

# Official Report

*PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION (2006-2010) 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*

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117<sup>TH</sup> Sitting

Wednesday, 24<sup>TH</sup> February, 2010

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*The Assembly convened at 2.06 p.m.*

*Prayers*

*[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]*

## **ANNOUCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER**

### **(1) Allegation by Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan of Hansard Record Tampering**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, there was a report on page 2 of today's *Kaieteur News* under the heading "Parliamentary records tampered with – Ramjattan." The report says as follow:

"Alliance For Change (AFC) Chairman Khemraj Ramjattan is charging that the Parliamentary Hansard has been tampered with. Ramjattan was referring to the session which relates to the controversial \$4 billion allocation which was allotted to the Housing Ministry...."

It is usually a practice that when the Speaker is on the floor, the Assembly remains absolutely silent. I would appreciate if that convention can be maintained.

"Ramjattan said that the answer which was given by Minister of Housing and Water Irfaan Ali to a question asked by Alliance For Change Co-Vice

Chairperson Sheila Holder during the January 11 sitting of the House, was not accurate. Ramjattan was at the time referring to Financial Paper # 6 which was tabled in the House earlier this year and involved billions of dollars which Ramjattan is charging was not spent for the housing sector, according to the laws of Guyana. According to Ramjattan, he was reliably informed that the Hansard - which is the verbatim record of the National Assembly - has been tampered with, and he has therefore requested that the Speaker of the House launch an investigation into the alleged tampering.

“What I feared will happen with the Hansard when it was not forthcoming in the usual seven to 10 days has actually happened now that it has taken some 40 days for compilation,” Ramjattan said.

He added that it was queried in the House from the Housing Minister whether the money was already spent and he answered in the negative, but the expenditure for 2010 clearly states that the money has already been spent and as such, the Housing Minister was in breach of the laws of Guyana. Ramjattan recently told this newspaper that what is now recorded in the Hansard and attributed to the Housing Minister is “we are ready.”

This he stressed should have read, “We have spent it already.” Ramjattan told this newspaper that he intended to use the Hansard of the National Assembly to file accurate statements against the duo with the Director of Public Prosecutions.”

The gravity of these charges, I am sure, is not lost on you. The Hon. Member, Khemraj Ramjattan, reported his suspicion to me on Monday, February 22, 2010 – last Monday, whereupon on the evening of the same day, as soon as I got the opportunity, I requested the Clerk to investigate, as you are aware, yesterday was a public holiday. I would have expected that the Hon. Member would have awaited the results of the investigation before making a public allegation.

I now confirm that I have listened to audio recording and it confirms the Hansard Record of Mr. Irfaan Ali's statement "we are ready", with exemplary clarity. I now ask for a tape recording of the portion of the debate to be played, please.

*Audio played for the benefit of all Members of Parliament.*

I have requested the Clerk to ensure that Hon. Member Khemraj Ramjattan receives a copy of the audio recording and I look forward for appropriate comments in this Assembly, tomorrow, after the Hon. Member would have had an opportunity to study the tape.

I will ask the Clerk to forward the written transcript of the Hansard, the audio transcript of the tape and a copy of this announcement to the *Kaieteur News*. I expect that the *Kaieteur News* will make an appropriate statement on the matter.

I wish to add, finally, that the staff of the Parliament Office who have shown dedication, commitment and integrity to this Parliament, not to this side of the Parliament or to that side of the Parliament, but to this Parliament, far beyond the call of duty since I have served as your Speaker from 1991, are deeply pained at the Hon. Member's allegation. I look forward that anything he or the *Kaieteur News* might wish to say, would go some way in alleviating that distress. Thank you.

## **PUBLIC BUSINESS**

### **MOTION**

#### **BUDGET SPEECH 2010 - MOTION FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 2010.**

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

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

AND WHEREAS Estimates of the Revenue and Expenditure of Guyana for the financial year 2010 have been prepared and laid before the Assembly on 2010-02-08;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

“That the National Assembly approves the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 2010, of a total sum of one hundred and twenty-five billion, five and sixty-eight million, five hundred and seventy-three thousand dollars (\$125,568,573,000), excluding seventeen billion, two hundred and seven million, and twenty-six thousand dollars (\$17,207,026,000) which is chargeable by law, as detailed therein and summarised in the under mentioned schedule, and agree that it is expedient to amend the law and to make further provision in respect of finance.”[*Minister of Finance*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members the Assembly will now resolve itself into Committee of Supply to begin consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure for the year 2010.

*Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply*

*In Committee of Supply*

**Mr. Chairman:** We are now in Committee of Supply, Hon. Members, and we will now proceed in accordance with the Sub-Committee’s resolution and schedule. Will Members kindly get Volume 1 and turn to pages 32 and 33.

**Agency: 01 Office of the President**

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 011– Administrative Services - \$1,638,191,000**

There are no sums requested for those portions, Mr. Corbin from line items 6011 to 6034.

**Mr. Corbin:** I thought you were giving the whole programme Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Well, if you start from the top, Mr. Corbin, from line item 6011, that is the first vote that we have there. We have the total appropriated Current Expenditure: Actual 2008, Budget 2009, Revised 2009, and Budget 2010.

**Mr. Corbin:** Line item 6302 – Training (including scholarships).

**Mr. Chairman:** Where is 6302? Is that on page 32?

**Mr. Corbin:** It is on page 33, Sir. I wonder if the Hon. Prime Minister, whose name is listed here, would be able to tell the National Assembly who is being trained with this amount of money, what kind of training is being carried out under this Agency and whether he believes that...? Well, when I get that answer, I will follow.

**Ms. Webster:** I am answering on behalf of Office of the President. The sum requested here represents provision for students who are studying in Cuba. There are nine hundred and ninety-five of them pursuing various fields.

**Mr. Corbin:** Could the Hon. Minister not explain to the House whether this line item ought not to be with the Public Service Ministry? I am not sure; I am seeking to find out whether a more appropriate place for this amount of money - \$380 million – should not be under the Ministry of Public Service which has responsibility for training and, if not, why specifically, it is under the Office of the President?

**Ms. Webster:** In response to that question, the Cuban Scholarship Programme is administered by the Office of the President and that has been so since the year 2001.

**Mr. Murray:** I rise in connection with line item 6116 – Contracted Employees. Would the Minister agree that in the year 2010 more contracted employees are being catered for than in the year 2009? Could she therefore explain how it is that she requires less money in 2010 than was the revised figure for 2009? What were the unique circumstances that led to that? I can understand how it can happen, but let me get the answer. Secondly, could the Minister explain to this National Assembly why it is not possible for there to be an identification at the back of the estimates, as there is for all the Public Servants employed by the State, a listing of the positions of contracted employees, their relevant emoluments and the benefits that they are entitled to, especially since this is a question that has been raised in this National Assembly, by me, for more

than five years running, and a previous Minister had undertaken that it would be looked at with a view to getting it done?

**Ms. Webster:** In response to the first question asked by the Hon. Member, let me say that there has been a policy decision that staff employed on bands one and two throughout the Public Service are now employed on contract. That has been the case since the year 2007. So, no longer are those positions under pensionable establishment.

In response to the other question about the printing of the information – the salaries and other emoluments for contracted employees – that matter is still engaging the Government's attention.

**Mr. Murray:** Would the Hon. Minister not agree that more than five years for the engagement of attention to put the simple details of contract employees, is too long if we really believe in transparency? Secondly, could the Hon... **[Interruption]** That is a question for the Hon. Minister, would you please let the Minister answer it. Are you the Minister for that too? **[Mr. Ramson:** I am her adviser]. I know you are pot salt. Could the Hon. Minister also tell this National Assembly who among persons previously employed as Ministers or other politically appointed persons in the Executive are numbered among the contracted employees provided for in the estimates?

**Ms. Webster:** The response to that question is there are no political employees there under that line item.

**Mr. Murray:** Could the Hon. Minister tell the National Assembly, how and where the emoluments for the Adviser on governance are being met from these estimates?

**Ms. Webster:** The response to that question is it is not Programme 011.

**Mr. Murray:** Line item 6272: Could the Hon. Minister inform this National Assembly, whether any efforts are being made, and if so, what, to curtail the average monthly electricity charge of \$7.5 million for the Office of the President, especially in circumstances where we are all asked to conserve on energy?

**Ms. Webster:** The response to that question is I wish to say that the Administration of the Office of the President has always exercised fiscal prudent management and there are several measures

in place where it curtails all the activities related to any increases in electricity consumption. There is no wastage there.

*Programme: 011 – Administrative Services - \$1,638,191,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Mr. Chairman:** Could you turn to page 403 at Capital Expenditure.

**Mr. Murray:** Mr. Chairman, I just crave your indulgence to ask whether Programme 012 which is a continuation of the Current Expenditure will not be put before the Committee.

**Mr. Chairman:** My apologies. Before going to Capital Expenditure, we now turn to pages 33-34, Programme 012.

**Programme: 012 – Presidential Advisory (Cabinet and Other Services) - \$391,885,000**

**Mr. Corbin:** I refer to line items 6116 and 6117 – Contracted and Temporary employees which account for \$219 million and looking at the details, one notes that the contracted employees amount to eighty-one and the temporary employees – fifty-one. My question for the Minister is whether she would be able to identify for this National Assembly the category of employees who are employed under this line item, whether the ghost writers, religious advisers, former Ministers come under this Agency? That will be my first question.

**Ms. Webster:** The response to that is there are four Administrative Assistants, an Administrative Clerk, an Administrative Officer, an Assistant Archivist, a Cabinet Attendant, a Cabinet Monitoring Officer, a Press/Cameraperson to the President, three Cleaners, two Clerk 11s, a Community Development Officer, seven Confidential Secretaries, a Consultant, the Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet, an Environmental Economist, the Head of the Presidential Secretariat (H.P.S.), two Household Service Workers, four Information and Technology Officers, two Managers for the Protocol Division, six Office Assistants, two Presidential Advisers, a Protocol Adviser, a Political Adviser, three Research Technical Assistants, two Special Assistants, five Project Officers, eight Word Processing Officers and a Coordinator for Centre for Disease Control (C.D.C.)

**Mr. Norton:** Line item 6281: When one looks at it one sees the security expenditure in 2008, and then when one looks at 2009, it goes to \$18 million, but the Assembly budgeted \$36.114 million for 2010. Could the Hon. Minister explain what factors would have caused the doubling of it?

**Ms. Webster:** The response to that question is under the line items security charges were met including monitoring of security services provided for alarm facilities at the residences of Ministers.

**Mr. Norton:** Unless I did not put the question clearly: I was asking what are the factors that caused the doubling. Obviously, that answer cannot be it.

**Ms. Webster:** That is the answer; that has accounted for the change.

**Mr. Norton:** Could the Hon. Minister tell the National Assembly what is the average cost of these monitoring systems?

**Ms. Webster:** The average cost is \$77,000 per month per Minister.

**Mrs. Holder:** Thank you very much Mr. Chairman. I would like to direct the Minister's attention to line item 6294 – Other, and ask her to indicate what this really means. What does the “Other” refer to?

**Ms. Webster:** Under the line item of charge, a number of activities are provided for, such as activities hosted by the President - State Dinners, other functions, visits by schoolchildren to the Office of the President, who are given tokens, items such as gifts purchased by the President, and hotel accommodation for guests. This amount to the sum there.

**Mr. Norton:** I would like to go back to line item 6281. Could the Hon. Minister tell the Assembly what portion of this money is for the electronic monitor that she is talking about?

**Ms. Webster:** I am advised that that amount is about sixty per cent and I omitted to say that there is an additional security cost for an adviser.



**Mr. Norton:** Mr. Chairman, you would agree that sixty per cent... I am asking the Minister a direct question: how much money would the Office of the President spend on this electronic equipment? To tell me sixty per cent...

**Ms. Webster:** The answer is sixty per cent of the sum there.

**Mr. Norton:** Could the Hon. Minister tell me if when she calculates the number of Ministers by \$77,000, she gets that sixty per cent, and how much is that sixty per cent?

**Mr. Chairman:** Get out your cellular phone; you have a calculator on it.

**Ms. Webster:** I did say \$77,000 per month per Minister, and if the Member is talking about an annual cost, it can be calculated.

**Mr. Chairman:** That would be calculated in a minute. Or do you have the type of cellular phone that does not have a calculator? I will allow you to intervene and give that answer when you are ready, Hon. Member. You said you will give that answer... are you calculating it now?

**Ms. Webster:** I said it can be calculated. It is \$77,000 per month per Minister, and the costs are annual. That is what I said.

*Programme: 012 – Presidential Advisory (Cabinet and Other Services) - \$391,855,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Programme: 014 – Public Policy and Planning – \$4 billion**

*Programme: 014 – Public Policy and Planning - \$4 billion agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

2.36 p.m.

**Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 011 - Head Office Administration-\$2,226,696,000**

**Mr. Corbin:** Project 1212000 - Information Communication Technology - \$1,686,451,000 and it refers me to Project Profile Ref. 2: “Provision for development of technology-CHINA/INDIA.” The way it is put in the Project Profile does not really help me to appreciate the

distribution of costs for this project. It points out that a lot of it is coming from donations. So my first question is, before I get to the cost, whether this Central Data Centre in Georgetown is the one that will be put at the Central Intelligence Agency (C.I.D.) in the Castellani House Compound, and if not, where will this Central Data Centre in Georgetown be located? This is my first questions.

**Ms. Webster:** The answer is no in response to that question. It is not the building which is ninety per cent completed that is housed in the Castellani House Compound. In response to the second question is that the Data Centre is going to be the hub for the cable from Georgetown to Lethem, and that Centre, it is proposed, will be somewhere at Providence, East Bank Demerara. Details are still being worked out.

**Mr. Corbin:** Is there going to be a correction to what Hon. Minister said, unless she is extending the boundaries of Georgetown?

**Ms. Webster:** It is still within Region 4.

**Mr. Corbin:** Under the same project, the allocation of expenditure indicates that this is money that will be coming with assistance from both India and China, I think. I wonder whether the Minister will be able to provide this House with the specifics. How much of these resources are being provided by the various countries, China and India?

**Ms. Webster:** It is there in the book: China will provide \$640 million and India will provide \$200 million.

**Mr. Corbin:** Hon. Minister is speaking there about 2010. I am asking whether those figures at the beginning - China \$6,564,000,000 and India \$1,000,000,000 - are the final figures? That is why I am specifically asking whether those figures there represent the amount being given by China and India. May I raise the other question that I was going to ask when the Hon. Minister answered it? Is this a grant or a loan, and if it is a loan under what conditions?

**Ms. Webster:** The sum which is being provided here in 2010 forms part of a loan being provided by those two Governments.

**Mr. Corbin:** Yes Sir, it is a loan, but could she point out to me to the source so that Members can have the details of the burdens being placed on the people of Guyana? What are the terms and conditions of this loan? Is it an interest free loan - well it is not a grant, it is a loan - a ten-year, five- year? Where can the information be obtained? The Government is committing \$1 billion. I can see the overall paid to it is \$1.2 billion, but Members want to know what burdens of this fibre-optic cable are being placed on the people of Guyana?

**Ms. Webster:** I do not have the details with me.

**Mr. Corbin:** This is very important because the public has been lead to believe that it is just \$300 and something million for this fibre-optic cable which is going to do wonders for Guyana. I wonder, now that Members have seen the extent of more than \$7 billion that we are going to be indebted for this fibre-optic cable, whether the Minister will undertake to provide these details at some point.

**Ms. Webster:** The response to that question is the Government is still going through the details. It is a work-in-progress and the sum which is being requested in Budget 2010 will facilitate the procurement of materials for the civil works component from Georgetown to Lethem, and for the second component, from Moleson Creek to Charity, and at the same time bringing the linkages to the Central Data Centre.

**Mr. Corbin:** I hate to be appearing persistent, but I really have not gotten the answer to the question I asked. I do not know how that can be policy when we are talking about moneys which are being borrowed and for which this nation would be indebted. The point is I am asking specifics, that is what the project is for. The Minister is saying basically the Government is not certain. But we are seeing in this Budget 2010 the Government is saying that it is drawing down \$640 million from China and \$200 million from India out of an anticipated \$6 billion in the first case, and \$1 billion in the second case which the Minister has confirmed will be a loan. Is the Minister saying that the Government is drawing down money without knowing the conditions under which this money is being made available to the Government of Guyana? Is that what she is telling the House?

**Ms. Webster:** I said that I did not have the details with me.

**Mr. Norton:** Could the Hon. Minister tell the Assembly if this will include the cost after for the distribution of the service?

**Ms. Webster:** As I said earlier I would not be able to provide the percentages here because we are just examining 2010 and this project is a work in progress. It is a very large project. It requires a lot of work. The work is still ongoing in this regard.

**Mr. Ramjattan:** I would like to ask the Minister if there was any feasibility study done on this huge project.

**Ms. Webster:** In response to the Hon. Member's question, let me say for the records that in Government every single project that it has started to undertake it has done its work. It had rigorously assessed the impact of that project and the cost-benefit analysis of doing such a project in accordance with its developmental agenda. All Government's projects are demand driven.

**Mr. Ramjattan:** Could the Hon. Minister indicate when this feasibility study was done and if it can be made available to our National Assembly?

**Ms. Webster:** This project is a public investment project and I am sure in the course of time more details will be provided. But I can say that a lot of work has been done.

**Mr. Norton:** On the feasibility study that the Minister said was done, could she tell us what the feasibility study suggested in the comparative analysis between using what Guyana Telephone & Telegraph Co. Ltd. (GT&T) has and that feasibility study position?

**Ms. Webster:** I do not think we are here to debate the importance of why Government is undertaking such a project as versus what GT & T is doing. We have had this debate before during 2009 in this Hon. House and I have outlined clearly for what the sum being voted here is going to be utilised.

**Mr. Murray:** Does the Hon. Minister recall saying to the Hon. Leader of the Opposition just now that the work has been done, the impact has been assessed and the benefits have done. The question I have for her, will she be willing and how soon to make that impact assessment and the

cost-benefit analysis available to the Members of the National Assembly? It is a simple question, Sir.

**Ms. Webster:** I did say that that information will be provided to this Hon. House.

**Mr. Murray:** Could the Hon. Minister say whether it is likely to be within a month, two months, six months, a year, ten years, when?

**Ms. Webster:** It will be provided sometime during this year to this House.

**Mr. Murray:** Would the Hon. Minister agree that the sum she has earmarked in the budget is approximately twenty per cent of the total sum earmarked for this project? If that is so, would she not agree that rather than describing the entirety of the project in the Project Profile 2, that it would have been more relevant to us considering the Budget 2010 to have had the details of what it is proposed to be accomplished in the year 2010? If this is not what is provided here as I suspect it is not, could she provide the specifics of what the money being voted for in 2010 is intended to accomplish?

**Ms. Webster:** I did say that what is stated here in the profile is quiet accurate. The works stated here form part of the activities for 2010. It is a very large project.

**Mrs. Holder:** I would like to ask the Hon. Minister a supplementary to that question. I see in the Profile - Description of Project, at number 3 the "Construction of a wireless and terrestrial network from Moleson Creek to Anna Regina". My question is, would this be done by the contractors, that she mentioned the funds for which will come from China and India or would it be a local open public tender?

**Ms. Webster:** Let me in response to question asked by the Hon. Member say that Government will go through a public tendering process. Local and international contractors are free to bid.

**Mr. Murray:** For the purpose of clarity, is the Minister really telling this National Assembly that in the year 2010 the Government will install communication fibre-optic networking system from Georgetown to Lethem? Is she saying that there will be construction in 2010 of wireless and terrestrial network from Moleson Creek to Anna Regina? Is that what she is telling the National Assembly? I want it to be clear.

**Ms. Webster:** The answer is yes.

**Mr. Corbin:** I would like to draw attention to project 2507300 - Integrity Commission, which deals with purchase of office furniture and equipment allegedly for the Integrity Commission, and referred to under Project Profile Ref. 6, and whether the Hon. Minister will justify expenditure for a Commission that for the past few years has not yet been fully established in accordance with the law. Why spend money for a Commission that cannot function?

**Ms. Webster:** I think that that is a matter of policy, but I wish to say that there is a Secretariat in place for the Integrity Commission. It is currently working.

**Mr. Murray:** Project 1700100 - Minor Works for which the sum of \$90 million is being provided. Could the Hon. Minister inform the National Assembly, what are some of the humanitarian and other activities that are intended to be funded by this amount?

**Ms. Webster:** I think this project of charge here, Minor Work, are funds for humanitarian projects identified by his Excellency the President.

**Mr. Murray:** Could the Hon. Minister say what criteria are applied, since there would be limitless number of requests always for assistance, in determining the beneficiaries under this project of \$90 million?

**Ms. Webster:** The response to that question is normally for projects. The requests are demand-driven. There are requests from communities because our Government consults throughout this country. Based on those consultations and requests made by the citizens of Guyana the Government considers those developmental projects.

**Mr. Murray:** Could the Minister please answer the question I ask? I understand the Government goes across the country and it has requests. I am sure the request it has will total way beyond \$90 million. I am asking, what are the criteria which are used? The Assembly wants to understand that there is objectivity, and there is some equity in the distribution of the resources. So I am asking, what are the criteria that are applied in determining who are the beneficiaries, or what are the projects that benefit from this \$90 million?

**Ms. Webster:** The response to that question is some of the criteria used include the amount of persons who will benefit; whether those communities are depressed; the impact of that particular project - the benefits of such a project to that community and the impact of such a project to the lives of the citizens of a particular community.

**Mr. Murray:** Could the Minister say whether in the interest of equity any criteria are applied to determine that there is some degree of balance among allocations in various Regions across the country?

**Ms. Webster:** The answer is yes.

**Mr. Murray:** Could the Hon. Minister say if the answer yes, on what basis the Government determines the priorities for Regions?

**Ms. Webster:** The response to that question is that one cannot ignore that one has to look at the vulnerability of a particular community. His Excellency the President in doing his identification would take that into consideration.

**Mrs. Holder:** I would like to ask the supplementary to that question to the Hon. Minister. I will like to ask whether she will be prepared to give the National Assembly a copy of the projects funded by this particular project in the previous year, last year, to give Members a sense of how it is spent?

**Ms. Webster:** That information I am sure will be in the Audit of the Public Accounts for the year 2009.

**Mr. Corbin:** Project 3300300- Lands and Surveys: The question is that of the “cadastral and occupational surveys... according to the Project Profile, being done... at Port Kaituma, Mabaruma, Linden, Mahaica , Black Bush Polder and Charity” and all of that, “Opening of new lands for agriculture purposes. What I am seeking to find out is - now that the Lands and Surveys Commission is a Commission - whether this is a grant, a loan, or what is the relationship? I would like to ask a similar question. I can understand the National Parks Commission, but with Guyana Energy Agency (G.E.A.) and so on, is it a loan or a grant?

**Ms. Webster:** The Lands and Surveys Commission generates its own revenues by virtue of it being a Commission. The moneys which are being requested here will be utilised to pay the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission for work done in those areas - Port Kaituma, Mabaruma Settlement, Bartica-Potaro, Mahaica and the Linden-Soesdyke Highway, in Regions No. 4 and 10.

**Mrs. Holder:** I would like to refer the Hon. Minister back to the project 1700100 - Minor Works, and to inform her that these details are not contained in the Auditor's General Report. What the Auditor General would have said was that he has seen the details but they are not available to this House. I ask once again, is she prepared to make them available so will we will get a sense of how the funds were spent last year specific to this project?

**Ms. Webster:** I think the question asked by the Hon. Member should be redirected by the Public Accounts Committee to the Accounting Officer of the Ministry.

**Mr. Corbin:** A similar question that I asked previously, but it relates to the National Communication Network (N.C.N.) on project 4502100 - National Communication Network and refers to Project Profile 14. That project profile highlights "Purchase of installation of transmitters. Purchase of production equipment for various locations." First of all I would like to find out whether this is a grant or loan to N.C.N., and if so, what are the arrangements as they relate to this loan or grant? Second, where are these transmitters being placed? As far as I know, already N.C.N. at the moment is dominating as a monopoly throughout the country. Can the National Assembly be provided with some information about this matter?

**Ms. Webster:** The response to the question is the funds which are being provided here are not a loan to the National Communications Network. In fact in this sum which is being provided, part will meet the cost for the relocation and the expansion of the tower which is moving from Ogle to Onverwagt, West Coast Berbice. The balance of the sum here will be utilised to acquire production equipment. The N.C.N. has moved away from the use of tapes and it is now using digital and improved I.T. resources for the transmission of the news throughout the country.

**Mr. Corbin:** I thank the Mdm. Minister but she has not really understood the gravamen of my question. That is, I understand N.C.N. to be a finance centre, one which is generating funds. It is a corporation, and the Government is paying over money to it. That is why I asked, is it a grant



or is it a loan? Is the Government taking up the cost for the capital expansion? How would it be reflected in its books? These are really the questions I am asking, because N.C.N., as I understand it, is collecting its own revenues, unfairly competing with other private transmitting and television stations, and is getting grants from the Government. So I am not sure how the Government is treating this. Is it a loan in the books?

**Ms. Webster:** The response to the question is it is a grant. N.C.N. does generate its own revenues. In fact the sum which is being provided here is a mere token sum, because the operational cost of N.C.N. exceeds the sums which are being provided here by more than four hundred per cent.

**Mr. Carberry:** Project 3301000 - Land Use Master Plan: I am assuming of course that that falls within the Lands and Surveys Commission. But given the fact that it is being funded to enhance its capacity, I imagine that there is some study being done to determine what that capacity should be, and what is expected to happen at the end of this programme. Could the Minister say whether or not that study is being done, and if it has been done, could that study be made available so that at least the House can understand what capacity would be installed in the Lands and Surveys Commissions after this? It is \$200 million we are talking about. In fact it is more than \$200 million.

**Ms. Webster:** In response to that question, this Land Use Master Plan which is currently being undertaken at the Lands and Surveys Commission is being funded under the Tenth European Development Fund (E.D.F.) of the European Union. It is meant to provide and strengthen the functions of the Guyana's Lands and Surveys Commission. Via that project there will be three main activities - land and planning legislation, geographical information systems and satellite interpretation, and data base development and management. It will provide the Lands and Surveys with the tools to improve the methodologies which are currently being used for Urban and Regional Planning, and bring harmonisation of the existing land laws and regulations.

*3.06 p.m.*

**Mr. Carberry:** Apparently my question was not well understood. The question I asked, I thought was a very simple question. We are talking about the \$918 million here being spent to enhance the capacity of Lands and Surveys. I expect that there would have been an evaluation

done to determine what that capacity should be, and therefore at the end of the programme one would expect certain outcomes. I am asking whether that study is available, and if it is available, when it could be available to the National Assembly? That is what I am asking.

**Ms. Webster:** The response to that question is yes, an evaluation has been done. At the relevant time that study and the outcome of that study will be made available to this Hon. House.

**Mr. Carberry:** Could the Minister say when is this relevant time? This project is going to spend \$200 million out of \$918 million in 2010. So when is this appropriate time? Could she tell this House?

**Ms. Webster:** Let me say that this project is for the duration of three years, and I outlined earlier all the activities envisaged. But I will say that Government is committed to providing the details to this Hon. House at the appropriate time.

**Mrs. Holder:** I would like to ask the Minister if the appropriate time is synonymous with timeliness.

**Ms. Webster:** The answer is yes.

*Programme: 011 – Head Office Administration- \$2,226,696,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

#### **Agency: 09 Public and Police Service Commission**

##### **Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 091 –Public and Police Service Commission – \$42,206,000**

##### **Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 091 –Public and Police Service Commission –\$1,221,000**

**Mr. Chairman:** That is at page 401.

*Programme: 091–Public and Police Service Commission–\$1,221,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Agency: 10 –Teaching Service Commission**

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 101– Teaching Service Commission –\$58,575,000.**

*Programme: 101– Teaching Service Commission–\$58,575,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 101 –Teaching Service Commission – \$5,000,000**

*Programme: 101– Teaching Service Commission– \$5,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Agency: 11 Guyana Elections Commission**

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 111 –Elections Commission – \$1,040,845,000**

**Mr. Corbin:** Line item 6302, that is found on page 75: I would have preferred to ask the question under line item 6301, but the rules preclude me, since I see a zero, that is, there is nothing there for education. I would like to know whether the Hon. Prime Minister can inform the House on whether this training/vote will also be used, not only for training members of the staff of Guyana Election Commission (GECOM), but whether it will be used for the education of the public on the new Local Government system? Because I do not see any money under education, either under this or the other line item which we are going to come to next. I will wait until we get there. Under here, there is training. Does that include education?

**Mr. Hinds:** The answer is no. Public education is not included in line item 6302, Programme 111.

**Mrs. Holder:** I consider the Hon. Leader of the Opposition's question extremely important. Since the Prime Minister did not volunteer under which Programme Members could find it, I want to ask whether or not it could be found line item 6312? If not, is he prepared to tell us

where, and if indeed funding is provided for public education of the new Local Government system?

**Mr. Hinds:** There is provision for public education under national registration. The activities are listed here in some different numberings. I think it is spread because it utilises different numbers here, for example, print and non-print. Some of the teaching materials would be provided under the line item: Print and Non-Print Materials, and so on. So apparently it was not brought together under one programme in this preparation of the budget, but it is put together separately in some details in print and non-print materials, and the publication in the media, and so on. Throughout the budget that has been presented here portions of the different line items would be utilised for educating the public.

**Ms. Kissoon:** Line item 6241: Could the Hon. Minister say whether this amount allocated will be sufficient to cover rental cost for upcoming Local Government Elections since there has not been a large increase?

**Mr. Hinds:** I have been advised yes. It would be.

**Mr. Patterson:** Since the Prime Minister is in possession of an accumulative figure for the training and the dissemination of information, will he give the Assembly the total figure since he said it is spread out over various line items which are allocated for the training and information?

**Mr. Hinds:** Most of it will come under Programme: 112 – Elections Administration.

*Programme: 111 –Elections Commission - \$1,040,845,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Mr. Chairman:** Before moving on to the next item, it was brought to my attention that I omitted to put to the House Agency: 09, Programme: 091 - Current Expenditure. I will now do so please, we have passed it. It is under Public and Police Service Commission.

**Agency: 09 Public and Police Service Commission**

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 091–Public and Police Service Commission - \$42,206,000.**

*Programme: 091- Public and Police Service Commission - \$42,206,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Agency: 11 –Guyana Elections Commission**

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 112 –Elections Administration – \$879,872, 000**

**Mr. Corbin:** My first question is whether the Prime Minister recognises that any important system, like the one we are implementing for local government which has a complete change in the electoral system, a mixture of the constituencies and the O.P.R. system, where we are permitting individuals to enter for the very first time, would not require a substantial area of education? Since I must find a line item, because zero again is provided here for education, and I cannot ask a question under zero according to the rules. I am asking it under line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships), whether the Prime Minister does not believe that there should be a substantive or substantial amount fixed for education and an educational programme and, if so, since I am to rely on his previous answer, that it was considered by the Commission, where and under what line items would we find this substantial sum to deal with this important area of Local Government Reform?

**Mr. Hinds:** I am pleased to inform the Hon. Member that under line item 6284 there is a provision for civic and voter- education in support of elections of some \$44,900,000. Line item 6284 –Other.

**Mr. Corbin:** The Prime Minister may want to reject that line item.

**Mr. Hinds:** This here is a total amount of money which would be utilised, as I said earlier, from other line items where appropriate, for example, print and non-print materials. Earlier I was asked of the total sum of money to be used on civic and voter- education, and I can now say that is \$44.9 million in total, including a portion of the \$14 million and moneys from other line items.

**Mr. Corbin:** Thank you, a supplementary question. My real question to the Prime Minister is whether he did not feel that such an important area as education should be properly identified as a programme, so that we could know how that \$44 million is being spent? At the moment we

have no means of monitoring this very important area in Local Government Reform, and I to say that it is hidden in this estimate, is one of those programmes which should not be hidden at all.

**Mr. Hinds:** I think, Mr. Chairman, that education in this presentation normally refers to people who are either full-time or temporary employees of the Agency. So that is why the public education is provided for differently.

**Mr. Corbin:** May I ask a specific question, in the various line items that we cannot identify at the moment, and in this \$44 million that we are told that would be utilised for education, are there provisions there for any contraction of any professional agency to carry out this programme? Or could he tell the Assembly who will carry out this education programme? Which agency, and in what manner it will be conducted? Because really we have no way of monitoring this.

**Mr. Hinds:** Yes, I am advised that various media will be contracted to provide information to the public.

**Mrs. Holder:** Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, I would like to direct the Hon. Prime Minister's attention to the line item 6302 –Training (including Scholarship), and to enquire whether the GECOM staff will be trained in this new Local Government system? I notice a distinctive reduction in the allocation under training. Would the staff receive any training at all, since few people in this country understand the new system? Would the staff be in a position to explain it?

**Mr. Murray:** Mine is linked to it. May I ask it, so that he could answer it together?

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes.

**Mr. Murray:** I see he is engaged, anyway would the Prime Minister...

**Mr. Chairman:** You better allow the Prime Minister to deal with one question at a time

**Mr. Murray:** Yes.

**Mr. Hinds:** Line item 6302 would be utilised in training some eleven thousand persons who would be required on polling day; some of them may be trained for a few days, and some may be

a bit longer depending on their assignment. But line item 6302 is specifically for training persons for the Election Day.

**Mrs. Holder:** Supplementary if I may... I understand what the Hon. Prime Minister is saying, but the training of which he speaks seems to be related to the procedure for elections. I am asking specifically if it will also include training in the new electoral system for Local Government Elections.

**Mr. Hinds:** That would be the subject of the training.

**Mr. Murray:** Given the enormity of the change that is being proposed for the forthcoming Local Government Elections, would the Prime Minister, first of all, agree that when the sum of \$177.3 million was put into the budget in 2009, it was in contemplation of that fact and the enormity of the training that would have been needed to be done? Against that background, would he not agree that the sum of \$56.3 million would be wholly inadequate to undertake the massive amount and a range of training that would be necessary to run off a completely new system efficiently?

**Mr. Hinds:** I am advised that some of it has been accomplished already - things to do with registration, claims and objections period. This sum last year would have been for everything which is being accomplished, but some of it has been accomplished already. Hence the estimate put here for 2010 is what is anticipated would be required for 2010. It is anticipated that elections would be held in 2010.

**Mr. Murray:** Is the Prime Minister really saying to me that in his and GECOM's estimation that a sum that is merely less than a half of what was originally contemplated in 2009 Budget, which I think recognise..., less than one-third my colleague tells me, is in fact going to be sufficient to train people for this completely new system? Or can we expect a supplementary to come along the way? That is what I am really seeking to find out.

**Mr. Hinds:** I have been assured that what has been put here is expected to be adequate taking into account the current position and what has been accomplished so far.

**Ms. Kissoon:** Line item 6294 – Other: Can the Hon. Prime Minister say what accounts for this three hundred plus per cent increase?

**Mr. Chairman:** I thought you would have asked the Prime Minister what consists of “Other.”

**Mr. Hinds:** This line item 6294 – Other covers payments to staff, including scrutineer, relating to the elections.

**Mr. Ramjattan:** With respect to the same line item, can I ask the Hon. Prime Minister, what was it that was paid to the two parties, P.N.C.R.-1G. and P.P.P./C, for scrutineers?

**Mr. Hinds:** None has been paid as yet for 2010.

*Programme: 112 –Elections Administration – \$879,872 000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Capital Expenditure**

#### **Programme: 111 –Elections Commission –\$20,000,000**

**Mr. Corbin:** I am just asking a question under the Programme - Elections Commission. There, again, I find myself constrained by the rules to find a project title. So I want to choose Programme: 111 - Elections Commission - project 2501000, under capital expenditure, where it states that \$20 million has allocated for “Purchase of vehicle, office furniture vehicle and equipment.” I am really asking the Hon. Prime Minister, since no sum is provided for under Programme 112, whether he is satisfied that the absence of any capital expenditure at all under project title: National, Regional & Local Government Elections in 2009, and none provided for in 2010, means that the only thing required in terms of capital expenditure for Local Government Elections are those matters mentioned, under the project I referred to earlier? I do not know if my question is clear.

**Mr. Hinds:** I would answer to my understanding of that question. I think the practice is to assign capital to the agency for all of its programmes. I do not think a distinction is made. What is here covers both Elections Administration and also the Elections Commission.

*Programme: 111 – Elections Commission – \$20,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

#### **Agency: 53 Guyana Defence Force**



## **Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 531 –Defence Headquarters – \$5,797,948,000**

*Programme: 531 –Defence Headquarters –\$5,797,948,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

## **Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 531 –Defence Headquarters – \$436,700,000.**

*Programme: 531 –Defence Headquarters – \$436,700,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

3.36 p.m.

## **Agency 57 –Office of the Ombudsman**

### **Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 571 –Ombudsman — \$3,956,000**

**Mrs. Riehl:** I wish to ask – I do not know who is answering – the Hon. Prime Minister, if this expenditure here, the budgeted amount of \$7,214,000, line item 6011 is intended for the salary of a new Ombudsman?

**Mr. Hinds:** Yes.

**Mrs. Riehl:** Supplementary, when will an Ombudsman be appointed?

**Mr. Hinds:** As soon as the Administration finds a good candidate.

**Mr. Murray:** Mr. Chairman, through you Sir, may I ask then whether the Hon. Prime Minister, by his answer, is inferring that there is an advertisement out inviting applicants to this position? Or is there likely to be an advertisement out within the next month or how soon? Because he said when the Administration finds a suitable candidate. So the assumption I make, he can correct me if I am wrong, is that the Administration is about to or it has already advertised such a position.

**Mr. Hinds:** I am advised by the Attorney General that the Administration is searching for an Ombudsman.

**Mr. Murray:** I am specifically asking the Prime Minister whether that search includes publicly advertising for the position to be filled because that has not occurred. That is what I specifically am asking.

**Mr. Hinds:** I shall take note of the suggestion of the Hon. Member.

**Mr. Murray:** The answer is either yes or no. It either takes account of a public advertisement or it does not. Can the Prime Minister be a little more specific? I am asking a question. It needs an answer.

**Mrs. Holder:** I would like to refer the Prime Minister to line item 6011, but to put the question somewhat differently. I would like to ask what motivated the Government to actually include the line item in 2009 and 2010, but not in 2008? We have not had an Ombudsman for a number of years. I see the same figure appears in 2009, but it was not a line item. No funds were allocated to the line item in 2008. So the Government must have been motivated to include it for the last two years. So I would just like to ask, what motivated the Government to include it?

**Mr. Hinds:** The Administration continues to search for an Ombudsman, someone of the requisite quality who will accept the provision here for payment.

*Programme: 571 - Ombudsman - \$3,956,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

#### **Agency: 58 Public Service Appellate Tribunal**

##### **Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 581 Public Service Appellate Tribunal -- \$6,789,000**

*Programme: 581 – Public Service Appellate Tribunal – \$6,789,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

##### **Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 581 – Public Service Appellate Tribunal – \$1,680,000**

*Programme: 581 – Public Service Appellate Tribunal – \$1,680,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

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

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 021 - Prime Minister's Secretariat – \$133,212,000**

**Mr. Corbin:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. I will like to call the Hon. Prime Minister's attention to line item 6116 – Contracted Employees, where he has \$15 million there for contracted employees and under the Staffing Details we see thirteen persons employed. I would be grateful if the Hon. Prime Minister could explain the categories of persons who fall on this line item.

**Mr. Hinds:** The scales are GS1 - 2, GS 2 - 2, GS 5 - 2. The categories...

**Mr. Corbin:** Yes I want to know who they are.

**Mr. Hinds:** What do you want to know?

**Mr. Corbin:** Are they technicians, carpenters? Who are they?

**Mr. Hinds:** Under GS1, there are two persons: an office assistant and a cleaner; under GS2, three persons: two personal attendants and one telephonist; under GS5, there are a secretary typist and a special assistant; under GS7, a special assistant; under GS8, there are a supervisor at the Prime Minister's Residence and an assistant to the P.M., and under GS11, there are the Principal Assistant Secretary (P.A.S.) and two assistants to the Prime Minister.

**Mr. Corbin:** Is it now the policy of the Administration to appoint contract workers at all levels? It would appear so now, from office assistant right up. Is that the new policy and, if so, whether the arrangements for those who are in existing employment benefit from the same level of salaries that the contract employees who have recently been taken on are enjoying?

**Mr. Hinds:** I think I can inform the Hon. Member that those persons on contracts that I have called out against existing scales receive the same moneys as people who are on the fixed or the pensionable register in that scale.

**Mr. Murray:** Would not the Prime Minister agree, however, that there is at least one element which is not comparable, that whereas somebody who is on the permanent pensionable establishment has to wait until he retires at 55, or whatever age, to get any gratuity and pensionable benefits, that a person who is on contract enjoys a gratuity of every 6 months at about twenty-two and half per cent? That is a significant difference in terms of employment. Have those persons who are on the pensionable establishment at this time being offered as an alternative to their current employment a contractual position?

**Mr. Hinds:** My understanding and my advice is that at least at a certain point of coming on to employment, everyone has a choice to make. I am not quite clear whether people already on the pensionable scheme can exercise that choice at that time.

**Mr. Murray:** Could the Prime Minister, Sir through you, kindly undertake to check and in the interest of equity to ensure that at least those who were previously employed are offered terms no less beneficial?

**Mr. Hinds:** I can tell you of one case. My Confidential Secretary who was told that it could be arranged for her to be on contract opted to stay on the pensionable scheme.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, I now put...

**Mr. Corbin:** No Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Are you not finished as yet?

**Mr. Corbin:** No, I was giving way to my colleagues. I would like to go to line item 6321 which deals with "Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations" where I see \$70 million there. The first question is whether the Hon. Prime Minister, recognising that in 2009 we approved \$72.5 million but actually spent all, and when in 2008 we paid 3 billion..., and first of all will this \$70 million in 2010 discharges all our obligations under that item? And if not, what are the details of the subsidies or where can I find them? In other words, it would appear that unless we

were in very great arrears in 2008, we had to pay \$3 billion. In 2009, we only paid \$72.5 million and we are budgeting in 2010 \$70 million. Could he be good enough to give some details?

**Mr. Hinds:** I would like to check those notes – that in 2008 we needed to make additional provisions for the large increase in oil prices which Guyana Power & Light (G.P.L.) faced. We did it here. But this provision here is for Lethem specifically. This \$70 million is to support fuel and, maybe, other current costs for the Lethem Power Company.

*Programme: 021 - Office of the Prime Minister – \$133,212,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Capital Expenditure**

#### **Programme: 021 - Prime Minister's Secretariat – \$3,190,624,000**

**Mr. Corbin:** Project 2601100 – Electrification Programme, “Provision for upgrading and expansion of electrification systems - IDB/CHINA/OTHER”. It refers us to Project Profile 19, if I can just highlight what is stated there for the purposes of my question. We have again, similar to the I.T.C Project, funding coming from the Inter-American Development Bank (I.D.B.). Then there is an Other of \$7 billion - I do not know what that is - and then China \$8 billion and according to the details there are a myriad number of activities here, including:

- “1. Procurement of solar home systems in hinterland villages including Sebai, Red Hill, St. Denny's, Chenaupou, Waipa, Yupukari, Sand Creek and Jawalla.
2. Completion of electricity at Port Kaituma.”

Would the Prime Minister be in a position, first of all, to give the Assembly some idea of how this sum is being allocated across these various projects which are listed here? Because as I understand the project profile, one is supposed to have some idea of how this money is spent. But the way this is grouped here, really we are groping in the dark other than knowing that there is a large sum of... [Member: This is providing light.] Well that is the point. Blackout! That is all we are seeing here. So I will be grateful for some details on how this money is being allocated: how much is going to Jawalla, how much is for Port Kaituma? That is the first question. Second, the I.D.B, Other and China, I do not know what *Other* means, if he could

amplify that? Three, whether the Hon. Prime Minister will be able to say to us whether this is a grant or loan, and if it is a loan of a total of \$19 billion, what are the terms and conditions being placed on the people of Guyana for the future of this \$19 billion? That is my first set of questions.

**Mr. Hinds:** The Government has been improving the electricity supply and distribution under different Programmes. The Government has gotten them here, under Source of Funding, so that it has had the programme - the Unserved Area Electrification Programme - which is a loan it negotiated from the I.D.B. and that programme comes to an end this year. Under that programme it is spending \$983 million this year, in concluding this programme. It has a number of headings here on extension of services, G.P.L. grid: supporting the G.P.L. Loss Reduction Programme, acquiring additional prepaid meters, and some funding for implementation of the new building system. There are technical institutional support for loss reduction, financial and operational audits which are related to this Programme, and under the hinterland component, some demonstration projects: solar home systems in another fifteen villages, generator and distribution systems in Port Kaituma, and also in Mahdia, improvements in Lethem - St. Cuthberts Mission and Maraikobai, and some other institutional strengthening and capacity building components.

So under the Unserved Area Electrification Project which comes to an end this year, the Government is spending some \$983 million completing this project. One may recall this project's implementation started, I think, late 2004.

From Government's own funding and in particular the Petrol Caribe Funding, a new 21 megawatt power plant was commissioned, I think, in early December or late November last year. Associated with that were two transmission lines: one from Kingston to Sophia and one from Skeldon to No. 3 Village, and also the rehabilitation and conversion of the two Merlies engines at Canefield. I think Mr. Corbin is quite familiar with those engines. The Government is rehabilitating them and converting them from diesel to heavy fuel oil. I think in particular the last one is outstanding. There may be some payments to be made on the transmission lines too, but that is the provision for this year under that Programme, and that also will be completed this year.

Beginning this year, but lasting maybe for another two years, is the large programme of approaching \$40 million on a soft loan from the China Development Bank, which primarily will complete the transmission system, in particular a transmission line from Sophia to Onverwagt, and also put in some seven substations. For this year Government is making a provision of twenty per cent of the total project. It is hoped that all things will be cleared and it will start going in the second quarter. When a project is started it is very hard to predict sometimes exactly how it will ramped up.

**Mrs. Holder:** Thank you very much Mr. Chairman. I will like to refer the Hon. Prime Minister to project 1701000 – Minor Works. When I look at the legend, “Provision for developmental works”, I see it actually refers to improved living conditions of vulnerable groups. The project entails implementation of minor projects and programmes. It is very wide. Can I get some specificity? What are the kinds of projects envisaged here?

**Mr. Hinds:** This, as the name says, is a provision for appeals made to the Prime Minister over the year and I would like to assure the Hon. Member that he hears the appeals and he does not know the race, colour, creed, political persuasion, or anything of the people. He just responds as best as he could. I could give a certain example that was even responded to today, where I responded to a request for some assistance from some group in the Essequibo Islands. I did not look at the name at the bottom, and I would not look at the name at the bottom.

**Mrs. Holder:** Thank you. May I ask a supplementary to the Hon. Prime Minister? Again the Hon. Member Winston Murray had asked for a kind of guidance used for giving these donations – the criteria – so that the public can get a sense if it can write the Prime Minister because this information seems to be privileged to just a few.

**Mr. Corbin:** Supplementary to my previous question, Sir, would the Hon. Prime Minister agree that he did not really answer my question and that is that the profile the Assembly has been presented here at Profile 19 does not help it to identify the expenditure that will be utilised on each of these projects? So it is difficult for the Assembly to monitor it. The second part of my question was whether this money was by a loan or grant and what were the terms and conditions? He mentioned just \$40 million in his answer. What about the rest? We are talking here about billions of dollars and he has skilfully avoided the question of whether these billions

of dollars – I identified some \$19 billion which I could have identified here... How is it going to be repaid? Is it a grant? What is the condition for the loan? And that is one aspect that he avoided. What he has told me is basically what I could have gleaned from looking at the project profile. But I do not know how much is being spent where so the Assembly cannot monitor anything. So could he provide me with the allocations of the exact sums where and if not, is there a document that we can have which will help to enlighten it? But certainly he could be able to answer the one on the conditions of the loan or grant.

**Mr. Hinds:** I am pleased to answer that one, and I am glad that the Hon. Member has pointed out how much money is involved in providing electricity to our people. Because of that, the Government looked very carefully to the interest rates - the costs of financing. I did say one portion is from the I.D.B: the completion of the Unserved Area Electrification Project (U.A.E.P.) and that loan is concessionary. I think less than two per cent and up to forty years. The other is Petro Caribe and that also is very concessionary - I think two per cent and a total period of twenty-five years - and the loan from China Development Bank is also very concessionary - I think these loans are all laid in the National Assembly from time to time. The I.D.B. loan was laid here already - I am being advised. I think that is the answer. All of these are loans on very concessional terms, and that has been one of the factors which has constrained maybe the rate at which the Government has progressed in bringing improvements to the electricity sector to arrange for financing on soft terms because the normal commercial terms would add greatly to the cost of electricity.

**Mr. Corbin:** Having regard to the nature and corporate status of G.P.L, how are these sums being treated in relation to the company itself? Are these loans or grants from the Government?

**Mr. Hinds:** Generally Sir, they are loans un-lent to G.P.L.

*4.06 p.m.*

**Mr. Corbin:** This is the final question on this Programme. The last item which deals with \$20 million for payment of generators at Lethem, I would not repeat the number - I think the Project Profile is 20. My question to the Hon. Prime Minister is whether there has been any feasibility study into the project. He said this is final payment for generators and to improve operational facility. These generators have already been bought. Having spent all of this money on the



generators, whether would it still not have been more feasible, cost-benefit wise, to have an arrangement where power can be brought from Bonfim, Brazil? Also, whether that would not permit a cheaper price to the consumers in that area rather than the Low Carbon Development Strategy thrust seeing you are utilising all of these carbon fuels in running the generators there?

**Mr. Hinds:** Mr. Chairman there are two answers to that question. One of them is that yes we did pursue with the Brazilian Government some time ago in getting electricity for Lethem from them. There are two parts there again: one part is that they said at that time that we would need to run the transmission system from some kind of substation in the Boa Vista area. You are looking at 70 miles of transmission which would be significantly costly. Secondly, you would need to get the Venezuelan approval too because they get that power from...well not from the Guri Dam, but there is a clause that says selling to any other country from within Brazil needs their approval or concurrence.

The other thing is that we all know that for about the last year, the Guri Dam too has been suffering from the low rainfall in this region and actually I understand that in Bonfim and Boa Vista areas, there have been shortages of electricity there as well as in Venezuela itself. One has to weigh all of those things together. We think that going ahead with this diesel station is a good thing. You may have heard that along the way we are looking to get an opportunity to re-establish Mocamoca and I think that I did say in the debate last week that we have responded to the invitation for bids or proposals put out by China. We have identified another fall nearby so that electricity may be available, in this case, for Lethem and Annai.

*Programme: 021 – Prime Minister’s Secretariat - \$3,190,624,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

## **Current Expenditure**

### **Agency: 07 Parliament Office**

#### **Programme: 071 – National Assembly - \$636,216,000**

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you. Once again we have not had the opportunity of displaying in detail the amount of work that we diligently do and plan to do every year, but thank you very much.

**Mr. Hinds:** I was going to show you Mr. Chairman that I would be very pleased to make a representation on this matter for the Parliament Office.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much.

*Programme: 071 – National Assembly – \$636,216,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

## **Capital Expenditure**

### **Agency: 31 Ministry of Public Works and Communications**

#### **Programme: 311 - Ministry Administration – \$218,074,000**

**Mr. Corbin:** Yes Sir. I have some difficulty with items 6111 to 6116 which deals with staffing. Under contracted employees we have eleven persons. I perhaps should start with item 6116 - whether the Hon. Minister will be in a position to tell us what category of workers is employed under this item? Let me get that first because my second question may not be necessary.

**Mr. Benn:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. Those who are held as contracted employees in the Ministry move all the way from a Field Auditor, Accounts Clerk II, two Office Assistants, one Stores Attendant, one Cleaner, one Vault Attendant, one Stores Clerk, a Confidential Secretary, a Principle Assistant Secretary General and a Permanent Secretary.

**Mr. Corbin:** My second question is whether the Minister is satisfied that this staffing ratio is adequate to undertake the functions which have been assigned to this Ministry? When one looks at the ratio of technical and other categories of staff here, if one were to look through those various heads, and of course under Senior Technical, you have zero persons, Other Technical you have two persons, and of course you have a heavy service staff. I am wondering whether that is responsible for substandard roads that we have all over the country- that you have no proper technical staff to monitor what is happening?

**Mr. Benn:** I want to reject any idea that the Ministry is building substandard roads. I would like to say otherwise that the technical people related to the Ministry are under programme II. This is the administrative section.

**Mr. Corbin:** I wonder if the Hon. Minister would be good enough to also enlighten us about the contributions to local and international organisations identified under code 6321 and 6322- if these are bodies to which we are affiliated to, what are they and whether we are up-to-date on our obligatory contributions to them.

**Mr. Benn:** The organisations under this head are the International Civil Aviation Organisation (I.C.A.O.), the International Maritime Organisation, the Regional Aviation Safety Oversight System and the Redex Satellite Communication Programme. I am advised that we are up-to-date with our payments to these organisations.

**Mr. Murray:** My reference is to item 6321- Subsidy to the Transport and Harbours Department. Would the Minister agree that in 2009 he came to Parliament for a supplementary provision because, I believe, largely on account of increase in the price of fuel for subsidy to be increased from what was in the original Budget to \$250 million? Could he explain to the National Assembly why it is that he is putting in the Budget for the year 2010 only a sum of \$50 million? That is my first question. Let me hear what he answers.

**Mr. Benn:** We have estimated and allocated \$50 million. I stated in our Budget Debate that we have been impacted by the reduction in activity at Berbice and we have lost 57% of revenue. We anticipate that more efficient operations arising out of the Supenaam Stelling coming into operation, that the fuel cost and the Berbice passage will not be as high. However, these are our current estimates in relation to this matter. The situation is still pretty dynamic at the moment.

**Mr. Murray:** Through you Sir, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister whether it could be inferred from his answer that if the price of fuel goes beyond what is contemplated in these estimates or the improvement in efficiencies forecast for 2010 do not occur, will he be coming to this National Assembly for supplementary provision to increase this subsidy?

**Mr. Benn:** I do not shut out that possibility. I cannot predict now what the prices of fuel may be over the next year or so. There is no reliable predictor. Their prices had been fairly stable over the last quarter, but I would say that on the Berbice passage, Transport and Harbours was spending some \$6 million a week on fuel. Movement to Essequibo has dropped to about \$4 million a week for fuel and lubricants and we are hoping that it would drop to maybe \$2.5 to \$3

million a week when the Supenaam Stelling comes into operation. But much of what may happen depends on the development of traffic on the Essequibo.

**Mr. Murray:** Mr. Chairman given the Minister's answers to the question, would it be correct Hon. Minister, through you Sir, for us to understand that you in no circumstance propose to increase the cost to the user public of the services provided by the Transport and Harbours?

**Mr. Benn:** There is no intension to increase the cost to the traveling public either for personal passage or freight. We are relying on improving our efficiency to provide a greater service.

**Mr. Murray:** Would it be correct to assume that it is not a ruled out possibility, but at this time it is not in contemplation?

**Mr. Benn:** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Scott:** Under line item 6281 - Security Services - there is an increase to \$39 million. May I ask if there had been an additional amount of places that require more staff to justify the \$13 million more being spent?

**Mr. Benn:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. We have moved our maintenance workshop over to the old railway embankment building and that requires additional services.

*Programme: 311 – Ministry Administration – \$218,074,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Programme: 312 – Public Works – \$655,898,000**

**Mr. Corbin:** Again if we can look at the very items being asked about, except that they are under the technical area of the Ministry of Public Works now, I ask the same question that if one looks at the distribution of staff and the categories listed in items 6111, 6112 and right on to 6117 from 0 to 28, if the Minister would first of all identify the categories of persons under contracted employees so that one can get an appreciation as to whether there is adequate staff to supervise these projects that the Ministry is responsible for and not have the substandard roads which the Minister denied is being constructed all over the country.

**Mr. Benn:** Again I want to reject any idea that we are building substandard roads in the country. As I said in closing my debate, those who are suggesting that these roads that we are building are substandard, should take their case to the people who are benefiting from these works.

To answer the question, the positions total twenty-eight and I would say that we have a Maintenance Superintendent, an Engineer at GS11, three Electrical Technicians at GS5, twenty-two Engineers and I repeat twenty-two Engineers under GS11, one Cleaner and a Maintenance Superintendent (electrical). They are other technical persons under Force Account Project Works too, but these relate directly to the administration in that programme for contracted employees.

**Mr. Corbin:** Supplementary question, Sir - would the Minister agree with me then that if he is satisfied that he has the right ratio of technical staff, as he so proudly informs us, to adequately supervise the work, then one assumes that what is taking place around the country is part of the programme and whether he would agree that part of his official programme is to do roads that can only last a month or two?

**Mrs. Holder:** Thank you very much. I would like to direct the Hon. Minister's attention to line items 6251 - Maintenance of Roads - and ask for the list of roads that will be maintained or constructed.

**Mr. Benn:** I could give a list of roads to be maintained now: Vlissengen Road and Irving Street, Sherriff Street, Duncan Street, the University of Guyana (U.G.) Road – and this going through right to the end to adjoin with Sophia where we have some problems – Water Street, Seawall Road, Camp Street, Barrack Street, Young Street, Thomas Street, Mandela Avenue, Homestretch Avenue, Carifesta Avenue, the Railway Embankment, some 5 miles of road on the East Bank of Demerara, 5 miles of road on the East Coast of Demerara, 5 miles of road on the West Coast of Demerara, 7.6 miles of road on the Soesdyke/Linden Highway and 4.5 miles of road on the West Bank of Demerara. We can produce a detailed listing of these roads. I wish you would ask more properly though.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member before Mrs. Holder asks her question I wish to lodge a strong protest from this high chair that the Bel Air Main Road, a small patch of about 10 yards, destroyed by the building of the school, has not been in your list and I hope that that will be corrected within the hour.

**Mr. Benn:** These are current roads that we intend to do. There are other roads under Urban Roads and Projects. I do not want to apologise on behalf of the City Council who really should be looking after your particular road, but we may and I am asking my Permanent Secretary to take particular interest in this road.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much Hon. Member.

**Mrs. Holder:** Thank you very much. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister a supplementary question, not necessarily to give him an opportunity to boast to us about the wonderful work that he is doing, but to get some specific answers. I noticed Oleander Roads are being constructed. I want to know if the Minister is going to pay any attention to the Main Roads in each village to get access to the seawall.

**Mr. Benn:** Madam this is exactly what we are doing. They are under Capital Expenditure. As I said, we will give you the list and let me say that we are not boasting about the roads. We are telling you what we are doing and we are answering the question. I did hear earlier, I think, the Hon. Member Murray, did say that these were “election roads”. Well let me say that we have been building these roads since 2006 so maybe the election started since then.

**Mrs. Holder:** Please Mr. Chairman the Minister forgot my other question. I asked specifically about Oleander Gardens because I see some construction work is going on there. I want to know if you are going to pave those roads this year and whether or not the main thoroughfares to the seawall in the villages on the East Coast would be given priority.

**Mr. Benn:** I did say that we have a listing of some roads and we are paying attention to the main access roads. I will not promise or suggest that I can look after the road for each and every Member of the House as much as I would like to.

**Mr. Chairman:** You are not talking about the Speaker of course?

**Mr. Benn:** What I would say is that we are probably at a road near you or any person in this House. We should be able to live with that.

**Mr. Norton:** Mr. Chairman could the Hon. Minister fulfill his last year’s promise to give to this House the guarantee of how long these roads would last? He had promised you that last year.

**Mr. Benn:** I did read out the maximum life of roads that we had built during the Budget Debate the other day. I will give, by circulating to each and every Member of the House, the maximum and minimum range of roads for all specifications, the longevity of these roads for each and every Member of the House.

**Mr. Norton:** Could the Hon. Minister tell this House if the U.G. Road that he spoke about that was done in 2006 that is now being redone, falls into that category of ten years?

**Mr. Benn:** I think the part that he is referring to was a part which was damaged by overloaded trucks which are going to build the housing scheme area. It was only patching that we did at some time.

*Programme: 312 – Public Works – \$655,898,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Current Expenditure**

#### **Programme: 313 – Communication and Transport – \$54,700,000**

**Mr. Chairman:** After this item we will suspend.

[**Mr. Hinds:** Inaudible]

**Mr. Chairman:** Capital Expenditure will take us until after 5.00 p.m., Hon. Prime Minister.

**Mr. Corbin:** There is not much to ask here because there is only one employee and so my question is, prior to that, for this year's allocation there were no technical staff at all and now we have one contracted employee. Now this communication section of the Ministry had certain responsibilities of which I am aware of in the past. I would like to know whether the functions of this section of the Ministry has been transferred to the new airport authority or where the functions of the Ministry, as relates to communication, are being executed and whether he is satisfied that this lone member of staff, whose classification I would like some information on, is capable of carrying out the functions that are assigned to this section of the Ministry.

**Mr. Benn:** Thank you. The Hon. Member is right in inferring that the positions and functions are now being done under the Guyana Civil Aviation Authority. The lone contracted employee is

tasked with responsibilities for aerodrome maintenance throughout the hinterland. Issues relating to frequency management are now with the National Frequency Management Unit. These were all taken out as independent semiautonomous units.

*Programme: 313 – Communication and Transport – \$54,700,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much Hon. Members. Even though we are running a bit late, I think we could take the suspension now. I hope we will be able to make up time later.

*Assembly resumed*

*Assembly suspended accordingly at 4.36 p.m.*

*Assembly resumed accordingly at 5.31 p.m.*

*In Committee of Supply*

## **Capital Expenditure**

### **Programme: 311 – Ministry Administration - \$9,903,829**

**Mr. Corbin:** May it please you Mr. Chairman. Item 1201800 - Construction and Rehabilitation of Buildings - which identifies Reference 92 as the heading. First of all, would the Hon. Minister be good enough to identify the exact amount for each one of the two projects? Second, could he explain what this multipurpose centre at Unity is all about? Those are my first set of questions.

**Mr. Benn:** The two activity items here are the rehabilitation of the Oranapai Towers at Wight's Lane, the Office of the Prime Minister, to the sum of \$2.5 million; the construction of a multipurpose centre at Unity on the East Coast of Demerara to the sum of \$40 million which is allocated, giving a total of \$42.5 million.

**Mr. Corbin:** Supplementary question, Sir. Given the fact that the note at the bottom says contract work, we have no idea of how many people would be gaining employment as a result of this. Would the Minister be in a position to say whether the contract has already been awarded or is to be awarded? Has the tender has been given out and all of that?



**Mr. Benn:** No contract has been awarded as yet. We anticipate that advertisements would be placed shortly with respect to these two issues.

**Mr. Corbin:** No trick question, a supplementary question, Sir. Then you are alerting the bidders Hon. Minister. Is this \$40 million the engineering estimate? How did you arrive at that figure?

**Mr. Benn:** All contracts are tendered out on the basis of the engineers' estimates. [Mr. Corbin: That is what I am asking] It is normal, nothing is different here.

**Mr. Murray:** Mr. Chairman could the Hon. Minister inform this National Assembly as to the purpose of this multipurpose centre?

**Mr. Benn:** The multipurpose centres normally would have libraries, Information Technology section, and a place for community meetings - a place where the women of the community could do handicraft work – sewing, cooking and things like that. [Interruption] Well the men can partake too. All the normal activities a community would want to get involved in, but the particular community would normally try to involve and design into the centre their own activity. However, basic things nowadays are I.T., community meetings, and libraries and so on.

**Mr. Murray:** Could the Hon. Minister inform the National Assembly under whose control and management this multipurpose centre will be?

**Mr. Benn:** We are building the centre and I anticipate that the Ministry of Local Government will be the recipient of the facility for its ongoing...

**Mr. Murray:** If the Minister's purpose is to be really served since this is a community centre, essentially, might it not be better handled by the Regional Administration which is the entity that has responsibility for the activities in the Region or the N.D.C.? Indeed Sir, I will support you on either one.

**Mr. Benn:** Our Buildings Division will continue to help with ongoing maintenance of the structure. However, I do not know if I can state here whether it is better for any other organisation to be running the facility with regard to its operationalising.

**Mr. Murray:** So from what the Minister says it seems to me that he is constructing this building then he is going to determine who is going to manage it and what is going to happen. This is

putting the cart before the horse! Mr. Minister are you saying to this National Assembly that you really do not have a clear idea, having constructed this building with a purpose in mind, who should manage it and to whom should be given the responsibility for its operations and \$40 million worth of moneys?

**Mr. Benn:** I did say the Ministry of Local Government and I do not know why the Hon. Member is confusing himself on the issue. He was suggesting other agencies which may or should perhaps be involved or to whom the building should be given, but I did say the Ministry of Local Government.

**Mr. Murray:** It is not within your contemplation, is it Minister, to hand over this building for management by either the Neighbourhood Democratic Council or the Regional Democratic Council? Let me have a definitive answer on that.

**Mr. Benn:** The Ministry of Local Government has some authority with respect to the Regions, the N.D.C.s and all those other persons. If they want to un-lead the building or whatever, that is a matter for them. What I am saying is that the Ministry through its Buildings Division will have the building constructed and pass it to the Ministry of Local Government who will take care of its assignments.

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. Corbin there are two other persons. I will take them and then call you back. First it is Mrs. Holder.

**Mrs. Holder:** Thank you very much Mr. Chairman. I would like to direct the Hon. Minister's attention to line item 1206900, under Bridges. I notice there is no allocation for Road Safety for the year 2010. Is this an indication of downgrading the importance of this line item and why?

**Mr. Benn:** Can the Hon. Member please repeat her question?

**Mrs. Holder:** I was observing that no provision has been made since 2008 for Road Safety. Item 1206900 – Bridges, am I in the right place, Agency 31? [**Member:** Yes] I want to know if this is a policy decision or are we likely to see allocation made for road safety somewhere else? It is still a very important and needed activity. It is part of the responsibility of the Government to deal with road safety.

**Mr. Benn:** I am not sure if the Hon. Member is relating to the same item we are speaking of. We have at the moment some roll over projects with respect to road safety. I did make mention of them. I think I spoke of the lighting programme that is going on and the barriers you see being erected on the East Bank, West Bank and in various areas. This is an ongoing project that came over from last year that is on the way.

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. Williams you wanted to ask a question?

**Mr. M. Williams:** Yes please Sir, but I will defer to the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Chairman:** I am asking you. If you wish to ask a question just ask it. You cannot defer to anybody. I choose who speaks. You either ask your question now or forfeit the right.

**Mr. Williams:** I will ask the question Sir. With respect to line item 1401800 Reference 103 in the Profiles. Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough at some point in the future to provide us with a list of the roads in the various Regions? And with respect to Region 3, since there is a difficulty in obtaining bills of quantities for monitoring purposes, would the Minister be kind enough to supply the bill of quantities for Region 3?

**Mr. Benn:** I am prepared again to give the listing of all the roads, the completion of roll over projects in Regions 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. There is the rehabilitation of the Albion main access road, the construction of the Mahaicony branch road, construction and rehabilitation of new roads in Regions 1 to 6 and Region 10 totaling \$1.44 billion dollars. There is no difficulty in obtaining the bills of quantities. None! You can get them and we are distributing them to the Regions and the N.D.C. I am happy too if you would join in keeping an eye on what is going on as well.

**Mr. Williams:** I am happy for that Sir.

**Mr. Benn:** In fact, I believe Mr. Chairman, that we had circulated the listing in December.

**Mr. Williams:** I am thankful for that Sir because the Regional Councillors on the Opposition benches within the Region do not get those bills of quantities until after the roads would have been completed.

**Mr. Benn:** I will make sure you personally get a copy along with the other people. There is no difficulty in making that information available to you.

**Mr. Williams:** Grateful for that Sir. May I ask the Hon. Minister at...

**The Chairman:** Do you want to come back later?

**Mr. Williams:** No Sir, the microphone was malfunctioning. I do not know if the Minister of Works is responsible for that too.

**Mr. Chairman:** He is actually.

**Mr. Williams:** With respect to line item 2700400, Profile 113, last year the Budget profile said that the \$55 million had been provided for the acquisition of roll-on/roll-off ferries. This year we have design and construction of two roll-on/roll-off ferries. Two questions: Could the Hon. Minister say if we are talking about two different things here? And secondly, could the Hon. Minister say that since ferries were not procured, where could we find the accounting for the \$55 million provided last year?

**Mr. Benn:** The moneys the Hon. Member is referring to was not spent last year. We are spending right now, specific and national cost in relation to the design of the ferries. The ferries are not off the shelf items. The ferries are being built and specifically designed to our conditions. This has seen teams coming from China. It will also result in a couple of our people going to China as well to confirm and work with the Chinese specialist with regard to the design and finalisation of those designs and parameters for the ferries. The conditions in the Essequibo - draught consideration being the problem - means that ferries could not be off the shelf items.

**The Chairman:** Mr. Desmond Fernandes, Mr. Corbin indicated to me that he will be happy to defer to you so you can ask your question now. You do not have to defer to the Leader. I will leave Mr. Corbin for last because he will have a series of questions.

**Mr. Fernandes:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. Line item 1401800 - could the Minister say which road works are to be done in Region 1 and which are the new roads to be rehabilitated in this Region?

**Mr. Benn:** These are rehabilitation of new roads. I do not have the listings of the roads right now with respect of Region 1, but I can provide that to you.

**Mr. Scott:** Sir, under the \$40 million multipurpose... [Member: Line item, man!] ...dealing with Administrative Programme 311 where you have the Construction of the Multipurpose Centre at Unity. The Minister said that his Ministry is constructing the building and then hand it over to the Ministry of Local Government, but this Ministry also does constructions if you were to check Agency 13. I was wondering why it is necessary for the Ministry of works to do a job that will eventually fall under the aegis of the Ministry of Local Government.

**Mr. Benn:** We normally do all of the designs for buildings in the Regions either directly or by having it contracted out. I did say that we have a number of engineers. We now have two architects who came out of our programme from Cuba who are working with the Ministry and doing wonderful work. They are being challenged to do work all over the country with respect to buildings. They are doing the work now for the Mdm. Minister at Onverwagt and there are lots of other things that they are engaged in. We have the capacity to give services throughout the country and that really is the reason.

**Mr. Corbin:** Line item 1207200 refers us to Project Profile 96. Having regard to the purpose of a project profile, would the Minister agree that what he has here provides absolutely no information and is of no assistance for us to know how this huge sum of \$365 million will be spent? Would he be good enough to treat this National Assembly with some courtesy in this matter?

**Mr. Benn:** I am sorry that the Hon. Member would think that I would be discourteous to the National Assembly. The item refers to the activities of the Work Services Group. The breakdown in respect of their issues:

- \$271 million for salaries;
- \$51 million for vehicle operating cost;
- \$7.4 million for utility cost;
- \$36 million for other operational expenses.

The Work Services Group is now merged with the Sea Defence and all the works in respect of roads, bridges, designs - everything - is being done out of that engineering group. That is what relates to the \$365 million.

**Mr. Murray:** That same line item 1207200. Would the Minister agree that the Work Services Group continues to be a department within the Ministry of Public Works and Communications?

**Mr. Benn:** It is a project execution unit within the Ministry.

**Mr. Murray:** If that is the case could the Minister explain why this item finds itself under capital expenditure which is to meet salaries and other costs? Why is this not put within the framework of the Ministry itself and given line item positions in the various categories of expenditure relating to the current expenditure of the Ministry? If not, why did he not choose to put it as a subsidy or contribution to local organisation if it stands outside? Surely this is a nebulous position and is not one that is satisfactory from the point of view of parliamentary accountability.

**Mr. Benn:** The unit was set up under donor funding under whom much of its work is related to same. We have again brought the projects in this form to the Hon. House.

**Mr. Murray:** Could the Minister say why if this is done by donor funding that there is no specific financing here identified in the Budget? It is clear from what he says that all of this expenditure is being borne by the Government of Guyana and therefore there could be no valid reason for not having it on-line position in the Ministry?

**Mr. Benn:** I did say that the overwhelming majority of the work that they do is related to donor funding. I did not say that this is donor funded. If you see here it is national funds. The overwhelming bulk of the work they do is related to donor funding with respect to roads, bridges, sea defences or whatever.

**Mr. Murray:** Would the Ministry not agree that there are a number of Governmental agencies that have project execution units within them, but who are financed with on-line items within the Ministry? What makes this particular Work Services Group so special? It is all current expenditure. I cannot understand this. Could you please explain why current expenditure for a unit that falls within your Ministry is being handled under capital expenditure in this way?

**Mr. Benn:** I think I did try to explain that these are counterpart funding related to foreign funded projects.

**Mr. Murray:** With great respect Sir, to the Hon Minister, these are funds being borne by the Government of Guyana for setting up a project execution unit within the Ministry. I see no specific finance for this entity and therefore this entity, I put to the Minister, should properly come within the line item responsibility and accountability by the Ministry since these are all current expenditure. It bloats the capital expenditure unnecessarily and misrepresents the current expenditure by the Ministry. That is what it does by handling it in this way.

**Mr. Benn:** I am advised that this is the procedure for all similar type projects and that these are the counterpart funding in respect of regard to the activities for internationally funded projects.

**Mr. Norton:** Mr. Chairman I wish to turn to line item 2700100 - Reconditioning/Construction of Ships - where it is noted that the cost to dock and rehabilitate the MV Baramani is \$80 million. Then at item 2700200 - Reconditioning of Ferry Vessels - the cost is \$100 million. Now I want to turn to the acquisition of a new ferry at item 2700400...

**Mr. Benn:** Mr. Chairman?

**Mr. Chairman:** We have not had the question as yet.

**Mr. Benn:** I would not be able to answer the question because he is making a fundamental mistake. The Docking and Rehabilitation of the Baramani is not \$80 million, but is \$25 million assigned to it. I am just correcting him.

**Mr. Norton:** I do not know what the Minister is saying, but when we look at line item 2700100 the cost is \$80 million. When you look at the next item 2700200 the cost is \$100 million. When we look at item 2700400 the cost for a new ferry is \$32 million. I am asking the Minister why is it that rehabilitation of the two ferries costs \$180 million when you can get two new ones at \$32 million. Why do we?

**Mr. Benn:** Any day I could get two new vessels for G\$32 million I would be very happy. I did say in answer to that specific question before that \$32 million relates to the design cost for the vessel. The \$30 million is specific, being a grant from China, and \$2 million associated with national cost. The Hon. Member may not have the specific detail. The Docking and Rehabilitation of the Baramani is \$25 million and \$55 million is allocated for the Acquisition of

Spares. In respect of the other vessel, I think he quoted the Malali, \$60 million is assigned for Docking and Rehabilitation with an associated \$40 million for spares for that class of vessel.

**Mr. Chairman:** We have to move on Hon. Members. We are running out of time.

**Mr. Williams:** With respect to line item 1600200 - Hinterland/Coastal Airstrip Profile 114 - since no work has been done with respect to Leguan Airstrip and since works would have started with respect to Wakenaam Airstrip in the second week of February 2010, could the Hon. Minister say firstly when he estimates that these two airstrips would be completed? And secondly, how does he reconcile the representation by the citizens of these two islands that they do not need airstrips on these two islands?

**Mr. Benn:** The Hon. Member did say that we have started work on the completion of the Wakenaam Airstrip. In respect of the construction of the Leguan Airstrip, we are still working on acquiring land with the requisite parameters to establish the aerodrome there. So that acquisition is being done now.

**Mr. Williams:** What about the question about your estimated time of completion with respect to both projects? In addition to that, I did not say that you started work on the completion. I said you started work period in the second week of February. And before you rise to answer, the reason I asked these two questions is because this is the second year that budgetary provision is being made for these two airstrips.

**Mr. Benn:** Work has started at the Wakenaam Airstrip recently. We expect an end of April date for its completion. I did say that with respect to the Leguan Airstrip, land acquisition issues are still a problem. The land has to have the right parameters for the construction of the aerodrome; specifically you have to have land which is not too low, has the right geography and other characteristics for the establishment of an aerodrome. Hopefully, we would be able to finish construction this year for Leguan as well. The reason that this project went on for a couple of years was specifically because of the land with the correct inherent characteristics for the creation of aerodromes.

**Mr. Williams:** Last year we were told by the Hon. Minister that relevant studies would have been completed before a determination is made with respect to construction of the airstrips. How



is it now in 2010 the Hon. Minister comes to the National Assembly to say that they have not yet acquired lands, but have determined what cost would be incurred with respect to construction of the airstrip?

*6.01 p.m.*

**Mr. Benn:** The design specifications and costing are fairly well known for these types of airstrips. The studies were done as I said, but you had to acquire the lands from the owners of the land. These are not public lands, these are private lands. That really was the issue.

**Mr. Corbin:** Sir, I know you are looking at your clock, but I am sure we will not have as many questions in the other areas. So we will make up. I would ask all the questions here under profiles 99, 102 and 103. I am going with the profiles because that is the fastest way to deal with it, and 107 which is covered by a number of items there. It should be easy to find.

I take the first one at profile 99 which according to the profile deals with the expenditure of \$1.7 billion for a number of projects. Again, the way I understand a project profile is supposed to be prepared, is to enable Members of this House to follow in some coherent way what the plans of the Government are in relation to specific projects. Again, I must protest the manner in which these profiles are presented which is certainly not in a manner that can enable us to monitor what is being done. Now we have \$1.7 billion and there are four projects here, bridges, and the Timehri to Rosignol road, etc. I do not want to waste time on the preliminaries. How much money is to be spent on each one of them? Secondly, whether the Minister when he answers the question of the Timehri to Rosignol area, is in a position to say if he has a detailed list of the bridges and so on that will be done and their cost? As it is here, we cannot really follow it. I hope it can proceed in this manner, Sir?

**Mr. Chairman:** Let him answer the first question.

**Mr. Benn:** We are doing what is called the Bridges Rehabilitation under the Transport Infrastructure Rehabilitation project which is supported by the Inter-American Development Bank (I.D.B.). There are two lots in respect of the contractual works for the bridges rehabilitation and this is going on at the East Coast Demerara and on the East Bank of Demerara, mainly. For Lot A and Lot B, the total amount of moneys which are specific, cost is \$671

million. For bridges rehabilitation under Lot B, those are local costs at \$61.5 million. Supervision cost for these two items, Lot A and Lot B, amount to about \$130 million and studies on designs for the Lot B was \$28.7 million. We will, since it is being demanded, provide a long list of all the bridges which are being done. I must say, this includes the bridges at Buxton which for reasons we all know could not have been done at the time we were doing the work on the East Coast of Demerara.

Let me apologise for the project extent, Timehri to Rosignol area. If we did not put Rosignol in, perhaps we would not have been able right now to put in the bridges at Buxton and a few other structures along the East Coast.

This stretch of road along which the work is being done is Timehri to Rosignol. Under items 2, routine maintenance is \$119 million. These are national funds. Traffic safety and civil works which I think is related to some question which was asked earlier is \$172 million. Under item 4, there is the rehabilitation of the Black Bush Polder Road and civil works at \$574 million with a supervision of \$22.5 million and an associated audit for these at \$2.1 million. So the total sum for all of those is \$1.78 billion of which \$180.6 million is national cost. The \$1.6 billion is internationally funded.

**Mr. Norton:** Profile 140-1700 - Construction Rehabilitation of Bridge, specifically the East Coast Railway Embankment. Could the Hon. Minister say if any study was done to see if it makes sense to put new bridges rather than to rehabilitate the existing bridges?

**Mr. Benn:** The bridges along the embankment have been assigned specifically to the persons who have expertise in those types of bridges - the people at the Demerara Harbour Bridge. I think we have some \$20 million assigned this year. There are some, particularly the one just before the University of Guyana (U.G.), in which some work is going to be undertaken just now. The bridges will be maintained and issues relating to further inputs will come out in the studies which will be done this year.

**Mr. Norton:** Mr. Chairman, unless the Hon. Minister did not hear the question, I am asking a simple question: if a study was done to determine whether it is more feasible or economical to rehabilitate the bridge as they exist, or is it more economical to put new concrete bridges? I am merely asking if that study was done.

**Mr. Benn:** I did say that we have assigned responsibility for maintaining and advising on these bridges to our experts at the Demerara Harbour Bridge. We will not assign funds when we still have bridge elements which could be replaced and reused on those bridges. When the appropriate time comes that we have the money to change the bridges completely and build concrete bridges, we will do so. I do not think that time is here just yet.

**Mr. Corbin:** Given the project profile heads already, I would like the Minister to note them; profiles 103, 106, 107 which deals with works on the highway. Those heads in particular, all of them suffer from the same deficiency of the question I asked a moment ago. That is, examining the profile, there is no way one is in a position to monitor it. To save the Minister that time he spent here in this National Assembly, I would ask whether he would not agree that if he prepares a proper project profile it will save him having to get up so often. And when he would undertake in relation to those specific projects that I have mentioned, present to this house a proper project profile or some details on all those projects. Because as they are here, we are in no position to monitor what is going on. All of it is clouded in bulk expenditure.

**Mr. Benn:** I am prepared to rise as much as the Hon. Member would want me to answer rational questions. I said to the Hon. Member before that we will give detailed listings of all of these projects. I think we were also asked about the estimates of the projects. I said we will give those as well. I cannot take a position that the project profile itself is inadequate. If we attempt to put it in these documents, we will have to double or triple the size of the documents we already have. In any event, whatever we put up here, we will be asked for the same thing in three different ways. I am saying here again that I am prepared to give every bit of information with respect to all of these bridges and roads and so on that you are interested in and anything that you require.

**Mr. Murray:** I just have one item on which I would like to ask a question. Item 1100-100 - Demerara Harbour Bridge. Is the Minister aware as I am sure he is that this National Assembly recently passed a law that gave responsibility for the operation, management and maintenance of the Demerara Harbour Bridge to a statutory body? In the circumstances, could the Hon. Minister explain to the National Assembly what is his rationale for assigning the execution of the project to rehabilitate the bridge to the Ministry itself and not to this body?

**Mr. Benn:** The sum of money \$700 million will go to the Demerara Harbour Bridge as a grant. I thought there was a suggestion maybe that the agency itself would have been able to garner funds on its own to pay for this level of expense in terms of capital works with rehabilitation, but this sum of money is for the servicing of pontoons at \$145 million. Are you not interested now? I am prepared to stand up and call all of them out. Do not now be disinterested when I am prepared...

**Mr. Murray:** Perhaps I did not explain myself well enough to the Minister. I did not ask the Minister whether this was a grant or a loan to the Demerara Harbour Bridge Corporation. I asked him why if there was this statutory body, is the Ministry of Works the executing agency for this project and not the statutory body? It is no point giving them responsibility without authority. When you execute the project and you hand it to them, if there are deficiencies they always have the room to come back to you. However, if you give them both responsibility and authority to execute the project, then the onus is on them and there is no fallback position. Why did you choose to not let them be the executors of this project? The project profile identifies the executing agency as the Ministry of Public Works and Communication.

**Mr. Benn:** These moneys are a subvention to the Demerara Harbour Bridge Corporation and they will be executing the project.

**Mr. Murray:** I am grateful to the Hon. Minister and what he says makes absolute sense. May I therefore suggest to him that he amends the project profile so that we can see the executing agency as the Demerara Harbour Corporation? Thank you very much.

**Dr. Austin:** Mr. Chairman Project code 140-1800, project profile 103. I would like to know what roads would be completed in Canje and what new roads would be completed construction in Region 6? That deals with subsection 1 and 4 of description of projects. I would also like to have the cost of the road to be done in Canje and the new one, if any, in Region 6.

**Mr. Benn:** We are rehabilitating roads in East and West Canje. We will provide the Hon. Members on the other side with a detailed listing of all of these roads.

*Programme: 311 – Ministry Administration - \$9,903,829,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Programme: 312 - Public Works - \$9,457,039,000**

*Programme: 312 – Public Works - \$9,457,039,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Programme: 313 - Communication and Transport - \$402,000,000**

*Programme: 312 - Communication and Transport - \$402,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Agency: 04 Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 041 Ministry Administration - \$752,229,000**

*Programme: 041 - Ministry Administration - \$752,229,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Programme: 042 - Foreign Relations - \$1,640,236,000**

*Programme: 042 - Foreign Relations - \$1,640,236,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Programme: 043 - Foreign Trade and International Cooperation - \$98,483,000**

*Programme: 043 - Foreign Trade and International Cooperation - \$98,483,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 041 - Ministry Administration - \$5,502,000**

**Mr. Norton:** This is not a question. It is just a reminder. Could the Minister recall that last year he would have agreed that it is not a monument, that it is a marker, and had agreed that it would at this time manifest itself as a marker rather than a monument?

*Programme: 041 - Ministry Administration - \$5,502,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Programme: 042 - Foreign Affairs - \$26,500,000**

**Ms. Kissoon:** Mr. Chairman I was standing.

**Mr. Chairman:** Well you have to make yourself visible.

**Ms. Kissoon:** You do not look over here too steady.

**Mr. Chairman:** Well you have to make me look.

**Ms. Kissoon:** Not in Parliament, Sir. Line item 6302 - could the Hon. Minister say what type of training will be done and who will benefit?

**Mr. Chairman:** Could you repeat the question Hon. Member? This is in relation to 042, Capital Expenditure.

**Ms. Kissoon:** No, I thought we were at page 150.

*Programme: 042 - Foreign Relations - \$26,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates*

**Agency: 44 Ministry of Culture Youth and Sports**

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 441 - Ministry Administration - \$155,638,000**

**Mr. Chairman:** Mrs. Backer would you like to ask something or are you going out?

**Mrs. Backer:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. Line item 6116 - Contract Employees - the staffing detail tells us that there are forty-four employees contracted. My first question on this head is: Are these persons there by virtue of a written contract or are they month to month oral contracts that they are employed by?

**Dr. Anthony:** These persons all have written contracts.

**Mrs. Backer:** Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to tell us what is the maximum length of any of the written contracts? In other words, are they all there by annual contracts or do some

have two or three year contracts or do some have a six month contract? I want to get the range of the written contract.

**Dr. Anthony:** It varies from one to three years.

**Mrs. Backer:** Are you then saying Hon. Minister that the minimum contract would be for a period of one year?

**Dr. Anthony:** Yes, some people would have one year contracts.

**Mrs. Backer:** The minimum will be one year. There will be no one working there on a six month or an eight month contract? I just want to be very clear.

**Dr. Anthony:** Not under that category, but you do have under the temporary employment.

**Mrs. Backer:** No, I am on contracted employees.

**Dr. Anthony:** So under contracted employees, you have people who are there for one year.

**Mrs. Backer:** One year and above?

**Dr. Anthony:** Yes.

**Mrs. Backer:** Thank you very much. Could you indicate to the Hon. House whether there is any contracted employee who is over the age of sixty?

**Dr. Anthony:** Yes, we do have persons who are over the age of sixty.

**Mrs. Backer:** Could you say how many of the forty-four contracted employees are presently over sixty years of age?

**Dr. Anthony:** I do not have that information at hand, but I can easily provide that to you afterwards.

**Mrs. Backer:** Could the Hon. Minister indicate to us the nature of the employment carried out by the two temporary employees? This is line item 6117.

**Dr. Anthony:** Those will be one Cleaner and a Finance Clerk.

**Mrs. Backer:** Mr. Minister if you divide the figure by two, then on an average they are getting \$64,000 monthly. If one is a Finance Clerk and a Cleaner, could you give us the figure for the Finance Clerk? Then we could work out the Cleaner.

**Dr. Anthony:** Apart from the payment of the salary, it also caters for leave and gratuity of the two persons.

**Mrs. Backer:** Okay let me ask the specific question. What is the monthly wage of the Finance Clerk? That should be at hand!

**Dr. Anthony:** Could I provide you with that information a little later? We have it somewhere here, but I am not locating it.

**Mrs. Backer:** I would have been surprised if he had it, Sir. Line item 6281- Security Services, which is the security service that is being employed?

**Dr. Anthony:** This is Brans Security Guard Service.

**Mrs. Backer:** Could the Minister in finishing this head, indicate what building(s) is/are guarded by this security? We are under Ministry administration.

**Dr. Anthony:** This is for the Ministry's Head Office, the CARIFESTA Sports Complex and the Annex in Middle Street.

**The Chairman:** Mrs. Backer is there any more questions?

**Mrs. Backer:** No Sir.

**The Chairman:** Oh, I thought we were waiting on you.

*Programme: 441- Ministry Administration - \$155,638,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Programme: 442 - Culture - \$422,514,000**

**Ms. Kisson:** Mr. Chairman, under line item 6302 - Training including scholarships - could the Hon. Minister say what type of training will be done and who will benefit? This is under culture.



**Dr. Anthony:** This is for the students of the Burrowes School of Arts and also for dance and drumming workshops.

**Ms. Kissoon:** Could the Hon. Minister say which schools will be benefiting from the workshops?

**Dr. Anthony:** For the National School of Dance we will be spending \$1.5 million and on the Burrowes School of Arts, we will be spending \$3.5 million.

*6.31 p.m.*

**Mrs. David-Blair:** Is the Minister saying to us, this evening, that none of this money will be allocated to the Interior Regions that has culture groups?

**Dr. Anthony:** Mr. Chairman, persons who are trained at the Burrowes School of Art come from all over the country and so are the persons from the National School of Dance. In fact, at the dance school, we have persons who would come from the Interior and we would also give them stipends.

**Ms. Selman:** Account Code 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings - could the Hon. Minister say which buildings have been identified for such maintenance?

**Dr. Anthony:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. We have a number of buildings slated for maintenance. We will be doing work at the Umana Yana where we are projected to spend \$970,000; at the Walter Roth Museum we will be spending \$1.3 million; at the Museum of African Heritage - \$350,000; at the National Museum - \$1.6 million; at the National School of Dance - \$1.4 million; at the National Archives – \$1,050,000; at the Burrowes School of Art - \$1.2 million; and the National Cultural Centre - \$1.5 million.

**Ms. David-Blair:** Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Member, Ms. Africo Selman, pepped me just now but I was meaning to ask the Ministry my supplemental question which is, can he say which regions are sending groups out, and, specifically from Region Seven, what are the names of the groups.

**Dr. Anthony:** If the Hon. Member is referring to training, this varies from year to year; it depends on what requests we have and we will facilitate those requests.

**Mr. Chairman:** Do you have the regions which are sending children to these particular programmes for this year?

**Dr. Anthony:** It varies; if we have requests we facilitate those requests.

**Mr. Chairman:** So, all the requests have not come in as yet?

**Dr. Anthony:** No.

**Ms. Selman:** Account Code 6116 – Contracted Employees - could the Minister say what is responsible for the increase and could he provide me with the categories of workers who have been contracted?

**Dr. Anthony:** There are 17 additional persons under Contracted Employees and they vary from a Director of Culture to Clerks in the Ministry.

**Mrs. Backer:** Mr. Chairman, on the same page, Account Code 6116 – Contracted Employees - could the Hon. Minister share with us the designation of the highest paid contracted worker and what that person earns per month.

**Dr. Anthony:** The highest paid position under that sector is the Director of Culture and the salary range is \$303,000.

**Mrs. Backer:** Per month?

**Dr. Anthony:** Per month.

**Mr. Patterson:** Mr. Chairman, Account Code 6321 – Subsidies to Local Organisations - under Details an amount of \$100 million is allocated to the Arts and Developments Fund. Can the Minister explain how one accesses that fund and who are the intended beneficiaries for 2010.

**Dr. Anthony:** Those can be accessed by applying to the Ministry.

**Ms. Selman:** Account Code 6291 – National and Other Events - could the Minister provide the National Assembly with a calendar of National and other events as provided for by this sum?

**Dr. Anthony:** Mr. Chairman, there are a number of events that the Ministry would normally organise and facilitate and these include: Mashramani, Black History Month, Independence

celebration, Arrival Month celebration, Museum Week, Emancipation celebration, we do a number of outreaches to various regions when it is Heritage Month. There is a long list of events, and perhaps, if the Member is interested I could supply the dates and the long list of events that the ministry runs.

**Mrs. Backer:** Hon. Minister, under the same Head – 6291 – we see a figure budgeted for \$65 million for National and Other Events. My first question is whether this figure includes any outstanding payments for Carifesta X or have all payments been satisfied.

**Dr. Anthony:** Mr. Chairman, I thought we were dealing with this year's Estimates. Carifesta is long gone. What we have as I explained... and if the Member would like I can give her a breakdown of the events for this year and the sums of money allocated to them which makes up the \$65 million.

**Mrs. Backer:** Mr. Chairman, I am asking if the \$65 million, which is for National and Other events, includes any payment that is still outstanding for Carifesta X.

**Dr. Anthony:** Mr. Chairman, this year there is no Carifesta in Guyana. It is not a National event and therefore it is not budgeted under this sub-head.

**Mr. Murray:** Mr. Chairman... [Mr. Chairman: You have the answer there Mr. Murray. It is not budgeted for; Carifesta X is not budgeted for, so the answer to the question is no.] You are answering for the Minister, Sir?

**Mr. Chairman:** No, but the Minister said that the \$65 million is for events of this year, not any other time. So, one can reasonably assume from that that he means that the money - \$65 million - does not relate to any events which have taken place in the past. That is how I understand what he is saying. If you wish more clarity, you can proceed and ask for clarification.

**Mr. Murray:** Maybe, we do not have your discerning skills, Sir, to see what the Minister has said. The question I was about to ask the Minister is, is he aware that there are a number of times in which debts of previous years are carried forward into succeeding years and paid in succeeding years. In that context, it would not be an unreasonable question to ask whether the monies allocated for this year include payment of debts in relation to previous years. That was the question.

**Mrs. Backer:** Sir, if I may, for the benefit of the House, I was one of the persons who participated in Carifesta and has not been paid; it is a miniscule sum but I have not been paid and that validates my question because I am concerned. The Minister knows that because he complimented me for getting involved in Carifesta X.

**Mrs. Holder:** Thank you very much. I would like to refer the Hon. Minister to Account Code 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to local organisations. I want to ask the Minister whether he requires any reports on the performance of these entities to which you make the subventions in an effort to upgrade the operations of the Non Government Organisations (N.G.O.s) or is the money just given without a requirement of a financial report or a report of what they have done. Do you get any information at all?

**Dr. Anthony:** Under 6321, we normally make an allocation to the Theatre Guild, we have not received any report from the Theatre Guild but they had some difficulty in terms of comprising their Board and things like that. I suspect, now that they are in order, we will be getting those reports on a regular basis. Before this allocation is released we will ask them for this information.

**Mrs. Holder:** You only mentioned the Theatre Guild, Hon. Member. You have here, as well, Sports and Arts Development Fund, Rupununi Weavers Society and the National Trust. Do you get reports from all these entities?

**Dr. Anthony:** The Rupununi Weaver's Society, I am advised, is no longer functional. The others – the National Trust – have requested the Auditor General's Office to do their audit and I am sure I will be getting those reports shortly.

**Mrs. Holder:** Mr. Chairman, there is the biggest item there for \$100 million, the Sports and Arts Development Fund.

**Dr. Anthony:** Yes, that too. Once we get those reports I can make them available.

**Mr. Carberry:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. Going back to Account Code 6242, I noticed that the Minister mentioned that among the buildings to be maintained is the National Archives. I am not sure whether this building is completed as yet and whether it is open for business. Could the Minister help me?

**Dr. Anthony:** What is the question?

**Mr. Carberry:** You mentioned that among the buildings to be maintained is the National Archives. My understanding is that this building is still incomplete but if it is completed... you could tell us if it is completed and now being used.

**Dr. Anthony:** Mr. Chairman, for the Hon. Member's information, the building is functional. I think I reported that some time ago in the House. Sometime ago I told you about the space capacity that we have. In my debate during the Budget, I spoke about new materials that we had been collecting from the court and so forth, so it is operational. We also talked about plans to have a resident Archivist from the History Department of the University of Guyana (UG) being a part of that. I do not know why the Hon. Member thinks it is not operational. The Archives is functional, it is operational, people have been utilising its services and you are welcomed to come and visit.

**Mrs. Backer:** For Account Code 6281 – Security Services - I am correct in assuming Hon. Minister that Brans Security Service is the brand name... 6281, the sum of \$41 million \$924 thousand dollars, is it Brans Security also?

**Dr. Anthony:** I am advised that Brans Security is the security agency.

**Mrs. Backer:** Could you for completeness sir, share with us what buildings would be encompassed under this head.

**Dr. Anthony:** Again, Mr. Chairman, it is the Umana Yana, the Walter Roth Museum, Museum of African Heritage, National Museum, National Dance School, National Archives, Burrowes School of Art and the National Cultural Centre.

**Mrs. Riehl:** Mr. Chairman, I wish to ask the Hon. Minister... under the heading 6116 – Contracted Employees – I see there has been a jump there and an increase by 17 employees receiving \$20 million. There is a jump in the figure of \$47 million last year to \$67 million, an increase in \$20 million and an increase in the number of employees by 17. Could the Hon. Minister say what category of contracted employees caused this that he is intending to employ this year?

**Dr. Anthony:** I think I answered that at the beginning but I can repeat it again for the Hon. Member. Let me repeat it for clarity. We have 17 new employees in the following categories: Four Theatre Attendants, a Stage Supervisor, four Cleaners, an Instructor, an Anthropological Assistant, a Handyman, a Store Keeper 11, a Director of Culture, an Office Assistant, a Museum Attendant and an Electrician.

*Programme: 442 – Culture – \$422,514,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Programme: 443 – Youth – \$371,716,000**

**Mrs. Backer:** For Account Code 6252 – Maintenance of Bridges - we have a figure moving from 489,000 to \$2,750,000. Could the Hon. Minister share with us where the bridges are?

**Dr. Anthony:** These are two bridges: one would be at the New Opportunity Corp (N.O.C.) and we will be spending \$550,000 and the other at the Sophia Training Complex and on that we will be spending \$2.2 million.

**Ms. Selman:** Under Account Code 6255, what other infrastructure would be maintained?

**Dr. Anthony:** Under this category we will be doing the fences at Sophia and Smythfield, we will also be doing a concrete walkway and doing some repairs to the Kuru Kuru Training College. Additionally, we will also be doing some weeding and cleaning at the Madewini Camp Site.

**Ms. Kissoon:** For agency Code 6302 – Training – could the Hon. Minister say what type of training will be done, how many young people will be trained and will these young people be from all ten regions.

**Dr. Anthony:** Under the area of training, we will be spending most of this money to run our summer camps and we normally do them in all regions. This would serve more than 7000 young people in all regions in Guyana.

**Mrs. Backer:** Mr. Chairman, Account Code 6381 – Subsidies and Contributions to local organisations. When we look at page 389, we see that the Boy Scouts get \$120,000 per year, which is not a big figure, but the Girls Guilds gets only \$50,000. I had asked this already. Could the Minister explain to the House the apparent discrimination between the Boy Scouts and the

Girl Guides? Is it to do with the number of members because I am aware that the Girl Guides have more members now, I am speaking from personal knowledge, than the Boy Scouts.

**Dr. Anthony:** I hope that the Member does not feel that we have gender discrimination. It is based on request and it is also based on their activities, the membership and who they are serving. I am happy if we can get the Annual Report and if it shows that you are doing much more activities and have a broader geographical spread, then we will certainly look at your subvention.

**Mrs. Backer:** I do not know where the “you” comes in, Sir; I did not indicate that I am a member of the Girl Guides Association because if I am to do that, next year they might get nothing at all but I will communicate it to them and I hope that next year we will see an increase.

*Programme: 443 – Youth – \$371,716,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Programme: 444 – Sports – \$167,743,000.**

**Ms. Kissoon:** Under Account Code 6321 – Subsidies and Contribution to local organisations – could the Hon. Minister say which local organisations will benefit and how much each will get?

**Dr. Anthony:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. This is for the National Sports Commission.

**Mrs. Backer:** Account Code 6281 – Security Services - could the Minister share with us the name of the security services and the buildings that they are providing security for under this Head.

**Dr. Anthony:** The security service here is for the National Stadium and it is provided by R.K. Security Service.

**Mr. Patterson:** Mr. Chairman, can I return to 6321 which is Contributions to Local Organisations with a similar question as my colleague, Mrs. Holder? Is this agency required to give audited reports, are you in receipt of any audited reports prior to disbursing of funds and would you make that available to us? This is for 6321 and the subvention of \$100 million.

**Dr. Anthony:** By the National Sports Commission’s Act the agency is required to provide an audited report and once those are provided, we can make them available.

**Mr. Patterson:** Can I rephrase that? When last has this agency, which you plan to provide another \$100 million to in subvention, provided the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports with an audited report?

**Dr. Anthony:** I do not have the updated report but I can certainly get that to you, Hon. Member.

**Mr. Patterson:** This is my final supplemental question. Will the Hon. Minister be making a subvention to this agency without receiving any audited reports or will you now mandate that the audited reports be laid before you make your subventions?

**Dr. Anthony:** We would require the agency to submit the audited reports but I want the Hon. Member to understand that we cannot shut down the agency because we have a number of persons who are currently employed. So, we will work with them to ensure that they comply with what is in the law.

**Mrs. Holder:** Excuse me Mr. Chairman. Hon. Minister, the question is really very specific. Have they ever submitted an audited report? Ever!

**Dr. Anthony:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, there have been audited reports by this agency but the Member asked when last this was done. I said to him that I will give him that exact date.

*Programme: 444 – Sports – \$167,743,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 441 – Ministry Administration – \$8,800,000.**

**Mrs. Backer:** Mr. Chairman, Project Code 4501600 – National Trust – it could be found on page 149, the same observation made by the Leader: we have three items listed but because there is no breakdown, we are constrained to ask the Minister the breakdown of how much will be spent on the rehabilitation of the windmill, construction of walkway and so on. Sir, could I suggest that next year, I see that the Minister of Finance is here, that at the side, in the same small way, they can put \$3.5 million it would help. Then we would not have to ask these very elementary questions; but we do not know, so we have to ask.



**Dr. Anthony:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. For the rehabilitation of the Hogg Island windmill we will be spending \$5 million; for the construction of benches at Fort Nassau we will be spending \$800,000; for the bench at Fort Zeelandia we will be spending \$750,000; for the construction of a walkway at Fort Zeelandia we will be spending \$2.3 million; a fence at Fort Nassau we will be spending \$4.7 million; for the refurbishment of the Dutch Heritage Museum we will be spending \$120,000; and construction of a boat landing at Fort Nassau we will be spending \$147,000.

**Mrs. Backer:** Is the Hon. Minister aware that a few of those items mentioned is not on the project profile at all?

**Mr. Williams:** Mr. Chairman with respect to Project Code 4501800 and reference to Project Profile page 152. Mr. Minister, with specific reference to the construction of athletic track, could you advise this National Assembly whether the premises identified for the construction of this athletic track is the Uitvlugt Community Centre Ground. If it is not, could you kindly tell this National Assembly which property is under consideration for this track?

**Mr. Anthony:** There are five areas which were considered and the one that is right now engaging more detailed study is the Uitvlugt Community Centre Ground.

**Mr. Williams:** Mr. Chairman could the Hon. Minister then say whether from the Estimates before us, a specific sum has been identified with respect to acquisition of the property and if so, could he tell the National Assembly what is the sum.

*7.01 p.m.*

**Dr. Anthony:** No sum has been budgeted for the acquisition of any property.

**Mr. Williams:** Sir could the Hon. Minister tell this National Assembly whether the guiding principle behind the Uitvlugt Community Centre ground being the one attracting the most attention at the moment and likely to become the final choice, has more to do with the need for an athletic track for our young people or whether it is heavier weighed by the need to pump moneys into GuySuCo?

**Dr. Anthony:** Mr. Chairman I am at a lost to answer the Hon. Member. The athletics track is something that this Government wants to see built. We have consulted with the athletics

community. This is something everybody has been clamouring for and we genuinely want to see such a facility built in our country. What absurdity is this!

We have made a very concerted effort to get this track built. One of the chief considerations that we have in mind is to ensure that we have adequate space for the development of the facility. Uitvlugt ground is one of the largest grounds that we have. Just to give you a better perspective of what we are trying to do; you have an eight lane track with a football field in the middle, and you want to develop the stands so that you can have a complete facility. This is something that will be an ongoing development; it is not going to be a one-off. We are going to lay the track now, but we are contemplating how we develop an entire facility. It will also require parking. If you look at most of the grounds that we have, you do not have enough parking space, you do not have the other amenities. So those are the kinds of considerations that we have in mind to ensure that we have a proper facility being developed. So I do not know what the Hon. Member is thinking about.

**Mr. Williams:** Mr. Chairman I believe that this country requires such a facility but at the same time is the Hon. Minister aware that Guyana Sugar Corporation is the owner of the Uitvlugt Community Centre ground. Is he also aware that the facility is currently in a very run down state and cannot be properly maintained by the Guyana Sugar Corporation therefore my question is whether the heavier weight consideration has to do as I asked with the young people or with the issue of relieving GuySuCo of: (a) Administrative and Maintenance Expense with respect to maintaining the ground or whether it is our young people who is the target group that is considered to be of primary importance to this country? That is my question.

**Dr. Anthony:** Again perhaps the Hon. Member did not listen to me properly: (1) we want to develop the facility to provide a proper athletics track in this country and that is one of the best places currently under consideration. I hope that you can understand that. And what I find very strange for the Representative of Region 3 - I think the Representative of Region 3 should be supporting an initiative like this - I find it very strange that you being one of the persons representing your constituency would like to have a facility like this in your Region. It would not only benefit the people in your Region but people across this country. You should be proud to have a facility like that in your Region.

**Mr. Chairman:** I am not going to permit this any further. You have a question Hon. Member?

**Mr. Williams:** Yes.

**Mr. Chairman:** Please ask it.

**Mr. Williams:** My final question with respect to this line item 4501800 is this; could the Hon. Ministry say to the National Assembly that if per chance the Uitvlugt Community Centre ground becomes the venue for this athletic track, whether that property would have to be bought for that for that purpose? Since it is my understanding that the agency responsible for ownership and management of that track will have to have that property invested in its name before some other things can happen.

**Dr. Anthony:** If that becomes the place that we are going to be building that facility then we will have the necessary discussions with GuySuCo to acquire the facility.

**Ms. Selman:** Could the Minister identify the sum? Mr. Chairman the same line item, could the Minister identify the sum for each item; completion of swimming pool, upgrading or sport facilities, etc?

**Dr. Anthony:** For the completion of the swimming pool we have \$274 million allocated; for the construction of the athletics track \$92.5 million; for the rehabilitation and upgrading of Collgrain Pool \$6.4 million; for construction of a fence at the National Sports Commission facility at Woolford Avenue \$3 million; for the construction of a guard hut at the National Gymnasium \$735,000; for the purchase of sport gears and equipment \$8.8 million; and purchase of gym equipment another \$7 million.

*Programme: 441 – Ministry Administration - \$8,800,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Programme: 442 – Culture - \$58,380,000.**

*Programme: 442- Culture - \$58,380,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Programme: 443 – Youth - \$25,000,000**

*Programme; 443 - Youth - \$25,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Programme: 444 – Sports - \$392,500,000**

*Programme: 444 – Sports - \$392,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Agency: 41 Ministry of Education**

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 411 - Main Office - \$393,290,000**

**Ms. Ally:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. I was anxious to ask a question under item 6111 – Administration - but the zeros would not permit me. Since it is Administrative and Main Office I would have like to ask a question under that. Nonetheless, under item 6116 - *Contracted Employees*: I would like to ask the Minister to list the positions of the seven Contracted Employees.

**Mr. Baksh:** Yes we have the Permanent Secretary, Personal Assistant to the Minister, Secretary General UNESCO Secretariat, Technical Facilitator to the Minister and two Confidential Secretaries one for the Permanent Secretary and one for the Minister.

*Programme: 411 - Main Office - \$393,290,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Programme: 412 – National Education Policy - Implementation and Supervision - \$137,007,000.**

**Ms. Ally:** On item 6116 - Contracted Employees - it would seem when we look at this code that Government is moving away from some fixed establishment and focusing on Contracted employment. Could the Minister explain the rationale for this? Since this move in terms of figures is from \$19.6 M to \$28.8 million.

**Mr. Baksh:** Well I know other Ministers would have answered that question about the need for contracted employees, in terms of having highly qualified persons come in here at special remuneration and specialist in the various fields.

**Ms. Ally:** I take it that, that is the rationale for the employment. Could the Minister say, what are the two new positions under this head of contracted employees?

**Mr. Baksh:** Senior Education Officer and a General Clerk.

**Ms. Ally:** Item 6284 - Other - could the Minister give us some explanation as to what 'Other' entails?

**Mr. Baksh:** This caters for internet and water for staff.

**Ms. Ally:** Item 6301 - Education Subventions and Grants - a sum of \$11 million is budgeted under this head. Of this I see a \$5.9 million budgeted for the T.V.Ed. Council. Could the Hon. Minister tell us; whether there is a stipend for the Chairman of the T.V.Ed. Council? If so how much, and whether this is paid monthly or as per meeting?

**Mr. Baksh:** Yes a stipend is paid monthly both to the Chairman of T.V.Ed. Council and the Members of the Council.

**Ms. Ally:** Part of my question is unanswered. May I repeat; how much is being paid to the Chairman?

**Mr. Baksh:** The Chairman receives \$7,000 per month and the Members \$5,000 per month.

*Programme: 412 - National Education Policy – Implementation and Supervision - \$137,007,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Programme: 413 – Ministry Administration - \$1,253,864,000**

**Mr. Corbin:** Items 6301 - and 6302 - Training (including Scholarships) - listed there for Education Subvention and Grants \$78, 710,000 and Training (including Scholarships) \$74,160,000, I want to know whether this Grant or this item is used in any way to assist schools that may have any projects such as tours, etc for educational purposes. Whether funds can be drawn from this head or are there any such plans this year for that?

**Mr. Baksh:** Yes this is for the Subvention to the Caribbean Examination Council.

*Programme: 413 - Ministry Administration - \$1,253,864,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Programme: 414 – Training and Development - \$854,975,000**

**Ms. Ally:** Item 6241 - Rental of Buildings - 2009 Budgeted was \$8.6 million – Revised to \$4.609 million, why was the budgeted sum not spent? And why the proposal to spend what could not have been spent in 2009?

**Mr. Baksh:** The increase here caters for V.S.O.s (Volunteer Service Officers) in 2010, rental for 8 V.S.O.s. We expect some more V.S.O.s coming in, so we have to rent more quarters for them.

**Mr. Corbin:** Now that we are on the other head, items 6301 and 6302, is it possible under this head since the last one was for CXC, whether this head can be used to assist in financing tours of students for educational purposes?

**Mr. Baksh:** No this heading here caters for increase students' intake at the Cyril Potters College of Education as stipends.

**Mr. Corbin:** Is the Minister aware that students of Queens College according to what I have read in the papers and from information I have asked some parents, have raise more than \$2 million to support a project of going on a tour of educational nature and that they have been deprived of this opportunity by the Board. And if so whether he has delegated all of his powers to the school Boards to interfere with educational opportunities? Not hearsay, I have documents.

**Mr. Baksh:** Can I ask the Hon. Member under what head or line item is he referring?

**Mr. Corbin:** Education and Training because I understand that this was in collaboration with a counterpart college in Trinidad to do with the CXC examination and a particular part of Caribbean Studies which required the students to have certain kinds of exposure. That programme was part of the academic programme to see certain activities in Trinidad and Tobago. So it is not unrelated to training and I am asking whether the Board has taken over the functions of policy. The Board of this school has taken over the function of policy and taken over the powers of the Minister that they can thwart certain legitimate educational pursuits, training.

**Mr. Baksh:** This training refers to the National Literacy Programme, there is no sum budgeted here in this heading/programme 414 for students of schools going overseas for training programmes. There is no heading here in this budget for that purpose.

**Mr. Murray:** Even if there is Mr. Chairman my question to the Hon. Minister is, would the Minister be willing to consider including under this heading opportunities such as the one being put to him in which students and their parents have raised the money to go on an exchange programme in Trinidad and Tobago for exposure. Whether it cannot be accommodated if he exercises his innovative skills to allow for them to come here and to permit this to take place?

**Mr. Baksh:** It cannot come under this line item. Perhaps next year I can raise that possibility with the Minister and the Ministry of Finance.

**Mr. Murray:** My question is; is the Minister prepared to exercise his innovative mind to bring this about on this occasion because we have students stuck right now. Could you not approach your colleague while we break so by tomorrow we can hear something about this?

**Mr. Baksh:** Regrettably Mr. Chairman I am unable to do that at this point in time. But I have taken note of the concerns expressed by the Hon. Members and I will be intervening with the Board on this matter.

**Mr. Murray:** Thank you very much.

**Mr. Corbin:** Thank you.

**Ms. Ally:** Item 6281 - Security Services - could the Hon. Minister say what is responsible for a \$5 million increase for security services in 2010. And I do not know if you would take the other one on 6284 – Other - very short. Please give some examples of what ‘*Other*’ will be spent for under item 6284?

**Mr. Baksh:** Actually it is not an increase over the budgeted sum for 2009; it is a decrease from the budgeted sum. The revised 2009, yes it is an increase on that one, so it is not an increase on the budgeted 2009. And why we spent a smaller sum, the revised was lower because many of the security firms have been short changing and we have set up monitoring systems to ensure they have not been given the number of man hours required. Therefore we do not pay them when they do not do that. This increase for the cost for preparation and marking exercise for the C.P.C.E. examinations and re-sits, invigilation, internet service, etc.

*Programme: 414 - Training and Development - \$854,975,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Programme: 415 – Education Delivery - \$ 4,076,204,000**

**Ms. Ally:** Items 6221-6224 and 6243, in all of these details I note that the revised sum in all cases are less than the budgeted sum. Yet many schools are not in receipt of grants. Could the Minister say whether the administrative mechanisms are in place in all regions to ensure that all schools receive the relevant grants?

**Mr. Baksh:** I must inform the Hon. Member that these heading here under Programme 415 - Education Delivery - relates to the technical institutes and not the school system. The Government Technical Institute, the Carnegie School of Home of Economics, the G.I.T.C. and the Kuru Kuru College, it does not relate.

**Ms. Ally:** I would have thought that schools would have come under Education Delivery so I wonder if you can advise me.

**Mr. Baksh:** The schools come under Programme 2.

**Ms. Ally:** Well those questions Sir, are relevant for Programme 2 then.

**Mr. Baksh:** I can facilitate and answer. The grants for Georgetown schools come under the Georgetown education office. As I understand it they have made all arrangements for the grants to be paid out to the schools which would be based on the size of the schools.

**Ms. Ally:** Item 6281 - Security Services - could the Hon. Minister explain the vast increase from the revised to the budgeted sum for this sector.

**Mr. Baksh:** This is for Security Services of all the technical institutes as I mentioned we have a listing here, also the Georgetown offices and the University of Guyana.

**Ms. Ally:** Supplementary Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister say whether there is any consideration for a 24 hours guard service for the other schools in the country.

**Mr. Baksh:** Yes several schools do have 24 hours guard service, others do not they only have a guard service in the evenings. It is a very high cost service but we are looking at increasing and



improving the security in the Georgetown schools. We are looking at that, so we can have some 24 hours services at the Georgetown schools.

**Ms. Ally:** Just a word to the wise with the increased vandalism and violence in schools it has become absolutely necessary for all the schools to have a 24 hours guard service.

**Mr. Baksh:** I will take note of that very good suggestion from the Hon. Member.

**Mr. Williams:** Mr. Chairman line item 6272 - Electricity Charges - could the Hon. Minister say what set of events or circumstances would have obtained in 2009 to cause an increase from the budgeted allocation of \$55 million to \$163 million that would not obtain in 2010, hence the reduced projected sum for 2010.

**Mr. Baksh:** This increase payment here is for arrears to the Guyana Power and Light Company.

**Ms. Kissoon:** Could the Hon. Minister give details for – Other - at items 6284 and 6294?

*7.31 p.m.*

**Mr. Baksh:** Item 6284 - increase for marking of additional examinations and the grade assessment system, grade 2, 4 and 6 assessment systems. And for examination; is for the rental of furniture and the movement of furniture from one location to another and especially for secondary schools and repairs to furniture in secondary schools.

**Ms. Kissoon:** Let me just clarify, I thought I heard you told, through the Chair, that you told Ms. Ally just now that this allocation here is for the Technical Institutes but you are saying now that the primary schools and the secondary schools examinations are cover under that. I do not understand! Could you please clarify?

**Mr. Baksh:** Yes, 6284, we do have for some furniture, remember that these examinations are held in the school system, the grade two, four and six as I said examinations so we have covered some schools under this category.

**Mr. Murray:** Mr. Chairman, I am addressing item 6115 – the staffing details, the Minister shows a reduction in semi-skilled operatives and unskilled of some 97 persons. Could the Minister please explain to the National Assembly what causes such a substantial reduction in that

category of employees between 2009 and 2010? As a follow-up under temporary employees the Minister has increased the number from 88 to 168 an additional 80. Is it that the Minister contemplates taking these persons off permanent employment and making them temporary employees?

**Mr. Baksh:** Item 6115 refers to acting teachers in the system who we have put into the Cyril Potter College of Education (C.P.C.E.) under the pre-service programme, so there has been a reduction there. Some cleaners who would have left the job we replaced them under the category temporary/part-time employees, a number of cleaners will come under that. In respect to 6117 - temporary employees, these will represent part-time staff at the various Technical Institutes because many of the programmes have been run in 2009 - 2010 on a part-time basis. We have full-time and part-time. A large number of part-time lecturers now represents under temporary employees.

**Mr. Murray:** Sir, is the Hon. Minister saying in respect of 6115 that once a person goes to the Cyril Potter College of Education from an institution that that person is no longer reflected as employed by that institution, is that what he is saying?

**Mr. Baksh:** If they go to the pre-service, they are in receipt of a stipend.

**Mr. Murray:** They are in receipt of a stipend. So from a legal point-of-view they lose their employment in the agency in which they were employed previously.

**Mr. Baksh:** Remember these are acting teachers; they are not in the permanent establishment.

**Mr. Murray:** But Sir, under semi-skilled operatives and unskilled, these people as I understand it are permanently employed persons. Could the Minister confirm for me that that is not the case? Because that is what my understanding is. Secondly, is the Minister also saying that all of the 97 persons reflected as a reduction in the category falling under 6115 are persons who have gone off to the C.P.C.E.?

**Mr. Baksh:** No, I have not said that, I said they are acting teachers who will not be in the permanent establishment. They will not lose their service when they go in to C.P.C.E. but there are also cleaners, labourers etc.

**Mr. Murray:** “*No man*”! When I asked you just know, because we are talking about... don't tell me about cleaners, we are talking about semi-skilled operatives and unskilled.

**Mr. Baksh:** Yes.

**Mr. Murray:** Yes, but you did not tell me that, what you told me is, there was a category of teachers who were going to the C.P.C.E., how many of this 97 then. Let me ask you a very specific question. How many of this 97 are teachers who have been taken from their institutions and being sent to the Cyril Potter College of Education? How many of this 97.

**Mr. Baksh:** I do not have that number.

**Mr. Murray:** I just do not understand this.

**Mr. Baksh:** I told you that there are teachers and there are also cleaners in this category here.

**Mr. Murray:** I am asking you to break it down!

**Mr. Baksh:** I do not have the breakdown

**Mr. Murray:** But you are coming here to answer questions on these estimates and you have your main adviser why you cannot tell me that? I believe this is fudging the issue, because you originally started out by giving me the distinctive expression that the majority of these people were in fact persons who are going off to the C.P.C.E. but when you found yourself cornered and having to give a commitment you decided that you will be sharing the category of these people and made some of them cleaners.

**Mr. Baksh:** From the very beginning I said that there were teachers and there were cleaners in this category involved here.

**Mr. Murray:** Yes Sir, I repeat, could the Minister tell me when he would tell this National Assembly how many of these 97 persons, because I am worried about the reduction of these numbers and whether he has send them out to pasture. How many of these 97 persons are in fact teachers that have been sent off to the C.P.C.E. and how many of the others are cleaners and unskilled types? That is what I would like to get.

**Mr. Baksh:** Well, I could supply that information in one week, as you have asked.

*Programme: 415 – Education Delivery - \$4,076,204,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Programme: 411 – Main Office – \$2,012,000.**

**Ms. Ally:** Thank you Mr. Chairman, 1209800, could the Hon. Minister say whether this sum provided takes care of adequate production and distribution of the modules. Mr. Chairman, during my budget presentation I did make reference to the inadequacy of the modules for the G.B.E.T. programme. I would like the Minister to say whether this sum takes care of adequate production and distribution of these modules.

**Mr. Baksh:** Could the Hon. Member repeat what is the line item? The number of the line item

**Ms. Ally:** 1209800 Capital Estimates, Guyana Basic Education Training.

**Mr. Baksh:** Yes, this is for the Distance Education Programme under the Guyana Basic Education Training programme where we develop the modules for the secondary school's curriculum. So we have the sum here budgeted for that programme.

**Mr. Corbin:** Is that adequate for the programme?

**Mr. Baksh:** Yes, because this was a sum, a fixed sum as an extension of the G.B.E.T. programme, we got an extension for two years and it is correspondent and that there was a fix sum and we had to operate within that budget.

**Mr. Williams:** Mr. Chairman, with respect to line item 2604300 - Technical Vocational Project - reference 138. Does the Hon. Minister recall that prior to 2009, \$71.1 million had been spent on consultancy work with respect to this project and \$550 million would have been budget last year and no work whatsoever has been done with respect to construction of the technical and vocational centre in Regions three and five. Could the Hon. Minister of the circumstance explain what happened and in terms of the Project being kicked off and in terms of the \$550 million budgeted last year?

**Mr. Baksh:** Mr. Chairman, there are difficulties of obtaining the requisite lands for these two projects and we had to make some changes to the sites identified, we have now decided at Park Mahaicony and Leonora that is fixed before, Leonora is okay, so you see we want both projects

to go hand in hand. We did not start the Leonora project. We are now ready, all details have been completed and is in the process and we will be signing up tomorrow with the contractor for the commencement of works, for both sites.

**Mr. Williams:** A follow-up question Mr. Chairman. Based on the projection that tools and equipment will be procured, is the Minister suggesting through this allocation, projected spending on equipment and tools, that these two facilities will be completed in the year 2010.

**Mr. Baksh:** Yes, we are very optimistic that it should be completed. That is the expectation that it should be completed by the end of the year. The expectation, there might be other contingency factors.

**Mr. Elliot:** Mr. Chairman, line item 1206000 – President’s College - a sum of \$15 million is allocated here for the rehabilitation of roof to block one and dormitory 2 and 3. I would like to know if this sum is adequate to complete the roof based upon the nature of the work at the college.

**Mr. Baksh:** Yes, the works covered here, we have the estimated cost for the repairs of the roof and the walls for the dorms, \$5 million, repairs to the roof of block one and the staff houses, \$6 million, structures of water storage tank, \$4 million, those are the basic items.

**Mr. Williams:** One final question Sir, line item 1206200 - building; National Library - the 118 project code. Hon. Minister I am requesting that the Hague Library, be included in your proposal for this year, when I checked the profile I did not see it, I am wondering why it is not provided for since that building has no windows, it is occupied by bats, rodents and looks outdated.

**Mr. Baksh:** Yes, the National Library determined the priority of the projects and they have decided to do some work now on the Corriverton Library, perhaps next year we can look at the Hague Library.

**Mr. Murray:** Mr. Chairman, Are you taking item 415 as well, are we taking them all?

**Mr. Speaker:** 411 only.

**Mr. Murray:** Thank you sir.

*Programme: 411 – Main Office – \$2,012,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Programme: 412 – National Education Policy – Implementation and Supervision – \$1,000,000.**

*Programme: 412 – National Education Policy – Implementation and Supervision – \$1,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Programme: 413 – Ministry Administration – \$4,200,000.**

*Programme: 413 – Ministry Administration – \$4,200,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Programme: 414 – Training and Development – \$93,000,000.**

**Ms. Ally:** Mr. Chairman, 1205900 - Nursery, Primary, and Secondary - I have read the profile at page 127, but I would like to know (a) which Nursery, Primary and Secondary Schools in those areas that are mentioned: (b) what quantity of Information Technology (I.T.) equipment will be placed in each of the schools: (c) has there been any provision for I.T. assistance for those schools.

**Mr. Baksh:** Yes, we have a range of schools here: Tucville Secondary, St. Mary's High Secondary, Patientia Secondary, extension of St. Thomas Moore Primary, construction of the Sophia Nursery School and construction of I.T. Laboratory. We will be building Secondary Schools at Leonora and at Sands Creek, and renovation of the science lab at Richard Ishmael Secondary School, those are the main projects.

**Ms. Ally:** Mr. Chairman, 1206700; could the Hon. Minister tell us what amount will be spent on the rehabilitation of buildings and the amount that will be spent on equipment.

**Mr. Baksh:** Yes, the construction of the office building will be \$1.1 million; furniture \$4 million; library books \$5 million; purchase of science equipment \$6 million; purchase of two photocopiers \$3.7 million; and purchase of a fax machine \$100,000.

**Ms. Ally:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to take the Minister back to my second question under 1205900, when I ask what and the quantity of I.T. equipment would be placed in each of the schools.

**Mr. Baksh:** This would vary but it would not be less than 15 computers in any one laboratory, 15, 20, 25, 30 depending upon the size of the school.

*Programme: 414 – Training and Development – \$93,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Programme: 415 – Education Delivery – \$1,857,630,000.**

**Mr. Murray:** Mr. Chairman, Education Delivery – could the Hon. Minister inform this National Assembly where a breakdown can be found of \$1.857 billion under 2010 for education delivery since the items that follow for Nursery, Primary, Secondary Schools, President’s College, Craft Production Design, University of Guyana (U.G.), Turkeyen and University of Guyana (U.G.), Berbice do not add up to less than \$500 million.

**Mr. Baksh:** Mr. Chairman, they all will have to be added up under heading 415. You have a whole listing here. If you go through the items you will see they are listed here.

**Mr. Murray:** Alright, I stand corrected.

**Dr. Austin:** Mr. Chairman, project code 1205900, profile 127, I would like to know where in Rose Hall Town and in Fyrish the I.T. lab will be completed, specifically where?

**Mr. Baksh:** No, and I do not think we have identified where, this is in construction of I.T laboratories. We have identified the expansion of the laboratories to accommodate the success maker in the primary schools and we have a listing of all of those schools.

**Dr. Austin:** Mr. Chairman, it is stated here, description of project at section 2, Rose Hall Town and Fyrish, so I wanted to know if the schools were identified.

**Mr. Baksh:** No, I would not be able to give you that information now.

**Ms. Ally:** Mr. Chairman, 2603500 – School Furniture and Equipment - this is being classified as critical for regions 1 to 10. (1) Could the Hon. Minister say whether a survey was done for all the

schools and (2) whether the requirement will be fulfilled to ensure that at minimum all the schools now will have adequate furniture?

**Mr. Baksh:** Yes, this is not for the Georgetown schools, this is national and it relates to purchase of equipment and purchase of teachers' furniture in particular and furniture for students at different levels.

**Ms. Ally:** Mr. Chairman, my specific question was whether a survey was done for all the schools and secondly, whether the requirement will be fulfilled to ensure that at minimum all schools will now have adequate furniture?

**Mr. Baksh:** The Hon. Member would know we are at present conducting a survey of all the schools in Georgetown to assess needs for the next school year. We are doing some advance planning, for the next school year. We procured lots of furniture for the first term of schools to satisfy the needs of the system, I am not saying 100% but we are already doing a survey for the schools of Georgetown and the Regions have also been requested, forms have been sent out, a needs assessment form for all of the schools of the region. So we are basing it on an assessment of needs by regions, by schools.

**Ms. Ally:** Supplementary Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister say whether the schools will get what is needed rather than what the Ministry alone feels they should get?

**Mr. Baksh:** Mr. Chairman, this will depend upon the provision in the budget. In no one year we will be able to satisfy all the needs of all the schools. This is a programme from year to year and we will get there.

**Dr. Austin:** Project code 2603500 profile 137, I would like to know which schools in Region 6 would receive tables, benches, chairs and desks.

**Mr. Baksh:** We do not have a listing, Hon. Member at this point in time.

**Ms. Ally:** Mr. Chairman, 2604300 could the Hon. Minister indicate which of the Technical Institutes and P.I.C.s will benefit from the allocation and the amount for each?

**Mr. Baksh:** This is profile number 136, I assume that you are asking under that one 138, yes these have been for the construction of the new technical institutes in Regions 3 and 5.



**Ms. Ally:** Second part of the question Sir, which of the P.I.C.s will benefit from the allocation.

**Mr. Baksh:** Under the Caribbean Development Bank (C.D.B.) project we are receiving some sums to retool the P.I.C.s and to purchase equipment, which are outdated.

**Ms. Ally:** Which some getting...

**Mr. Baksh:** For the P.I.C.s and we will have to quickly do an analysis I believe for the P.I.C.s

**Ms. Ally:** Could the Hon. Minister say which are the school facilities will be improved and the schools that will benefit and secondly, could the Minister give some of the expectations for the provision of child friendly classrooms in the hinterland institutions.

**Mr. Baksh:** Hon. Member could you let me know the line item you are referring to?

**Ms. Ally:** 2604300, training and equipment, tools and equipment

**Mr. Baksh:** The technical and vocational education which I mentioned, which is 2604300.

**Mr. Chairman:** Any other questions?

**Ms. Ally:** Mr. Chairman, the project profile at page 140, Education for All Fast Track Initiative. It says: provision for child friendly classrooms that is why I am asking you Sir. Could you say what are some of your expectations for the child friendly classrooms in the hinterland for their institutions?

**Mr. Baksh:** This child friendly schools which are piloted... which is only being conducted in one region and that is region 2. All primary schools in region two and then we will roll it out to the other regions

**Ms. Ally:** What are the expectations?

**Mr. Baksh:** Oh, the expectations of course, it will increase or improve attendance in schools, enhanced performance with greater attendance and so on

**Ms. Ally:** What do you expect them to do?

**Mr. Baksh:** Yes, attendance in school should improve better relationship between the teachers and the students. We expect performance to improve and so on.

*Programme: 415 – Education Delivery – \$1,857,630,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the estimates.*

*Assembly resumed*

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members this brings us to the end of our business for today.

**Mr. Hinds:** Mr. Speaker. I propose that the House be adjourned until tomorrow at 2.00 p.m.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Assembly now stands adjourned until tomorrow 25<sup>th</sup>.

*Adjourned accordingly at 8.05 p.m.*