that Sparendaaam is a new housing scheme area?

Mr. Ali: I am not aware of any new housing scheme earmarked for development in 2011 referred to as Sparendaaam.

Mr. Norton: Could the Hon Minister tell me, as quickly as possible, if there has been any expenditure on Sparendaaam?

Mr. Ali: In this 2011 Estimate that we are dealing with, there is no expenditure under this head for Sparendaaam.

Mr. Norton: Line item 2800900, could the Hon. Minister say, as it relates to extension and rehabilitation of coastal water supply systems, what are the areas included here?

Mr. Ali: Some of the areas included here are Onderneeming, Hope, Cotton Tree, Number 47 Village and Rose Hall. Then we have the procurement of pumps, water meters, motors and service connection upgrade in Bess Foreshore, Liliendaal, Yarowkabura and Eccles. There will be rehabilitation of transmission mains in areas such as Somerset to Charity, Hubu, Lacaba, Parika, Turkeyen and Liliendaal.

Mr. Norton: I will return to Sparendaaam latter.

Line Item 280100- Linden Water Supply- could the Hon. Minister say which of the water systems they are rehabilitating in Amelias Ward?

Mr. Ali: Linden Water as very clearly defined here in the profile says that we will have the rehabilitation of treatment plants at Wisroc and Amelias Ward, service connection upgrade and metering in Amelias Ward, Phase 2.

Mr. Norton: I asked a direct question as to what is being rehabilitated at Amelias Ward and could the Hon. Minister say, as they have recently dug wells that did not produce water, if they are using the old plant that existed before and could the Hon. Minister tell this House what were the costs of digging those wells that did not produce water?

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, I have answered as pointedly as possible. Secondly, I am not aware of any well that has not produced water. I am totally unaware of this. I have outlined what the programme constitutes in Linden Water and the very fact that we are talking about rehabilitation of treatment plants speaks to the rehabilitation of what exists.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, would the Minister agree that at Amelias Ward they have established a plant and dug wells and that when they failed to work, they resorted to rehabilitating the old plant and are using it? It is a simple and straight question.

Mr. Ali: The answer is simple and straight; I am not aware of this. I am not aware of any well that we drilled in, Region 10, Amelias Ward that does not produce water. Straight!

Mr. Norton: Again, a direct question, is it true that you had to resort to the old pump at Amelias Ward as well as the old well?

Mr. Ali: Pointed, No. It is not true.

Mr. Norton: Could the Hon. Minister tell this Hon. House the cost of putting a water main directly from Better Hope to Sparendaaam?

Mr. Ali: I would like the Hon. Member to refer to me under what line-item he is speaking of here.

Mr. Norton: I am trying as much as possible to get the Hon. Minister to decide where Sparendaaam is. I can put the question differently. [**Ms. Shadick:** It is not in the Budget.] It is in the Budget. Mr. Chairman, could I put the question differently? [**Mr. Neendkumar:** What is your problem with Sparendaaam?] I do not have a problem with Sparendaaam. All I want is for the people to know what happened there but you are concealing it. I am coming back to Sparendaaam.

For line item 1402500- Construction and rehabilitation of community roads, training and administration of projects- could the Hon. Minister say which roads are being rehabilitated?

Mr. Ali: The line item 1402500 is that of the Community Roads Improvement Project. This is a project that is jointly funded by the Caribbean Development Bank and we have the rehabilitation of roads in a number of NDCs: Bath, Woodley Park, Tuschen, Uitvlugt, Rosignol, Zeelugt, Unity, Vereeniging, Port Mourant, John, Mon Repos, Stewartville, Cornelia Ida, Enmore, Hope, Golden Grove, Diamond Place, Haslington, Grove, Best, *Klien*, Pouderoyen Industry and Plaisance.

Mr. Norton: May I ask a straight question? Is there any allocation in this provision for Sparendam Housing Scheme?

Mr. Ali: I have outlined very clearly in very simple language the areas that we have provision for under this head.

Capital Expenditure

Agency: 45, Ministry of Housing and Water

Programme: 451 – Housing and Water – \$5,280,000,000, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency 46 – Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation

Current Expenditure

Programme: 461 – Public Hospital – \$4,009,616,000

Dr. George Norton: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister say in staffing details about Line Item 6113? There is an increase of 33. How many of those are midwives – taking into consideration that the Georgetown Hospital needs 120 and that they only have 64 at the moment according to his information.?

Minister of Health [Dr. Ramsammy]: The staff in this category is nurses – midwives and other categories of nurses.

Dr. Norton: To the Hon. Minister, there are has been recently incorporated into the staff of the hospital, anesthetist nurses who would have been staff nurses. Could the Hon. Minister say what

the increase in salary is for these anesthetist nurses that have started working now as compared to what they were receiving? By how much is there an increase in wages?

Dr. Ramsammy: I would not be able to say that right now. I will provide you with that.

Dr. Norton: Could the Hon. Minister say, under Line Item 6302- Education Subventions and Training-under “Training”, could the Hon. Minister say if there is any training in biomed technology?

Dr. Ramsammy: The answer is “yes”. We have training at different levels for biomedical engineering.

Dr. Norton: Just to confirm, did you say biomedical engineering?

Dr. Ramsammy: And technicians.

Dr. Norton: Just to follow-up, is this training being done locally?

Dr. Ramsammy: Both locally and internationally in Cuba and India. We also have some Cubans and persons from India training locally.

Dr. Norton: Could the Hon. Minister say under Line Item 6281- Security Services- as there is an increase of \$20 million, could he explain this to us?

Dr. Ramsammy: Over the last couple of years we have not been able to complete the signing of an agreement with the security firm and so there have been limited engagements. We are hoping that this year we would be able to complete signing with a security firm to provide security at all of the various areas of the hospital and the health centers that we run.

Dr. Norton: Could the Hon. Minister say, under Line Item 6241, which buildings is the Georgetown Public Hospital renting?

Dr. Ramsammy: Under Line Item 6241 we have a number of buildings that we have rented to house Cuban doctors. We also house one of the doctors from Vanderbilt that works with us in the emergency department – we have had somebody here for three years – and some of the Cuban consultant doctors.

Agency: 46, Programme: 461 – Public Hospital – \$4,009,615,000, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Agency: 46 – Georgetown Public Hospital Cooperation

Programme: 461 – Public Hospital – \$131,700,000

Dr. Norton: Could the Hon. Minister say if the ambulance that is being purchased is being purchased as a vehicle to be equipped or it will be purchased with all of the equipment including oxygen, defibrillators and so on with the vehicle?

Dr. Ramsammy: No. These will be the basic ambulances.

Dr. Norton: On the purchase of furniture and equipment, could the Hon. Minister say how much is allocated to the purchase of beds and how many beds the hospital intends to purchase?

Dr. Ramsammy: This allocation for the number of beds that will be bought will be 20 pediatric beds.

Dr. Norton: Could the Hon. Minister be a little more specific with respect to the dietary equipment?

Dr. Ramsammy: These are kitchen equipment like bread mixers and such like.

Dr. Norton: Could the Hon. Minister say what the cost is for the portable ultrasound equipment that they plan to purchase?

Dr. Ramsammy: It will be tendered, so I cannot tell you the price. Usually the price is about US\$20,000.

Dr. Norton: Could the Hon. Minister say the type and how many operating tables for the theaters they plan to purchase?

Dr. Ramsammy: There is one operating table being procured. The type I cannot say.

Agency: 46 – Georgetown Public Hospital Cooperation

Programme: 461 – Public Hospital – \$131,700,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 47 – Ministry of Health

Programme: 471 – Ministry Administration – \$650,682,000

Dr. Norton: Under Staffing Details, could the Hon. Minister say under Line Item 6113, the designation of that staff member?

Dr. Ramsammy: A Transport Officer.

Agency: 47 – Ministry of Health

Programme: 471 – Ministry Administration – \$650,682,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 47 – Ministry of Health

Current Expenditure

Programme: 472 – Disease Control – \$498,557,000

Dr. Norton: Could the Hon. Minister say under Line Item 6302- Training- what type of training would be taking place for that \$10 million increase?

Dr. Ramsammy: These are various kinds of training under chronic disease, mental health and so on. We have been preparing, over the years, the standard treatment guideline. We are introducing this year, for example, the standard treatment guidelines for common neuropsychiatric illnesses. There will be training of all of the primary healthcare providers – doctors, medics, nurses – on the use of the standard treatment guidelines. That is one example of the training that will be done.

Dr. Norton: There has been an increase in contracted employees by two but there is a \$7 million increase in wages and salaries. Could the Hon. Minister explain?

Dr. Ramsammy: This reflects the 5% increase, first of all, and then there are two new Surveillance Officers that will also be employed. So it is for new employment as well as that 5%.

Agency: 47 – Ministry of Health

Programme: 472 – Disease Control – \$498,557,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 47 – Ministry of Health

Current Expenditure

Programme: 473 – Primary Health Care Services – \$457,987,000

Dr. Norton: Under Staffing Details, Line Item 6114- Clerical and Office Support- could the Hon. Minister say if among the staff there are sufficient data entry clerks or the statistical clerks especially since we have run into some difficulties with data with regards to that which is supposed to have reached international organisations that we are working closely with?

Dr. Ramsammy: The information system at the Ministry of Health has expanded over the years and we are collecting extensive data from across the country and indeed that remains a constraint because the present Public Service establishment to support the information system that we have does not exist, and therefore it remains a constraint but over the years we have been overcoming that problem. With the computerisation that we have now, it is far more efficient but I would concede that we can do with extra staff for data entry.

Dr. Norton: Do you agree that your staff remains the same as there was no increase from last year to this year?

Dr. Ramsammy: The question you are asking on this line-item for data entry actually is in Programme 1 so the data entry clerks that we were talking about in Programme 1... I should explain to you, Dr. Norton, and to all of our colleagues, that in addition to what is in this Budget, the Ministry of Health, over the years, has been supplementing and complementing the staff with additional staff that are supported through our grants. We have grants from Global Fund and so on that has been taking up the slack and hopefully gives us time to create these positions and take them up into the National Budget.

Agency: 47 – Ministry of Health

Programme: 473 – Primary Health Care Services – \$457,987,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimate.

Agency: 47 – Ministry of Health

Current Expenditure

Programme: 474 – Regional and Clinical Services – \$2,509,271,000

Dr. Norton: Could the Hon. Minister explain the \$19 million increase in security services for line-item 6281?

Dr. Ramsammy: The security services will include those at Linden and Kwakwani, but Dr. Norton, I am not quite sure if you know that this will also include security for additional health facilities that we are building.

Dr. Norton: Under Line Item 6284- Other- there is an increase of \$28 million, what constitutes “other”, if the Minister could explain?

Dr. Ramsammy: This year, in terms of the Chinese medical team, it is their time to go home for vacation and that would cover their expenses. It also covers the expenses of traveling for the Cuban medical team that came for the diagnostic centers and so on.

Dr. Norton: Under Staffing Details, Line Item 6117- Temporary Employees- the numbers remained the same but there was a \$17 million increase.

Dr. Ramsammy: This line-item is what we are utilising to cover the stipends for the Cubans at the various diagnostic centers.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, Line Item 6282- Equipment Maintenance- could the Hon. Minister say if this allocation will serve to ensure that the equipment in the diagnostic centers are functioning so that Linden does not have to transfer. I understand, for instance, Charity is asking people to go to town and Berbice is transferring to Mahaicony. Could the Hon. Minister say if this will contribute to maintenance of the biomedical equipment and allow for greater efficiency in these areas?

Dr. Ramsammy: This covers the contracted sum to Meditron which was awarded a contract for maintenance of all the equipment at the various hospitals and health centers around the country.

Mr. Norton: The direct question asks if, in your estimation, based on this allocation, it will result in an improvement so that there will not have to be transfers of which the average man is crying out for.

Dr. Ramsammy: The contract for maintenance is intended so that we have less down-time with our equipment, as such, we fully expect an improvement.

7.00 p.m.

Dr. Norton: Line item 6302 – Training. Will this \$28 million increase be used to train the Cuban doctors who return to Guyana before they are sent out into the regional centres to work?

Dr. Ramsammy: Are you referring to Line Item 6302?

Dr. Norton: Yes.

Dr. Ramsammy: This line-item does not cover that. This caters for Regional Health Officers and doctors to go for short term training.

Dr. John Austin: Line Item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies. Could the Hon. Minister say how much of this \$1.1 billion allocated to this programme is intended to be spent for Region No. 6?

Dr. Ramsammy: This sum will cater for medicine and supplies for all ten regions. How much does the Ministry provide on an annual basis depends on the request that comes from the region. During the debate, I had given the amounts that each region got for 2010. I do not have those figures in front of me but I had read out the numbers during the debate. It is a matter of the hospitals and health centres making request based on their consumption.

Dr. Austin: I asked this question because I wanted to bring home the point that the amount that is allocated to Region 6 is inadequate. It is a chronic situation at all of the hospitals – New Amsterdam, Port Mourant, Mabicuri and Skeldon - where basic medical supplies have to be bought by patients.

Dr. Ramsammy: This year in my Budget Debate Speech I focused almost entirely on this issue for a reason so that people could understand. This is one of the few countries that provide free medicine at our health facilities. Cuba is another country. The demand for medicine at this time is about \$5 to 6 billion because we are adding new services all of the time. This amount plus another \$1 billion that we get from additional sources are what we provide to our people. Most of the time, most of the basic medicines are available. Now we have added medicine for neuro-psychiatric illnesses and cancer among others. The medicine that Guyana has in its essential drug list is a much longer list that the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends for an essential medicine list.

Programme: 474 – Regional and Clinical Services - \$2,509,271,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 475 – Health Sciences Education - \$416,551,000

Dr. Norton: We are finished with that already.

Mr. Chairman: Are we finished with Programme 475?

Dr. Ramsammy: No. We have now reached Programme 475.

Mr. Chairman: Dr. Norton, if you wish we can finish it now and move on.

Programme: 475 – Health Sciences Education - \$416,551,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 476 – Standards and Technical Services - \$254,600,000

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, I might be wrong but the Hon. Minister is here to correct that. Under the Appendix queue I was looking for the correct heading for Senior Technical personnel in Staffing Details - Line Item 6112 - to find out if a pharmacist for the New Amsterdam Hospital is included in the three persons listed there.

Dr. Ramsammy: The pharmacist for the New Amsterdam Hospital is under the establishment of Region 6. This pharmacist is not part of the Region 6 staff. This is a Ministry of Health staff.

Dr. Norton: Could the Minister then confirm if the New Amsterdam Hospital will get another pharmacist since there is only one operating there at the moment?

Dr. Ramsammy: We are expanding our pharmacist staffing across the country and we are always looking to add more.

Programme: 476 – Standards and Technical Services - \$254,600,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 477 – Rehabilitation Services - \$198,977,000

Dr. Norton: Line Item 6112 – Staffing Details: Senior Technical. Could the Hon. Minister say if a physiotherapist is included in the 7 staffing personnel listed for the Region 6 area?

Dr. Ramsammy: This line item covers the Ministry of Health Staff mainly for the centres that it operates. This does not include Region 6.

Programme: 477 – Rehabilitation Services - \$198,977,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 471 – Ministry Administration - \$33,600,000

Dr. Norton: Line Item 2501900 – Equipment: Medical. Could the Hon. Minister say where the density meter will be placed?

Dr. Ramsammy: This is for the Food and Drug Analyst Department to measure alcohol in beverages.

Dr. Norton: Line Item 2502000 – Equipment. Could the Hon. Minister say where the intercom system will be placed.

Dr. Ramsammy: This will be placed at the Ministry of Health's new building because when the old building was destroyed, that system was also destroyed. In our reconstruction, we are now replacing the intercom system.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 471 – Ministry Administration - \$33,600,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 472 – Diseases Control - \$16,400,000

Dr. Norton: Line item 2501800 - Office Furniture and Equipment. Under this line item there is an allocation for the purchasing of a fax machine. Why would the Ministry be buying a fax machine rather than a scanner?

Dr. Ramsammy: The Ministry mostly uses the scanner but there are organisations that it still deals with, in various parts of the region and the world, that still utilise the fax machine. The Ministry does have to maintain some capacity for faxing.

Dr. Norton: Line Item 2502000 – Equipment. Under this line item there is allocation for the purchasing of a pump. Could the Hon. Minister say what would be the capacity of this pump?

Dr. Ramsammy: This is for the National Psychiatric Hospital. I cannot say offhand what the capacity of that pump is.

Dr. Norton: My reason for asking is just to ensure that there will be a 24-hour water supply at the hospital.

Dr. Ramsammy: This is not a pump for the supply of water. One of the problems we have had with the National Psychiatric Hospital Compound is flooding. We have done a lot of work to stop the flooding but some of the construction on the road to stop the water from river flowing over can also trap the water in. It is a pump to extract water out of the compound.

Dr. Norton: I am grateful to the Minister for the explanation because the Estimates just state “purchase of pumps”.

Programme: 472 – Diseases Control - \$16,400,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 473 – Primary Health Care Services - \$259,458,000

Dr. Norton: Line Item 2404500 - Land and Water Transport. Could the Hon. Minister state what type of vehicle will be purchased and for which department?

Dr. Ramsammy: This vehicle is being procured for the Cheddi Jagan Dental Centre. Some of the dentists travel around and this is to support that activity.

Dr. Norton: A portable x-ray is listed for purchase under Medical Equipment. Could the Hon. Minister say which centre the x-ray is for?

Dr. Ramsammy: This is for use at the Georgetown Chest Clinic – the Tuberculosis (TB) Clinic.

Programme: 473 – Primary Health Care Services - \$259,458,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 474 – Regional and Clinical Services - \$523,500,000

Dr. Norton: Under Land and Water Transport there is provision for the purchasing of an ambulance. Could the Hon. Minister tell us what is the cost of this ambulance as compared to the one that was purchased before?

Dr. Ramsammy: We are estimating this about a cost of US\$7500. This ambulance is mainly to transport patients from Ogle Aerodrome to the Georgetown Public Hospital.

Dr. Norton: Under Health Sector Programme, \$235 million is allocated for the completion of the in-patient facility. Could the Hon. Minister tell this House what is the estimated time of completion of this facility.

Dr. Ramsammy: The contract period at this time is the end of March. We expect that the hospital should become operational by the end of May this year.

Programme: 474 – Regional and Clinical Services - \$523,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 475 – Health Sciences Education - \$7,900,000

Dr. Norton: Under equipment, the project profile says purchase of generator for Linden and New Amsterdam. Could the Minister be a little more specific?

Dr. Ramsammy: These generators are for the Nursing Schools in Linden, New Amsterdam and Georgetown.

Programme: 475 – Health Sciences Education - \$7,900,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 476 – Standards and Technical Services - \$1,000,000

Programme: 476 – Standards and Technical Services - \$1,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 477 – Rehabilitation Services - \$3,190,000

Dr. Norton: Under Office Furniture and Equipment, there is budgeting for the purchase of a projector. Could the Hon. Minister say where this projector will be located?

Dr. Ramsammy: This is for the national programme. As you know, besides having the rehabilitation services now de-centralised and in all of the regions, the Ministry also maintains a national team that goes out to train. This will be used mainly by Ms. Lawrence and her team at the centre.

Programme: 477 – Rehabilitation Services - \$3,190,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

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

Mr. Chairman: I was told that the Hon. Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Ms. Priya Manickchand, will be answering all of the questions which pertain to this agency.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 481 – Ministry Administration - \$162,447,000

Mrs. Backer: Line Item 6116 – Contracted Employees. Could the Hon. Minister share with this Assembly the designations of the persons who are contracted workers?

Ms. Manickchand: They are care skilled supervisors, vehicle drivers and a cleaner.

Programme: 481 – Ministry Administration - \$162,447,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 482 – Social Services - \$5,264,354,000

Ms. Cheryl Sampson: Line Item 6112 – Senior Technical. I notice that there is an increase of 11 persons. Could the Hon. Minister indicate what positions these persons will fill and to which departments they will be attached?

Ms. Manickchand: They are recently appointed Senior Probation and Social Service Officers. All of the 11 are accounted for under this increase.

Ms. Sampson: Line Item 6114 – Clerical and Office Support. There are two persons here. Will these persons be attached to the Child Care and Protection Agency?

Ms. Manickchand: No, it does not appear so.

Ms. Sampson: Line Item 6116 – Contracted Employees. There is an increase of 7 persons under this head. Could the Hon. Minister indicate what categories are named here?

Ms. Manickchand: The increase is accounted for by the employment of patient care assistants, statistical officers and data processing operations officers.

Ms. Sampson: Under line item 6292 – Dietary, I notice that there is an increase of more than \$20 million. Could the Hon. Minister indicate what percentage of this amount will go towards the Palms, Night Shelter and the Drop-In Centre, respectively?

Ms. Manickchand: A percentage might be hard for me to say right now because it means I will have to get a total to ascertain that. I can tell the Hon. Member that the residents at the Night Shelter have been doubled and so within a 24-hour period, instead of serving about 90 persons we now serve about 180 persons three meals per day. The Palms maintain a steady residency rate of about 240 persons. The Ministry has about 160 children in its care that it feeds daily and provides snacks for.

Ms. Sampson: Line item 6302 – Training. Could the Hon. Minister indicate who will benefit from this training?

Ms. Manickchand: Probation Officers and Child Protection Officers.

Mrs. Backer: Hon. Minister, will all of the training be conducted locally or will there be overseas training?

Ms. Manickchand: This budget caters for local training. The Ministry may employ expertise from overseas. However, this does not mean that this is the only training staff is going to be exposed to. Ever so often, the Ministry receives invitations from very many bodies, including Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), for staff to be exposed to overseas training. In fact, we expect that staff will be exposed to much overseas training this year but not through this line item.

Ms. Sampson: Line item 6343 – Old Age Pensions and Social Assistance. Does the increase in funding under this line item indicate that there will more people joining this group?

Ms. Manickchand: Public Assistance is something that is determined by a local board of guardians and, therefore, that is something that the Ministry can predict. If one looks at how much it has been over the last couple of years, one would notice that it follows a trend. It is the same for old age pensioners. For the last four or five years there has been a steady forty to forty two thousand pensioners. Of course, because of the very nature of the elderly, some die and new ones come into the system. This is just an estimation of what the Ministry is likely to have. The Ministry does have a projection from a United Nations Expert Demographer that projects that in 2010, Guyana should have about 43,549 pensioners. This is an estimation of what might happen, given the trends in the last four or five years.

Mrs. Backer: Line Item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations. Some \$56.19 million has been allocated. There was a very small sum - \$15,000 budgeted for the Florence Nightingale's Home and nothing was spent. Again, this year, \$15,000 is budgeted. Does this home still function, Minister?

Ms. Manickchand: The Ministry was trying to get a list of the homes to determine which ones function and which ones do not. The Ministry has improved its collaboration with these homes. If this money has been returned, then it means that the home did not come to receive this subvention. I would not attempt to say whether or not the home functions because I would have to find that out from my staff that actually checks in with each home. I do not have that information at hand right now but I can provide it.

Mrs. Backer: For the information of the nation, could the Hon. Minister indicate where this home is supposedly located?

Ms. Manickchand: I have no idea. Just so that Hon. Members know, the way this is done is that if someone gets a subvention from the Government through this Ministry, it would have had to be that they applied to the Ministry through the Permanent Secretary (P.S.), the P.S forwards it to the Ministry of Finance. This would have happened many years ago and some of the homes are now closed for different reasons. I do not know where this one is located. I can say that it has not come on to our system in the time I have been Minister, but I undertake to find out for the Hon. Member whether it existed and if it no longer exists, where it was located.

Mrs. Backer: Thank you. I just want to say that the question is not for my benefit. I would want the Minister to find out so that the nation could know where the home is or was located. Under that same line item there is a figure of \$32,338,000 for the Legal Aid Clinic. Does your Ministry offer legal aid in Linden?

Ms. Manickchand: This sum is budgeted for the Guyana Legal Aid Clinic which provides legal aid to Regions 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 and, on occasions, 7, 8, 9 and 10. In Region 10 there is another provider of legal aid, another partner of the Ministry, called the Linden Legal Aid Services. For the last few years it has been funded by our partner, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), with funds that are assigned and allocated to Guyana. We understand that UNICEF is seeking to re-fund this body and if they do, then the services will be provided through the Linden Legal Aid Services. If they do not, the Government of Guyana has committed to providing legal aid services to all of the coastal regions and Region 10 would be a beneficiary.

Mrs. Backer: Would the Linden Legal Aid Clinic, as it is called, then may be in a position to access money, subject to the availability of funds, from this \$32 million.

Ms. Manickchand: This money is allocated to the Guyana Legal Aid Clinic which has a Board of Directors and is a separate NGO. As far as I know, it does not include any member of the Linden Legal Aid Service

Programme: 482 – Social Services - \$5,264,354,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 483 – Labour Administration - \$275,576,000

Programme: 483 – Labour Administration - \$275,576,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 481 – Ministry Administration - \$17,200,000

Programme: 481 – Ministry Administration - \$17,200,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 482 – Social Services - \$233,046,000

Ms. Sampson: Line Item 1206800 – Buildings. Could the Hon. Minister advise this National Assembly on how soon the centre and rehabilitation building funded by the Venezuelans will be completed?

Ms. Manickchand: I am advised that it will be completed within the course of 2011.

Ms. Sampson: When will the Child Care and Protection Agency building be completed and where is this building located?

7.30 p.m.

Ms. Manickchand: We were told initially, that it would be finished on January 31st. We have now been told that it will be finished on the 14th of February, Valentine’s Day. That may be a good indication. It is located in Broad Street Charlestown, obliquely opposite Gaffoor's- the old Environmental Protection Agency building.

Mrs. Backer: Under the same line item, can we get a break down of cost for the two buildings? We have the rehabilitation of the Child Care and Protection Agency building and the completion of the centre. I am trying to get the figure of the respective cost.

Ms. Manickchand: It is in the document. Under local, \$12 million goes towards the Child Care and Protection Agency building and \$197,546,000 goes towards the home for the displaced persons.

Mrs. Backer: Minister, just for completeness, you did say that the Centre for Rehabilitation and Reintegration will be completed sometime this year, would you be in a position to indicate if it

will be opened to offer services this year? When we say completed we are speaking about a physical structure. Will it be and ready to provide service during this year?

Ms. Manickchand: It was our intention that this building would be operational, i.e opened, providing services and housing our displaced population, in 2010. We had problems with the contractor so my prediction is based on what our contract with them says. It is our intention to open this building and by open, I mean, have our Guyanese citizens who find themselves in this building receiving care and services within the course of 2011.

Programme 482- Social Services- 233,046,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 483 - Labour Administration- - \$10,500,000

Mrs. Backer: Mr. Chairman, line item 106800- Buildings, \$209, 546, 000. On the profile page we see it is really for two projects. My question is: what portion of that \$8 million will be used to construct the fire escape at the Camp Street building?

Ms. Manickchand: \$1.5 million of that sum is going to be used to construct the fire escape at the Camp Street building.

Programme 483-Labour Administration- \$10,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members that brings us to the end of our business for today.

Sitting resumes

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members I would like to inform you, if you look at your Order Papers for tomorrow, there are two additional items. I think, Members assume that we are dealing with the estimates you may very well not pay sufficient attention to your Order Paper and miss the fact that there are two items in addition to the estimates. They are the Confirmation of the Customs Duty Amendment Order Bill, I cannot say what this will entails but normally on the Confirmation of Customs Duty... it is that thick document that you have. This is just a formal presentation by the Minister, and it attracts no debate. The second item is the second reading of the Fiscal Enactment Amendment Bill of 2001. This is a Bill to amend the income tax and the corporation tax to bring into effect the proposals announced by the Hon. Minister of Finance in his Budget speech in relation to the income tax proposal and the reduction in the corporation tax. I think, this looks like it is welcomed by most Members I do not anticipate a long debate. I have learned, however, never to anticipate the National Assembly. I want to ensure that Members are aware that these two items are there and that you will be prepared.

Mr Rohee: Mr. Speaker, I move that the House be adjourned until Thursday 3rd February at 2 o'clock.

Sitting adjourned accordingly. 7.38 p.m