

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORT

[VOLUME 7]

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FOURTH SESSIONS OF THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY OF THE SECOND PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE
CONSTITUTION OF GUYANA

17th Sitting

2 p.m.

Wednesday, 20th December, 1972

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

His Honour the Speaker, Mr. Sase Narain, J.P.,

People's National Congress

Elected Ministers

The Hon. L.F.S Burnham, S.C.,
Prime Minister

(Absent)

Dr. The Hon. P.A. Reid,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of
National Development and Agriculture

The Hon. M. Kasim, A.A.,
Minister of State for Agriculture

The Hon. H.D. Hoyte, S.C.,
Minister of Works and Communications

The Hon. W.G. Carrington,
Minister of Labour and Social Security

The Hon. Miss S.M. Field-Ridley,
Minister of Information, Culture and Youth

(Absent – on leave)

The Hon. B. Ramsaroop,
Minister with Portfolio and Leader of the House

The Hon. D.A. Singh,
Minister of Health

(Absent)

The Hon. O.E. Clarke,
Minister of Home Affairs

(Absent – on leave)

The Hon. C.V. Mingo,
Minister of State for the Public Service

The Hon. W. Haynes,
Minister of Co-operatives and Community Development

The Hon. A. Salim,
Minister of Local Government

Appointed Ministers

The Hon. S.S. Ramphal, S.C.,
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Attorney-General

The Hon. H. Green,
Minister of Public Affairs

(Absent)

The Hon. H.O. Jack,
Minister of Mines and Forests

The Hon. Miss C.L. Baird,
Minister of Education

(Absent)

The Hon. F.E. Hope,
Minister of Finance and Trade

Dr. the Hon. K.F.S. King,
Minister of Economic Development

The Hon. S.S. Naraine, A.A.,
Minister of Housing and Reconstruction

Parliamentary Secretaries

Mr. J.G. Joaquin, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Finance and Trade

Mr. P. Duncan, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of National
Development and Agriculture

Mr. J.R. Thomas,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Information,
Culture and Youth

Mr. C.E. Wrights, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Works and Communication.

Other Members

Mr. J.N. Aaron
Miss. M.M. Ackman, Chief Whip
Mr. K. Bancroft
Mr. N.J. Bissember
Mr. J. Budhoo, J.P.
Mr. L.I. Chan-A-Sue
Mr. E.F. Correia
Mr. M. Corrica,
Mr. E.H.A. Fowler
Mr. R. J. Jordan
Mr. S.M. Saffee
Cde. R.C. Van Sluytman
Cde. M. Zaheeruddeen, J.P.
Cde. L.E. Willems

Members of the Opposition

People's Progressive Party

Dr. C. Jagan,
Leader of the Opposition
Mr. Ram Karran,
Mr. R. Chandisingh
Dr. F.H.W. Ramsahoye, S.C.

Mr. D.C. Jagan, J.P.,
Deputy Speaker
Mr. E.M.G. Wilson
Mr. A.H. Hamid, J.P.
Opposition Whip
Mr. G.H. Lall, J.P.
Mr. M.Y. Ally
Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P.
Mr. E.M. Stoby, J.P.
Mr. R. Ally
Mr. Balchand Persaud
Mr. Bhola Persaud
Mr. I.R. Remington, J.P.
Mr. L.A. Durant
Mr. V. Teekah

(Absent)

United Force

Mr. M.F. Singh
Mrs. E. DaSilva
Mr. J.A. Sutton

(Absent)

Independent

Mr. R.E. Cheeks
Mr. E.L. Ambrose
Mrs. L.M. Branco

OFFICERS

Clerk of the National Assembly – F.A. Narain, A.A.

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

The National Assembly met at 2.p.m.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

Prayers

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS**PRIVATE BILL****GUYANA AND TRINIDAD MUTUAL FIRE
INSURANCE COMPANY, LIMITED**

Mr. Saffee: On behalf of the Guyana and Trinidad Mutual Fire Insurance Company, Limited, of 27, 28 and 29 Robb and Hincks Streets, I present to the Assembly a Petition to have introduced a Private Bill to amend the Guyana and Trinidad Mutual Fire Insurance Company, Limited Ordinance Chapter 210.

The Clerk read the Petition as follows:

“GUYANA

PETITION

To the Honourable Members of the National Assembly of Guyana

THE HUMBLE PETITION of the Guyana and Trinidad Mutual Fire Insurance Company, Limited whose registered office is situated at 27, 28 and 29 Robb and Hincks Streets, Georgetown, respectfully sheweth as follows:-

1. Your petitioner is a Company incorporated in Guyana by virtue of the Guyana and Trinidad Mutual Fire Insurance Company Ordinance, Chapter 210 of the Laws of Guyana.

2. Your petitioner underwrites insurance in several of the Caribbean territories through branches or agencies established therein. By reason of its place of incorporation, Your petitioner considers that it would be beneficial to its interests should it establish subsidiaries in the territories wherein it underwrites insurance having regard to the varying laws applicable in such places.

3. Your petitioner is the promoter of a Bill which seeks to enable Your petitioner to establish subsidiaries in the Caribbean territories aforementioned and which also seeks to have the Company's machinery keep pace with the modern requirements of commercial practice.

4. Your petitioner is desirous of having the said Bill introduced in the National Assembly and enacted by the Parliament of Guyana.

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that the Honorable Members of the National Assembly may be pleased to allow Your Petitioner to proceed.

And your petitioner, as in duty bound, will every pray.

Signed this 25th day of November, 1969.

THE GUYANA AND TRINIDAD MUTUAL FIRE
INSURANCE COMPANY, LIMITED

(Sgnd.) C.J. Betteencourt-Gomes

Chairman

(Sgnd.) G.U. Jaikaran

Director

(Sgnd.) E. O'Dowd

Director

(Sgnd.) A. Belgrave

Secretary

Petitioner."

Mr. Speaker: In accordance with Standing Order 57(4) I shall now put the question which is "that the promoters be allowed to proceed."

Question agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS – FIRST READING

The following Bill was introduced and read the First time:

Tax (Amendment) Bill, 1972 –

[The Minister without Portfolio on behalf of the Minister of Finance.]

PUBLIC BUSINESS**MOTION****APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE 1973**

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of supply to resume consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year, 1973 totalling \$277,712,944.

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: By agreement, we will proceed with the Head, Ministry of Mines and Forests. Page 98 to 101.

The Minister of Mines and Forests (Mr. Jack): Mr. Chairman, I wish to ask for three small changes as they appear on page 98, that in the increase of the post of Principal Assistant Secretary from one to two, the increase of the post of Assistant Secretary from two to three, and the post of Economist from one to two.

The Chairman: Hon. Members, there are minor amendments. Under the Establishment, with respect to items 23 and 24, the addition of one in each case, that is, one becomes two.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: I should like to speak on several subheads.

The Chairman: Please proceed. Will you please indicate the items as you go from page to page?

2.15 p.m.

Mr. R.D. Persaud: The item I would like to speak on is item (12), Chief Clerk, and very briefly, last year I urged that the post of Executive Officer should be created in this Ministry because there was one officer who had tremendous responsibility of co-ordinating a number of important operations within this technical Ministry. To my surprise, I was informed that instead of regrading the position of Chief Clerk to Executive Officer, the position of Chief Clerk has more or less been abolished and will now function under Senior Clerk. It means that an officer with about twenty-five years' service can no longer find a place in this Ministry and, indeed, an officer with about five years' service would be filling this position.

I am sure the hon. Minister would like to tell us why this change. One would have expected that with the job evaluation, the important function performed by this officer for a substantial number of years, 25 years, would have been taken into account and the officer would have been regarded to his proper position and properly remunerated, but I understand he has been transferred to another Ministry – unless the new position proposed by the Minister this afternoon will take care of this officer and he will be one of the Assistant Secretaries.

The next item I wish to mention is item (15), Conservator of Forests. I know the officer has resigned, when will the position be filled? Then, I go to the next page. On this page, I wish to deal with item (45), Geochemist, and (47), Geophysicists. With regard to the Geochemist, I understand this position is still held by an expatriate. I think a U.N. man is holding this position in the Ministry. Can the Minister tell us whether anyone is being trained to take over and to occupy this important position? I need not emphasize the importance of it because the Minister has capable technical advisers to point out the importance of this office.

Geophysicist. We have, not a United Nations appointee, but an expatriate. No aspersion, we are grateful to the expatriates for what they have done when we did not have technically qualified men, but will the hon. Minister tell us whether any steps have been taken to train someone to fill this position of Geophysicist?

Then we come to item (51), Inspector of Mines and item (52), Mines Officer. I advocated very strongly in the past that if there are six mining districts, it is only reasonable that in these districts, if our minerals are to be properly supervised so that we can received maximum benefit from them in terms of royalty, and indeed, so that smuggling which is rampant in these areas can be reduced, that this estimate for this so-called 1973 year of fantastic development, that efforts would have been taken in this Ministry at least to have enough officers to manage and supervise our mining districts. Unfortunately, this estimate only provides for three Inspectors of Mines. I wish to strongly suggest six, and would advocate that the Minister comes back to Parliament to increase the number of Inspectors of Mines for this Ministry.

Why I make this point. I make this point because the whole question of the production gold and what we receive from these mining districts have relevance to the people who are manning and supervising the districts. I have only to quote one figure to show the fantastic drop within the seven years of the P.N.C. Government. From 1957 to 1964, the production of gold was 48,366 ounces, form 1965 to 1972, under the P.N.C., this has dropped to 24,000 ounces of gold so that he P.N.C. Government is producing roughly half of what was being found and won under the P.P.P. Government.

In my view, the gold is there and we are finding the gold, but when the time comes to disclose what is found, this is where the Government is indeed losing because the area is not properly supervised, the people who are in charge of the areas are not competent people, as a result, the nation suffers and the government suffers. Let me quote from the 1970 Report to support this argument. There are also reports of gold and diamonds being won and not being declared. The person whose responsibility it is to prepare the Annual Report for this department

is making the same point which I made some three years ago in this House.

2.25 p.m.

In fact, it goes on to say at page 40:

“All these situations have resulted from the ineffectiveness”

A stronger word than I would have used –

“of the Interior Department in carrying out the functions of the Sub-Wardens and rangers which were transferred to that department against the advice of the Geological Surveys and Mines Department.”

I have no doubt in my mind that the advice of this department was sound, competent and well-considered advice. Probably the hon. Minister will be in a position to tell us this afternoon why the advice of this department was not heeded. It means to say that there is no cooperation between the Department of Geological Surveys and Mines and the Interior Department. What is being done here is technical advice is being separated from administration. To my mind they must go together and once they go together the Government will be able to get greater efficiency and better results from our minerals industry. In particular, gold and diamonds will be in a better position.

I, therefore, want to ask the Minister on this occasion to reconsider not my advice by the advice of his technical officers and so let the mining districts be supervised and, indeed, managed by the Department of Geological Survey and Mines.

I could refer the Minister to another bit of information, taken from the Report on the Geological Survey Department for the year 1971, I quote for page 38 of the Report:

“In the Mazaruni District the operations of Lampkin and Correia, the two largest operators, were at a standstill during the year on account of a dispute, ...”

I do not know who Correia is but I make the point that disputes fall under the jurisdiction of the Interior Department under the present arrangements because that Department is dealing with administration. Surely if there had not been this division and if everything fell under one department then this dispute could have been settled and because the settlement of disputes is not expedited we see a fall in production. At least, that is the technical reason given for the fall in production in the year 1970.

The Report goes on to state:

“The fall in the production of diamonds by 13,161.46 metric carate (36%) under the production of 1970.”

We can see that they point to the reasons of ineffectiveness, of inefficient administration, act of coordination, and then they make the vital point: the sum total is “a fall in production”.

I say today as I have said before that the Government is losing large sums of money. I do not wish to quote the figure. It probably is in the vicinity of millions in so far as our minerals are concerned and they Ministry of Mines and Forests is not geared at present to handle it. From the estimates it would appear that it will not be efficiently managed with the limited number of Inspectors of Mines to take care of all the smuggling that is going on in gold and diamonds.

I read in the newspapers that the Government arrested a man. But, how many have escaped without being caught or seen? There is that area of smuggling and, of course, there is the other area where there is under-declaration of the finds in both gold and diamonds. As I have said, during the P.N.C. term of office, 1967 to 1972, the production in gold is less than half of what it was during the P.P.P. regime.

There was also a lower production of diamond during this period. I know that the Minister can point to some increase during last year but that is not the over-all picture. I hope that the Minister will give heed to my contribution particularly as the Report has come out in support of my contention.

I now turn to items (67) and (68) under Drawing Office, I understand that there are two vacancies, one for Chief Draughtsman and one for Draughtsman. Will the Minister indicate whether these vacancies have been filled or whether steps are being taken to fill them? Probably the Minister will wish to consider making these officers Mobilee. At present these draughtsman are restricted to a particular department no matter their experience, no matter their service and no matter their competence. If the officers were Mobilee they would be able to move from department to department and receive what is due to them for the expert and technical services they render to this Ministry.

Item (98) on the next page, Responsibility Allowance. This is a new item with a provision of \$28,560. Probably the Minister will be kind enough to tell us about this since it is a new item.

I move over to page 101. The Forest Department and the whole operation of our forest industry fall on this page. *[Interruption.]* More or less. I am not dealing with capital expenditure figures. The point I wish to make is this: our forest resources are contributing but a fraction, a very infinitesimal sum, of what is should in view of our great potential and our resources in this field.

There are various types of problems, particularly in the forest industry. Let me make the first point for the small loggers. I understand they have been operating in the near areas. New trees are not being planted. As a result, within a short span of time the loggers will be compelled to go miles and miles away into the interior. There is no road; there are no transportation facilities. These loggers think that very shortly they will be put out of existence. Indeed, they

will be unable to earn.

Probably the hon. Minister is thinking for the bigger fellows who are operating in the forest industry, but I would like to ask him what will be the position of the small loggers. Undoubtedly an examination of the whole forest industry would show that they will be in a very serious position in a short time.

Let me move on to the whole question of the forest industry. This sector has not been attacked at all. In my view it remains untouched until now. The Government may probably tell us that in 1973 this will be done and that will be done. What I am saying is that over the years nothing has been done to improve the position of the forest industry. As a result, it has not contributed as it should to the economy and growth of the country.

2.35 p.m.

Now sir, there are many problems. For instance, shipping, which is a big problem. We do not a deep sea harbour. Probably the Minister will tell us whether the Government is considering this question which is so vital because the question of shipping and trans-shipping pose a tremendous hindrance to the exportation of our lumber. Unless this is done the people involved in this industry twill continue to face the difficulties of not finding ships to transport. I am told while some order are received for the export of our lumber and timbers although they are willing for export, there is no facility shipping; they have to wait they are told that a boat is coming now, and then another would not come until the next month, as a result they cannot even satisfy the small orders that are received.

We have ties and we have arrangements with Carifta countries. What is the Government doing to persuade our Carifta friends to buy its lumber and timbers from this country. We know that some of those countries use the soft wood as we would call it. But we have potential to satisfy a lot of their requirements, and I have a rough figure, I am told that they import over \$40

million from North American countries. Here it is we are buying a number of articles from Carifta countries, when these Carifta countries can trade on a reciprocal basis instead of buying from these North American countries. Something is radically wrong here. The time has come for the Government to be involved in serious negotiations with the Carifta countries so that they can place their orders with us.

Private individuals have been answering overseas orders, small as they are. But we need proper central grading systems for our various species of lumber and timbers. At the moment, each exporter has his own grading system, as a result the Minister I am sure will concede this afternoon that he has received complaints that the grading has not been to the satisfaction and there have been complaints of receiving inferior stuff. If we have central grading I have no doubt that this can be improved. There is an indication that during next year steps will be taken to formalise prices so to speak. This is a move in the right direction to avoid what we call the rat race or the competition of one man lowering the price to get a higher order. But you need to go beyond harmonizing the price; you need grading and you need continuity in the volume of production so that we can answer the orders. I concede that we are not producing enough to answer the requirements of the Carifta countries. But the point is we must take all the steps to ensure that our production improves, that there is adequate production.

Even in the area of furniture making people are moving away from some of the imported materials for furniture. Because the feeling is now that the steel, the chromium becomes rusty. If furniture was to be made out of our local wood even if it gets a bit old, each year you put on some polish and improve it. This shows that we have all the areas of improved production here, and I would urge the hon. Minister to look into all these areas.

Mr. Jack: Mr. Chairman, I do not know what is the experience of my hon. Colleague in this House when the debate was taking place, but for myself I wish to thank the hon. Member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud for having selected those particular items for discussion which allows me the opportunity of giving explanations not only to this House but to the nation in general as to

what my Ministry is doing. He has carefully selected those particular items which I would have wished to have spoken upon. Therefore I am glad that he has raised it first.

First of all, with regard to subhead 12, the Chief Clerk. We did in fact have a Chief Clerk who occupied the post which was in effect something of a dead-end. From that position it would have appeared he had very little prospects of promotion. That particular individual, I am told, has been transferred and now occupies a position where he is in line for the type of promotion which I am sure he richly deserves. In the meanwhile we are considering a re-organisation in the structure of the administration with regard to the Ministry so as to bring about a greater co-ordination between the various sectors of the Ministry – the two departments and the other aspects of the Ministry which we have to deal with. At the moment we have been holding discussions with the Public Service Ministry with regard to the proper structuring of the position pertaining to the Geological Services and the Forestry Department. It is expected early in the new year that this matter will be clarified with the appointment of a proper officer to take on the administrative aspects of the Geological Department which at the moment are carried out by the Commissioner of Geology and Mines who since the change from the position where we had the Commissioner of Lands and Mines to the position where we have a Commissioner of Geology and Mines. Since that change we have increased the burden upon the Commissioner of Geology and Mines, so we are going to take some of the administrative duties off his shoulders.

With regard to subhead 15, Conservator of Forests, it is true that the Conservator retired recently and the Deputy Conservator is now acting in that post and recommendations for filling the post have been made to the Public Service Commission.

Item 45, Geochemist. We have at the moment a Geochemist in training, Mr. Punwasi who is about to complete his M.Sc. I am told that he is earmarked for appointment upon completion of his studies.

With regard to the Geophysicists, we have two geologists in training, but they do not complete their course of studies for another two years, so we will not be in a position to make an appointment until then.

Item 51 and item (52). The position is that the Inspector of Mines is not a person who actually goes into the districts and carries out the functions of supervision. The person who does that is the Mines Officer, and we are about to appoint the three mines officers, one for the Mazaruni district, one for the Potaro district, and one to be stationed at Orinduik for the Rupununi district. The reason we are appointing three, and not six at the moment, is that those are the three areas in which there is mining activity at the moment.

It has been mentioned that the production of gold has dropped. This is a fact, but this was due to the fact that some time ago we had in this country a company known as the Consolidated Goldfields, a privately-owned capitalist enterprise which produced the bulk of the gold which was produced in Guyana. That company closed down and immediately there was a drop in gold production, which drop has not yet been made up. The department of geology is carrying out investigations with a view to introducing in the interior areas, a new method for winning gold, which would involve the utilization of certain degree of machinery which has not been used by porknockers up to now, and it is hoped later in the year, when plans to this end have been finalized, that we will be able to set up a pilot scheme which would then point the way to our porknockers as to how they may go into what one may call, the second phase of gold mining in this country.

The hon. member did make reference to parts of a Report coming from the Geological Surveys Department, and with regard to that I wish to state that with the introduction of Mines Officers, it is intended that they will take over some of the duties which were performed by the Interior Development Officers, and is a direct result of recommendations made to the Ministry by the Department of Geological Surveys.

The other item, item (67), there are two vacancies. Recommendations have been made to the Public Service Commission and we are now awaiting word with regard to the necessary appointments.

We come now to item (98), Responsibility Allowance, and I am happy to give the explanation which I am sure hon. Members already know, that as a result of my effort and his suggestion, we have introduced a system whereby geologists in the field would get during the time that they are in the field, a responsibility allowance of \$200 and the amount put here is to meet the cost of that particular item, which he and I both know this Ministry has been working on for some considerable time.

General remarks were made about the forest resources of the country, and what was termed the small contribution which our forests have been making. I think in broad terms one can say that this is true, but one should also recognise that up to quite recently the forest industry in this country has been in private hands, and it is only this year that Government as such entered into the production of forest products with the taking over of Guyana Timbers.

I do not accept the proposition that the small loggers are suffering. As a matter of fact, the number of small loggers far from decreasing has in fact increased, but a proposition was put forward to this House which, I think, I must take issue with, and that is, that new trees have not been planted and as a result, the loggers face a bleak future. The fact is that selective logging is what is done in this country and that makes it somewhat difficult for replanting to take place in the type of orderly manner that one would expect if one was to use the forest as it should be used, that is, taking down all species. However, it is my information that in countries where replanting has to be done, either the Government charges the leaseholders or the extractors for the cost of the replanting, or it is a condition of their holdings that they in fact do the replanting. In Sweden, where people own forests privately, they use the forests, cut down the trees and they themselves plant and replant year after year, so that they keep the forest very much as one keeps a farm.

If the hon. Member is suggesting that we should look into the question with a view towards making the leaseholders re-afforest the area, I am quite prepared to say that is something that should be done. If on the other hand, he is suggesting that we ourselves should re-afforest, then the cost naturally will have to be borne by the loggers and it may very well be that the loggers may find it difficult, unless they were a lot more efficient to bear the cost of the kind of replanting expenditure which will be necessary if we are to carry out this programme efficiently.

We were asked about the question of shipping. The Government at the moment is investigating the possibility of establishing a deep water harbour somewhere in the Essequibo River, and to this end, we have already managed to secure a preliminary report. Since then, we have studied the report, and are proceeding with further studies with a view to having this deep water harbour established as soon as possible, but it does appear that on the most optimistic estimate, such a harbour could not be constructed and completed before another six years.

In the meantime, we are also investigating the possibility of setting up an off shore facility, primarily for the use of our bauxite industry, but we have given thought to the prospect of having that facility enlarged for the purposes of accommodating our wood as well. At the moment, we are looking at various proposals made by certain companies with regard to the establishment of such an off-shore facility, and our officers are working out the financial and economic feasibility of this project. If we come up with the answer that it is in fact financially and economically beneficial to us, then I would say, before the middle of next year, we should have made a decision and, hopefully, we should have got started on this.

2.55 p.m.

The last question that was raised concerns the export trade in timber which, admittedly, could be vastly increased with proper organisation. Government, anticipating the question which was sure to come from the other side of the House, has determined to set up a Timber Marketing Board and has already discussed with the relevant members of the timber industry the

establishment of such a board. From the discussion which I personally have had I can tell this House that there seems to be broad agreement as to the necessity for such a board and I envisage the full co-operation of the industry when this board is set up, which should be early next year.

It is true that the Carifta region is still only just starting, but we have been carrying out promotion activities in the Caribbean. We have set up a prototype house in Jamaica; we are setting up one in Barbados. We have quite a substantial house-building programme going on in St. Lucia. We are having discussions with the relevant personnel in Barbados with regard to low-cost houses. All in all I can assure this House that the prospects for our continued expansion into the Caribbean area appears to be exceedingly bright.

Head 32, Ministry of Mines and Forests - \$1,471,719, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

DIVISION XVI – MINISTRY OF MINES AND FORESTS

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,356,590 for Division XVI, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Sutton: Subhead 3, 4 and 10.

Mr. RD. Persaud: I would like to speak on this Head in general.

The Chairman: I would like to indicate to hon. Members that the time allocated for this Head is finished. Please proceed.

Mr. Sutton: On page 101 we saw subhead 16, Silviculture, subhead 18, Promotion of Exports; subhead 29, Central Timber Manufacturing Plant and subhead 30, maintenance and Operation of Mobile Sawmill, but I thought it would be more appropriate to raise my question under the details of capital expenditure as shown on subhead 3, Central Timber manufacturing Plant, subhead 4, Re-afforestation and subhead 10, Assistance to Miners under this Division.

In connection with the Central Timber Manufacturing Plant, I presume that this is a reference to the plant in Kingston. I know I pointed out several times before that there does not seem to be any real reason why this plant should operate at a loss. As usual, we have not been able to see the true position because I can find no statement, as in the case of the previous estimate of revenue from the Central Timber Manufacturing Plant.

I view of the fact that the Government has acquired Guyana Timbers, one would feel that the Central Timber Manufacturing Plant would be used not only for the specific purpose of turning out high quality timber based on supplies taken over from the small saw mills, as has been happening, but that the operations there would be complementary to what is done at Guyana Timbers. Possible, too, the Government would have the expertise which would be available at Guyana Timbers to help it in the problems at the plant. If by any chance, those problems need additional expert advice; this would probably be available from the experts now in charge of Guyana Timbers.

I wonder if the Minister would tell us if it is intended to run this Central Timber Manufacturing Plant as other corporations and why it cannot be run with a view to making a profit. We bear in mind that the system continues to be the same. The primary stocks which are finished or processed at the Central Timber Manufacturing Plant are taken over from the smaller millers and it seems to be a question of adjustment of price, unless the Government considers it important to subsidise the finished article. Would it not be better in cases like this, to look the facts in the face and decide what should be subsidised and what should not be subsidised.

Subhead 4 deals with Re-afforestation and on page 101, subhead 16 is in respect of Silviculture, which is a type of re-afforestation. I wonder if the Minister would tell us whether anything is done apart from what the Government itself does for re-afforestation. What laws or conditions are in operation, as far as the larger producers of timber are concerned, to ensure that they provide a degree of re-afforestation in order to preserve the timber that is worked so that future generations will have the benefit of working similar timber?

Will the hon. Minister say whether any steps have been taken to preserve our forests and to see that re-afforestation is not confined only to Government efforts?

In the case of Silviculture, perhaps he will be good enough to let us know, in the light of the annual cost of Silviculture which is approximately \$11,000 a year, as shown in the Estimates, whether a projection is made in his department to estimate the total cost of this operation as against the total benefit when the trees that are planted have reached the stage of maturity that they can be worked.

Subhead 10, Assistance to miners. We notice from the Report of the Department of Geological Surveys and Mines, as pointed out by the hon. member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud, that the drop in production of gold is terrific. No doubt the Assistance to Miners scheme has been devised by Government in order to see if this could be an important factor in rehabilitating the production of gold.

On this question of Assistance to Miners I want to know what is the system followed? It has been observed by several persons who have had reason to look in this direction that several miners or so-called "miners" have been assisted. They go into the interior for a few weeks, they receive assistance and then clear out two or three days after their arrival and, in fact, nothing has been done.

I am aware that several people who may be deemed to be experience in the type of mining such as gold that they are particularly interested and diamonds to a lesser degree, have approached the Department but it appears although they have to be able to prove that they have been operating in this field for 20, 30 or 40 years. People who have not so proved have not been able to get assistance and although they put up reasoned plans of how they intend to work the Ministry has not found it fit in order to assist these obviously experienced persons who would have done so much better if they could get some encouragement by making certain types of machinery or capital available to them on a basis which is now possible by the Department and that should bring the Minister to the point if he would tell us what is the system used in affording assistance to miners.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Sir, subhead 4, Re-afforestation. The hon. Minister was making the point of who should plant back. Probably I can offer the suggestion that person who are involved and now have had years of experience in this particular area ought to be considered for loans. Very shortly we are going to establish an Agricultural Loans Bank and probably once the people who are concerned with the lending of funds are satisfied that the persons have the capacity and resource to repay then they ought to be considered for loans so that they can re-plant the areas to save the industry.

Subhead 10, Assistance to Miners. I did understand the difference between Inspector of Mines and Mining Officers as they are called. I was making the point about 6 Mining Inspectors because I feel that while people are going to be given money under this Head, if I am correctly informed, they are deprived of technical advice in their exploration. What is needed in all these areas where the people are operating apart from the money they ought to be technically advised. The officers cannot provide that advice; it is only the Inspectors of Mines who provide that type of advice, because they are qualified.

Finally, very briefly we have exploration and investigation going on in so far as oil is concerned. According to the Report we have a Russian export and several other agencies and

individuals carried out investigations. The hon. Minister will remember the two Russian experts who came here. They have done a lot of groundwork, and I feel the work done by them can form the basis for the present person carrying out these investigations. This must be so, but his work will be looked at and it will help. I wonder if the Minister can tell us what progress is being made in the exploration of oil and probably he can tell us whether anything has been done with respect to the investigation already carried out by the U.N. in so far as the Takutu Basin is concerned. I am aware that the Minister is not without advice on the potential and resources. Probably the Minister can give us some information on this.

Mr. M.Y. Ally: My. Chairman, subhead 29, Central Timber Manufacturing Plant. We notice the actual amount spent in 1970 was \$105,222, now we are called upon to spend \$169,000. Year after year this is the usual remark even with the past Minister of Agriculture, the hon. Member, Mr. Jordan. It has been said over and over that they should either rehabilitate the Central Timber and Manufacturing Plant or close it down because this is a losing concern. I think apart from employing people who are near to the party at the Plant apart from losing money and giving gifts to its friends we should really think seriously. We have a qualified economist in the person of the hon. Minister of Economic Development, Dr. King, and I think this should be brought to his attention. This Plant should be closed, because it is serving no purpose. What purpose does it serve? Just to find employment for party hacks and give away gifts. The time has come when we should try to save money. Under this subhead we could save a quarter million dollars which could be absorbed in the running of Guyana Timbers. I make this point in the hope that Government should look into this question and save some money.

Ms. Jack: Mr. Chairman, on the Central Timber and Manufacturing Plant, I expect that this would be the last year when provisions will appear on the Estimates for this Plant. It is intended early in the new year to turn this plant along with the Mobile sawmill which we have set up into a Corporation to run like the Guyana Timbers on a business basis without a government subsidy. I think that that would take care of the questions which the hon. Member Mr. Sutton was asking and the hon. Member Mr. Ally was asking.

Except for one thing I should like to say that I reject completely that this Timber Manufacturing Plant is maintained to give jobs to party hacks. Perhaps the hon. Member has not visited the Plant so that he will see who are the people working at the Mobile sawmill. If he would like me to be able to agree with him that party hacks are working there, I promise him I will recommend some changes so as to bring reality in consonance with his suggestion.

With regard to silviculture this year we will be planting 1,000 acres of pine. There was a question asked about the total cost of operation. This is on-going and although the total benefit can be calculated with some degree of approximation one would have to take into account the totality of years that one is making the projection for before one can get anything approaching an accurate quantification. But the benefits, of course, are not only in terms of cash, they are in terms of the economy of the country.

3.15 p.m.

With regard to assistance to miners, the scheme which we have at the moment is about the fairest scheme that I think we can at present devise. This scheme allows that miners who are going into designated mining areas receive subsidized passages, and again, miners in designated mining areas receive subsidized fuel. This means you do not have to make any special application, it is not a question of the Ministry or anybody granting to "A" a subsidized passage, and not granting to "B".

With regard to the other aspects of assistance to miners, that is, where one can contemplate giving specific assistance in terms of cash, we have set up a committee to go into this question. Quite frankly, I have already discussed with the miners themselves and I must confess up to the moment I have not been satisfied that any of the proposals put to me really and truly guarantees a competent way of making assessments as to who is to get assistance and who is not to get assistance. For this reason, I am very confident in refuting the allegation made by

the hon. Member, Mr. Sutton, to the effect that some people have got assistance while others have not. If he has any instances of this, I would like them to be brought to my attention, because in the first place, there was not the money provided for this special type of assistance to any person, and since we do not have the proper criteria worked out at the moment, we have not been giving this kind of assistance.

It is true that many miners have come asking for this assistance, but the facts are that one man wants \$2,000, another one wants \$5,000, one maybe, just \$100, but there is not a way yet and the committee's recommendations have not been conclusive up to now for me to be satisfied that we have a foolproof scheme which would prevent us from falling into the trap of helping "A" and not helping "B", as the hon. Member Mr. Sutton says. I am particularly surprised to hear that he would make such an allegation when I have been striving with all my efforts precisely to prevent such a state of affairs arising. As I said before, I would challenge him to produce the evidence during the time when the Ministry of Mines and Forests was established.

Apart from that, there was a question asked by the hon. Member Mr. Persaud concerning technical assistance to miners. We are in fact geared to give technical assistance to miners and the Mines Officers I am told are persons who would have at least twelve years' experience. Apart from that, the strengthened mines department now is gearing itself to give technical assistance to miners in the various mining areas.

It is true that a Russian expert came here some years ago, a Mr. Fidensky – two Russian experts – and naturally since we have got another expert here who will be assessing our present oil potential, all relevant information will be put at his disposal. It would be a peculiar state of affairs if we asked a man to advise us and then held from him eight years after, secreted from him, the knowledge which his compatriot had given us. I see the hon. Leader of the Opposition smiling in appreciation of what we are doing now. Better late than never. Oil exploration is taking place off shore, as you know, and there are a number of companies engaged. There is a possibility that either in 1973 or 1974 some wells again will be drilled.

With regard to the Tapakuma basin, we have done an aeromagnetic survey and we have recently completed a seismic survey of three rivers in the Takatu region. We expect to get the results of that seismic survey early in 1973. Upon the basis of that report, we will then decide whether we should do a further seismic survey of greater intensity, or whether the area does not warrant proceeding further. All the indications are now that we should continue the investigations and we trust that our Russian friend who is here would also be able to advise us on this. Thank you.

Division XVI, Ministry of Mines and Forests - \$2,356,590 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

RECOMMITTAL – HEAD 14
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Attorney General (Mr. Ramphal): Mr. Chairman, I seek you indulgence and that of hon. Members, to move with your permission and the concurrence of the hon. Deputy Leader of the Opposition, a recommitment of Head 14, Division IX, on page 48. This is for the purpose of moving an Amendment, similar in terms to that of which I had indicated an intention on Monday afternoon when the Head was being taken.

The Amendment relates to a matter to which I have alluded in my contribution during the debate on the Budget Speech, that is, that we hope, in 1973, to establish a small Mission in Brussels to service the negotiations that lie ahead of us in terms of the European Economic Community, and also to make provision for the arrangements which I outlined for the establishment of an office of Economic Adviser in the Ministry of Economic Development, an officer that would nominally hold a post of Ambassador in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, so as to enable him to facilitate his work in terms of negotiations with foreign Governments. Those two Amendments are provided for in the circulated Amendment.

I need to say one further word about that circulated Amendment. Hon. Members will see that we talk in the first item of four Principal Foreign Service Officers, and I have talked only of the establishment of two additional missions.

3.25 p.m.

What is being done is that the opportunity is being taken to move from the Unfixed to the Fixed Establishment two of the posts of Ambassador. The reason for this is that we have reached the stage in the development of the Guyana diplomatic service when the service itself is beginning to throw up officers of the calibre required for the highest posts. I am sure that all hon. members will welcome this development and the fact that quite recently two of the senior career officers of the diplomatic service have been appointed to be Ambassadors so that we are reducing the number of posts on the Unfixed Establishment from 9 to 7 and adding to the two new posts that I mentioned just now those two other posts. The total number will merely be increased by three.

The other aspects of the amendment are merely consequential upon those that I have outlined. I seek the approval of the committee for their incorporation in the Estimates.

Question that – Head 14, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, \$4,216,385, be recommitted.

put, and agreed to.

Head 14, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, recommitted.

HEAD 14 – MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The Speaker: I now propose the amendment as circulated.

Dr. Jagan: During the budget debate I referred to the very large increase in expenditure

in this Head. Now we see that provision is sought to create the posting in Brussels, as the Minister said, to service the European Economic Community. We are also to have an Economic Adviser with the rank of Ambassador who will be posted in this Ministry.

I have I had during the budget debate to complain about the expense of the bureaucracy. Why is it that we have to spend so much money? I am not saying that we must not have a foreign service but, for the value that this country is getting, is it necessary to do all of these things, that is, to pad the Establishment with all these posts? Of course, the Minister will say that they are justified. I am not satisfied, considering all that is being done here in this country, that it is necessary to have all these postings.

Now let us take the Brussels representative. Day by day we hear that we are strengthening the Carifta Secretariat. At one time it was even mooted that in some places there may be sharing of diplomatic representation so far as the Caribbean is concerned. Actually a statement was made on this, at least in London, when Guyana and Barbados had joint representation. I do not know if it was done elsewhere. This eventually broke down.

One would think that in the case of Brussels and the E.E.C. we are dealing with a regional matter. Regional, particularly so far as Guyana is concerned, with respect to sugar. The same interest which we have in this regard affects other Caribbean countries.

As regard the Economic Adviser, we have a Ministry of Economic Development. We have also, under the Deputy Prime Minister, a development section. Why is it that, on a matter of Foreign Affairs on economic matters? Surely, one economist under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs cannot be competent to deal with the wide range of matters in which economic planning and development are involved. And I would have thought that this was the kind of way we would deal with this matter rather than having experts in all the various Ministries.

In a fully developed country with a lot of money, in a very big economy, perhaps this

kind of bureaucratic arrangement would be justified. But Guyana is a poor country and surely it is not difficult, living as we are in small areas even in the capital here, to consult from time to time, to utilise these officers even if they have to go on trips abroad.

I should like to refer again to a matter which I raised on one occasion before. This Government claims to be non-aligned. It is adding to the number of Ministries that it has in the capitalist world and in the Third World, but we have not yet seen any posting in the socialist world. Why is it that the Government is reluctant – that is the word I can use because I have not seen any tangible recognition of this fact – why is it that it has not seen fit to make a diplomatic posting? I do not mean the London man being a representative, accredited to the Soviet Union and perhaps to other socialist countries. I think, if I may add a comment here, you have your own man, in any case, for that job. [Mr. Ramphal: “The Prime Minister offered you the appointment.”] This is one man you cannot bribe and your Prime Minister cannot bribe. John Carter, the present High Commissioner in London – I am just referring to him so that he can be identified properly – was a rabid anti-communist and even socialist. This position was stated explicitly. I think one member quoted a statement he made some years ago when he was opposed to the P.P.P. and when he was attacked by the present Prime Minister for the position he took.

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Yet today he is accredited by the Government and by the present Prime Minister who attacked him at that time, to the Soviet Union and I believe to some of the other socialist countries. Clearly, if development is going to mean something the whole ambit of trade, aid, etc., the industrialization of Guyana, the transformation of basic primary industries, I say that a lot of this will depend on, and to use their words, meaningful relations with the socialist countries. This cannot be done on a perfunctory basis without somebody, and not only just one man, an office being established so that one can examine all kinds of possibilities which may be open to this country.

Although the bureaucracy has significantly expanded for this Ministry this gap has not yet been filled. One must, therefore, question the whole motivation of the Government. We hear talk about ownership and control of resources. We hear lectures and figures given about how DEMBA used to exploit this country. But the fact of the matter is that even if we own and control, of course, we do not do all of it, but even if we control alone, we are still being exploited if we continue to ship our new materials from Guyana and the sooner this country can go on to produce aluminum and to produce the fabricated products from aluminum we are not going to be significantly in business. *[Interruption by Mr. Jack.]* The Minister asked how we will get to that point. We will get to it unlike the way the Prime Minister was trying to do in 1965 or 1966 when he was entertained – when he dined and wined – in Canada by the DEMBA boys.

The Chairman: What the hon. Minister means is that we are dealing with foreign affairs. How can you go to the question of aluminum?

Dr. Jagan: Sir, foreign affairs has a lot to do with the development, I was making that point.

The Chairman: It is a question of posting we are recommitting.

Dr. Jagan: This is why I am referring to that. If we do not have a sound foreign policy, if we merely talk about ownership and control, I am saying that we are not going to achieve the objectives which are required today in Guyana to solve the problems of Guyana. We will be spending a lot of money to have a glorified Ministry, a big bureaucracy printing a lot of papers, becoming a propaganda agency abroad for the Government without achieving the real objectives and that is, the development of Guyana. Foreign policy is clearly linked to this aspect not merely to become a public relations job for the Government and a means of recruiting proxy votes and overseas votes for which the P.N.C. has disgraced Guyana, for which a previous High Commission had to be removed from London because he was involved in this mess which soiled the name of this country.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, I do not think that is fair to say. The High Commissioner retired.

Dr. Jagan: He was expelled.

The Chairman: As far as I know and as far as this House is aware the High Commissioner retired.

Dr. Jagan: Sir, the High Commissioner retired but you should know that under the circumstances of that situation he could no longer sit in London.

The Chairman: I am not aware of that.

Dr. Jagan: You should be aware of a lot of things happening in the country.

The Ramphal: I understand the problem that the Leader of the Opposition is confronted with this afternoon because we really provided him with an opportunity to say something on foreign affairs. But we must not allow him to mislead the House. It is misleading to say that there has been a significant increase in the bureaucracy and the level of expenditure. If the hon. Leader of the Opposition was in place when I spoke on the Budget debate itself he will recall that I drew attention to the fact that in the Recurrent Estimates for Foreign Affairs when account was taken of the amount to be depreciated for devaluation there was an insignificant increase, an increase less than 5 per cent in the Recurrent Estimates and it is in the capital estimates that there was in fact a reduction in the amount sought to be appropriated. So it is entirely misleading, even with the addition of two new Embassies, to talk about substantial increases, and I know the Leader of the Opposition would not wish to mislead.

That having been said there is little to add, except that I should like to identify myself with your own remarks, Mr. Chairman, that it is unfortunate that statements that are

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unwarranted are uttered against our distinguished citizens who hold national posts abroad and serve this country with great credit. It is entirely misleading and it would be right that I should publicly disassociate the Government and I know all hon. Members from that statement.

Head 14, Ministry of Foreign Affairs - \$\$216,385, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Members, I understand it is agreed that the hon. Minister of Finance and Trade will proceed with item (2) on the Order Paper.

**SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES
FINANCIAL PAPER NO. 6 OF 1972**

The Minister of Finance and Trade (Mr. Hope): Mr. Chairman, in accordance with Article 80(2) of the Constitution, I signify that Cabinet has recommended for consideration of the National Assembly the following Motion for approval by the National Assembly:

“Be it resolved that the Committee of Supply approve of the proposal set out in Financial Paper No. 6/1972 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Capital Estimates for the period ending 15th December, 1972, totalling \$1,069,058.”

3.45 p.m.

Mr. Hope: Mr. Chairman, some time in 1967, a housing project was organized on the basis of which certain United States institutions proposed to lend something like \$8 million (Guyana) for a housing project to be run by the T.U.C. In order to arrange for the conduct of that project, the T.U.C. Co-operative Housing Society Ltd. was organized and the project was entrusted to that society.

The project called for the construction of 568 houses. In the course of the years 1967 on to 1971, approximately 363 houses were constructed and sold to people. In the course of that construction, the costs were higher than were originally projected. The prices of the houses were fixed at something like \$7,000, another at \$9,000, and another at \$10,000. There were three types. The houses were sold, as I said, and the mortgage money came in from the United States institutions that provided the long-term mortgage money.

It was found, however, that after the T.U.C. housing society had exhausted the funds which had come in for the mortgage money, there were still outstanding debts. We have examined those debts and the final amount now adds up to \$1,069,058. The society is not in a position to pay those debts now. However, the people who are owed are a large number of small people, some of them suppliers of material, others are workers, because the building contractors could not pay them, not having received their full pay from the society. The Government has thought it fit at this stage to alleviate the suffering and problems of the creditors by agreeing to loan the society this amount of money. The loan would be interest free and it would be repayable in between 10 to 20 years.

From what I have said, you will observe, Mr. Chairman, that the whole project was not completed but the society will not be completing that project. Indeed, the land which is now available will revert to the Ministry of Housing which will complete the project by constructing more houses on the site. Then the society at the moment has 14 to 16 houses, of which it is the mortgager and is receiving money monthly from the occupiers and owners of the houses. It is expected that in the course of that time the society would be able to repay at least part of its debt.

The Government, therefore, brings this Motion to the House, hoping that what is recognised is that the creditors are a larger number of small people who have been owed this money for more than two years, many of them have bank overdrafts which have been mounting up in terms of interest, and the Government thought it would loan this money to the society to enable the society to repay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Question proposed.

Mr. Durant: Mr. Chairman, I can very much appreciate the Minister's explanation as far as his knowledge goes. This T.U.C. housing project went under way, as the Minister said, in 1967 by a loan from the American labour movement. The society commenced its work. In this country, it was the first housing project I have witnessed which commenced without roads. That is number one. While this project was underway, fortunately, I was able to check on it carefully, because at the time I was constructing all the roads in South Ruimveldt Gardens, so I had a good chance as next-door neighbor to check on this project.

Before they reached half the distance with this project, the money given by the American was completely exhausted hence the entire work was held up. The Barker Committee was set up. As a matter of fact, when they started first, these houses should have been sold for \$5,000, the down payment was \$500. As a result, many workers had already paid in their \$500 to obtain one of these houses. After the project failed, because they failed to put expertise at the head of affairs of this project, who would manage it carefully for the benefit of the workers, and for the workers, the people who managed this project, when the money was exhausted, they were allowed to leave this country untouched. Of course, the Government at the time said it was the co-operative society that should have looked into that, but the gentlemen, whom I knew were supervisors on the spot, they left this country. As a result the entire works were held up.

The Barker Committee was set up, Mr. Barker of Housing and Planning, and who is now dead, recommended that for this project to continue the cost of the houses will have to go up.

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In other words, the houses will then have to be removed from the sum of \$5,000 and the cost will have to rise. To allow the society this exact figure, the sum of \$887,000 should be raised. That was Mr. Barker's report. When that money was raised he recommended that it

should be under the supervision of the Government. I think this was done and a few more houses were completed, not the exact amount which was then 568.

I was about to ask the Minister what type of expenses this money will be spent on. He tried to tell us that it was money to pay the suppliers of materials from the small places and for workers whom the society owes.

If this society, as I have said before in this House, had started off the correct foot as a co-operative society, managed and supervised by the Government, we would not have had cause to come to this House for \$1 million. I am certain that \$1,568,000 will not complete the expenditure. I have listened to persons from societies that resurfaced a few holes in the road – they did not build the road – and they said that this co-operative society owes them a large sum of money. Then there are the suppliers and the workers.

I have heard complaints from some of these societies which said that they did work and were not paid. I was told by a Government Officer that a society that did the work for TUCville – I was told that he squandered about \$142,000. He is still mentioning some thousands of dollars that this society still owes him for work done. The Minister called the name of the leader to me one night.

Therefore Mr. Barker recommended that the selling price should be increased so that they could raise \$887,000. The selling price therefore moved to \$7,000 and after a few houses were sold it went up to \$9,000. Again, after a few more houses were sold it went up to \$10,000.

When I speak of \$10,000, it is seen that the \$500 deposit by the small worker served no useful purpose. As a result some of the workers called back their \$500 because the down payment had to be higher and other payments had to be made, such as solicitor's fees, for the passing of paper. As a result, the cost of one of those houses when payment was finished was in the vicinity of \$14,000 to \$15,000.

Therefore, do not let us worry with this \$7,000, \$9,000 and \$10,000. That has come about because of the way the co-operative society started. It was a co-operative society that was incorporated. If that has been done there would have been no need to come to this House.

I would like to ask the hon. Minister if he can throw any light on what has happened with the charges that were brought against one officer who was employed in the scheme and the supplier. That case was started and then we heard nothing more about it. We would like to know if that matter has been dropped and whether those officers have gone with over \$1 million.

I cannot see where we will reach if we go on in this way. We will get absolutely nowhere because I am expecting that they will come back to this House for more money to pay off more of this TUCvill debt. I ask the Minister if he can tell us if this is the final payment for TUCville.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: I wish to say just a few words based on the figures given by the hon. Minister in relation to the loan of \$8 million sought by the T.U.C. Co-operative Housing Society Ltd to build 568 houses. Working it out, it means that each of those houses would have cost, roughly speaking, \$14,000.

The Minister then went on to say that 363 houses were actually completed and the money was exhausted. It clearly indicates that each of those houses would have cost approximately \$22,000 based on the figure given by the hon. Minister. If the houses are to be sold to civil servants I wonder whether this will be the charge for the houses and how they will be able to pay for them. An examination of the figures given by the Minister makes it clear that the price for the houses is fantastic.

Mr. Chandisingh: Mr. Chairman, we must note rather sadly that this much boosted housing project for the working class, for which this Government had taken very great credit in sponsoring, has come to an abrupt and rather inglorious end. As a matter of fact, the Minister has just written the final epitaph to this housing project. I say this with regret, because we would

really have liked to have seen these houses made available for the people for whom we were told they were originally intended.

On more than one occasion, when discussing this very project in this House, we have warned what was taking place and what was likely to happen. We warned, for example, of the debts which were not being paid to various suppliers of material and so on, apart from the debts to workers. Despite the fact that the Government eventually came in on this question some time ago and we were given assurance that the unfortunate experiences and misadventures of the past would have been corrected, nevertheless, on this occasion we see finally that the Government itself did not, or was unable to, adequately solve the problem in the interest of the low-income workers.

The point has already been made by my colleagues about the cost of the houses. I noted that the hon. Minister, although he did mention some approximate figures at which the three types of houses were originally to be sold, did not give the House any indication as to what were the final figures as a result of the misadventures and so on associated with the construction of these houses. It would be quite useful for this House to know what was the final cost.

It is very disappointing, indeed, that it has taken so many years to complete 363 houses for workers, presumably out of 568, when it was such a prominent project on which the Government set its reputation at the time when the project was announced in 1967. It is a very poor showing on the part of the Government in not seeing to it that the situation was not made better for the low-income group.

As a matter of fact, hearing what the Minister has finally revealed and from what we ourselves know of the project, it can hardly be referred to now as a project for the low-income group. If this is to be the pattern for the future, I think it points to a very sad situation. I hope that the Government will heed the words of advice and the warnings that emanate from this side, because we would really like to see houses provided for the working class and not have a

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situation where the cost of the houses raises above the means of the people for whom they were intended.

This is the position today with the T.U.C. housing project and, as I say, it registers a very dismal page in the history of housing in which this Government has been associated.

Assembly resumed

Sitting suspended at 4.45 p.m.

4.45 p.m.

On resumption --

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: Hon. Members, I wish to make an announcement in respect of the sittings of this House until Friday. We are going to sit until 6.30 p.m. today, tomorrow we will go until 10 o'clock and on Friday we will go until 4 o'clock. If time permits we will do Ministry of Education after the Head Ministry of Agriculture.

Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Dr. Jagan: I should like to make a few brief observations on this whole scheme and perhaps which one might call a fiasco. Recently we heard taunts from the Government side when we were questioning sources of money for capital development that the P.P.P. was unable to raise money, and what the Government was able to do in one year the P.P.P. was not able to do in four years of their programme.

I recall, sir, that in those hectic years, 1962 to 1964, similarly we heard arguments that the P.P.P. had no friends but the T.U.C. had friends in court, and they would be able to do what the Government should have done to get money from their friends, and so house the poor people of Guyana. At that time we did not have the slogan "Feed, Clothe, and House Ourselves". At that time the T.U.C. was going to solve the housing problems of the working class. Sir, the American Government made the money available through A.I.F.L.D. which we know is an institution working closely with the U.S. State Department and the C.I.A. Time has shown that this Scheme has failed, not only has it failed to achieve its stated objective of providing houses for working-class people but what is more distressing is that there is a lot of corruption involved in the whole process. It seems that wherever the State Department and the C.I.A. go corruption always follows in its train. We see that so rampant in Vietnam.

It is a pity that neither the T.U.C. Housing Project nor the Government's Housing Project is really catering for the small man. Now the Government is to throw in over \$1 million to bail out this organisation. The terms are obviously very generous, no interest, repayment in 15 to 20 years. Is the Government certain that it will be able to collect this money? Or is this to be part of State subsidy? After all, the P.N.C. then in the Opposition was part and parcel of this whole propaganda campaign.

No doubt it has now has to bail out the society by throwing in taxpayers money. I want to know from the Minister whether any action has been taken against those who have committed fraud in this outfit. I remember one person who was at the head of this outfit resigned in protest in a letter which was made public. Disclosures made to the public claimed that a lot of people were helping themselves, building their own property and what not. Did the Government carry out any investigation to bring those who are responsible to boot? I know, instead of bringing those people responsible to boot, the man who made these disclosures was the man who was pressured. This is how things work here in Guyana. People who want to ferret out corruption and all kinds of underhand things that are going on they are the one who come under pressure.

No wonder things have come to the sad state as they have come with this Society and this Scheme.

Let us hope that we will not have the same failure with the other partner, that is, the P.N.C. which has not assumed power in Guyana. No doubt we will suffer the same faith on the day of judgment. The same way we are able to raise a lot of money from our dear friends in Washington, Government is able to do it. *[Interruption]* A lot of this money is going down the drain, Greenland Co-op Society. *[Interruption by Mr. Hoyte.]* Tell us how many shares you have in Greenland. When the day of reckoning comes we are going to have other fiasco, because things which are put simply to short circuit certain normal developments in the country, in the short-term they will not succeed but in the long run, they are bound to fail.

Mr. Speaker: I understand the hon. Member Dr. Ramsahoye is speaking on this.

Dr. Ramsahoye: No, sir.

Mr. Hope (replying): There are one or two points I want to make clear in the beginning. This Government has indicated that a substantial part of its policy, in fact, a fundamental aspect of its policy is based on progress in Guyana through co-operatives. The Government, therefore, is making no apologies whatsoever in its assistance and encouragement to co-operatives. If a co-operative society makes mistakes, private enterprise from time immemorial made errors, and it is our duty to ensure that co-operative societies receive the assistance and the backing of the Government at all times.

Further, let us look at some of the creditors who are involved, small people: \$175; \$22.50; \$15.58; \$131. These are small sums due to small people that are involved and, therefore, we think that it is not only because the Government would wish to support a co-operative societies, but the Government in its abiding interest in small people would want to ensure that if these people have done work, if they have performed services, if they have supplied goods, then

they must be paid for their services and they must be paid for their goods. That is the Government's intention.

All these accounts as far as we have been able to determine have been proved accounts. Creditors' accounts have been examined. They have been outstanding for a long time and based on the examination, based on the proving, we have come up with this figure. We would hope that this is the final sum required to ensure that the creditors are paid but I am satisfied that if, in fact, there are others not included here, those too will be paid in due course.

I gave three prices, \$7,000, \$9,000, and \$10,000. These were the prices of the type of houses, not one type. It is true there were some escalation in the prices, but the figures I gave were the final figures. I have said before, and the hon. Minister of Housing and Reconstruction said before, that the Ministry of Housing has a very expansive programme for housing development. It therefore seems to me that the working class as a whole will be taken care of in the housing programme that the hon. Minister of Housing and Reconstruction has presented. I am also informed that financed out of money which was in escrow, roads have been built in the schemes and sewerage has been installed.

There have been a number of people who could not be supplied with houses. They have paid their deposits, and part of these funds now being requested from this House is to meet that expenditure, but I think it would be unfair if one were to go away with the impression that people withdrew their deposits solely because, or expressed a desire to withdraw their deposits solely because the prices of the houses were increased. In fact, the applications exceeded the number of houses that could have been constructed under the scheme, and those people who deposited money will have to get their refund.

I have no wish and I do not think I am in any way competent to make any statement with regard to any person who might be before the courts on any matters connected with the scheme. Thank you.

The Chairman: This completes consideration of the item. I will now put the Question, which is, “That the Committee of Supply approve of the proposal set out in Financial Paper No. 6 of 1972 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Capital Estimates for the period ending 15th December, 1972, totalling \$1,069,058.”

Agreed to.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Hope: Your Honour, I beg to report that the Committee of Supply has approved of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 6 of 1972 and I now move that the Assembly doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

RESUMPTION OF CONSIDERATION OF THE ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 1973

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: We will now resume consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure for 1973. We will now proceed with the Ministry of National Development and Agriculture. Page 83.

HEAD 27 – MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND AGRICULTURE

Question proposed that the sum of \$991,558 for Head 27, Ministry of National Development and Agriculture, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. R. Ally: I should like to t make a general comment on the Ministry of National Development and Agriculture.

Mr. Sutton: Subhead 6 and 8.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Subhead 6 and 8.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subhead 8.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Roshan Ally, let me hear you on the general comment.

4.55 p.m.

Mr. Roshan Ally: Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Agriculture and the Government had made a lot of noise about the increase in the price of rice by \$2 per bag. But what the Government and the Minister failed to do was to find out the present cost of producing a bag of rice.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Roshan Ally, I should allow you to speak generally but only on the items that are on this page, page 83, that is Fixed Establishment, General Executive, Unfixed Establishment and Other Charges which are all listed.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Subhead 6, Subsidy, Guyana Marketing Corporation - \$500,000. I wish to ask the hon. Minister if he can indicate to the House whether the Government is contemplating setting up various branches of the Guyana Marketing Corporation

so as to facilitate consumers who wish to buy produce from the Corporation. I wish to name a few places that I have in mind: Mahaica on the East Coast Demerara, Leonora on the West Coast Demerara, Port Mourant, Corentyne and another branch on the West Coast of Berbice near Bush Lot.

Subhead 8, subsidy on Oil. I wish to ask the hon. Minister if the Government has stopped issuing coconut plants to farmers. If so, could the Minister give the reason why the Government has actually stopped this type of assistance to farmers because, as we have seen, coconut production has been on the decline and copra production has also been on the decline. As a result, we are unable to produce enough coconuts and copra to satisfy the needs of the country.

Mr. Sutton: We note that the subsidy for the Guyana Marketing Corporation remains the same notwithstanding the fact that we were told that we may look forward to a reduction very shortly in this provision. We can see no signs of this corporation being self-supporting although this is a hardy annual.

I am not going to spend much time on that question but on the question of actual marketing that is going on in the corporation at the moment I would invite the Minister to visit not in an official capacity where he announces that he is visiting the next day at 10 o'clock and when he arrives he finds that everything is spick and span. He should try to arrive there as a member of the public to get some impression of how the public is handled and what the public actually has to suffer.

In the first place, I think it is the duty of the Ministry to ensure that the methods which other countries have adopted are used to make sure that the price control regulations are kept, that the goods are marked and that people know what they are buying. A complaint is made by people who shop there that the goods are packaged and the price 80 cents or 75 cents marked on the bags whatever it may be without any relation to the weight of the contents.

I speak particularly of the very laudable effort being made to introduce substitutes for imported articles. People would very much like to try these products but one sees a package, let us say, for \$1.80. It does not state if it weights half a pound or one pound. You ask, "Can I get a small quantity to try it out?" You are told, "No. That is how it is put up and there is nothing I can do about it." The attitude is such that you either take it or leave it.

I would invite the Ministry to have these products prices by the ounce or by the pound. I have absolutely no doubt that by this method people will be induced to try small quantities in order to see how it works out before they take the plunge and accept the substitute in good grace.

I had an experience a week ago when I made an attempt to buy oranges from the marketing centre at Robb and Alexander Streets. When I was passing I saw the truck there with oranges and as I did not get oranges the previous day I attempted to buy some. I was told that the truck had no yet unloaded and would I come back later. I went back two hours later and found the oranges were unloaded and packed outside the marketing centre.

A man was standing nearby. I asked him about the oranges. He said, "Me?" and nothing was done. Apparently there is a system that a person is employed to perform one job and on pain of death he will not do anything else. I speak subject to correction, but that man said that it was not his work or words to that effect.

I had to go back the next day in order to buy a few oranges. Yet they were there in front of me, but the persons who were there to bring them in, to pick them up and put them in the bin were not available. But a man was standing there doing nothing. He said that it was not his work and I had to leave.

We know that the Ministry would not know of such happenings but I think that those at supervisory level should see that these annoyances to the public are removed. Let the people

who serve there realize that the marketing centre is there for the benefit of the public and in the case of perishable in particular, no opportunity must be wasted to have them moved. That degree of impoliteness should not be tolerated at all.

With regard to subhead 8, Subsidy on Oil, the previous speaker mentioned this in a different way. We notice that we spend a lot of money buying oil, particularly from the West Indian islands and Carifta countries. For years we have been talking about improvement of the coconut industry.

Perhaps because of lack of knowledge several people are wondering whether the time has not arrived for some degree of control to be exercised if people are to be taught what to do and if estates are not to be allowed wantonly to sell water coconuts. Obviously if the majority of the production of water coconuts are sold – perhaps because of a better price and less trouble – not much will be left to be made into copra. I am informed that the copra situation is very difficult because the producers are dissatisfied with the price they are getting in relation to the price that producers in the West Indies are getting.

We wonder if something is not wrong. This should be looked into very seriously. Perhaps the Minister will confirm this or otherwise, but I am told that the price for copra in the West Indies and in other parts of the Carifta area is higher than in Guyana. Yet when we are out of oil we import that copra and bring it here and produce oil out of it. Does it not appear that we are subsidising the producer in another part of the Carifta area when perhaps we might give thought to subsidising our own producers?

That leads naturally to another sector of this operation in the production of oil. Perhaps the Minister will be able to tell us what progress is being made in the production of oil from soya bean and the production of palm oil and whether, in view of the present projection of the Government's efforts in this respect, it is likely that we could be self-sufficient in oil in the foreseeable future. If so, how will this be attained? Will it be done by taking special steps to

revise on a proper basis the coconut industry where it would produce enough or where the quantity would be adequate when the production from soya bean is added in the years to come. The Minister no doubt will tell us when production of oil from palm kernels is expected.

Now sir, one very important question which can probably be raised rightly at this time, is the question of direct help to the farmers who have suffered so badly in the Pomeroon District. Has any survey been made of the damage done there by the extensive floods earlier this year, and the additional damage which was done later on? I remember being told by the hon. Minister Mr. Kasim that canals were being dug which would ensure that the overflow of water from the Tapakuma Scheme into the Pomeroon would no longer be the danger to the farmers, that it is and will continue until something practical is done to alleviate that particular hazard. Has any factual survey been taken as to what direct help can be given to the farmers with a view to rehabilitating the farms that have been destroyed, the plants, coconuts and otherwise in the Pomeroon? Because up to two days ago a farmer told me that apart from the sharing out of a little ration here and there in an attempt to alleviate the immediate hunger in the district there appears to be no direct help or survey as to how these farmers would be rehabilitated.

Perhaps the Minister would tell us what are the plans to improve the situation in the supply of oil.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Mr. Chairman, if you will permit I will make a point with respect to the Guyana Marketing Corporation subsidy. We have always advocated that we are in favour of subsidy provided the subsidy reaches the correct source. Unfortunately, it appears as if the subsidy is used more or less in the administration of the Guyana Marketing Corporation. It is our conviction that subsidy to the Guyana Marketing Corporation should be used for better prices for the farmers' produce. This is the root of production. Unless we can satisfy their demands which I am sure the hon. Minister of Agriculture will not deny is just for better prices in so many areas of agricultural produce, we are going to frustrate their efforts and the result is the economy will suffer.

Indeed, the Guyana Marketing Corporation also needs certain facilities to assist generally the agricultural sector and to keep down prices for fruits in particular. During the debate last year I pointed to the fact that G.M.C. is without storage facilities, the result is for certain periods fruits are obtained at cheap prices when there is plentiful. When there is a shortage as a result of the G.M.C. not preparing itself by storing the fruits so that there can be a steady flow people are called upon to pay exorbitant prices. There is no doubt that we have the capacity to produce enough oranges, citrus generally not to mention the banana industry. But despite this the prices are high as a result of a fall in production during the course of the year. I should like the Minister to tell us what steps are being taken to provide G.M.C. with adequate storage facilities.

I go on to the next question, subhead 8. In 1970, we imported 112,000 lbs of copra to the value of \$22,845. I have attempted very sincerely in my contribution to the Budget Speech to see if I will bring the Minister out on this question. It would be asking too much if on this occasion if I ask the second Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Kasim to answer, because I recognise his interest in the industry. So I want on this occasion really to see if I can get the Minister out on this question of copra price. I am not going to give the wrong price because I have the Government's Agricultural Report, 1970 which says that the prices then were Grade 1, 14½ cents - and this is hardly ever paid - Grades II and III, 13½ cents and 12½ cents respectively. This is a scandal. The Government cannot stand up here and defend the copra prices paid to the farmers in the coconut industry. On the last occasion when I spoke I make an error with respect to the actual number of coconuts produced each year. There is definitely a fall in production. The two figures should have been from 52 million to roughly 50 million up to the year 1970 which shows there is definitely a decline in production.

The Government says that everything is fine, we are producing more. But the figures do not support the Government's contention of increase in production as I would attempt to point from time to time in my contribution in the Estimates. Only recently, last week I think it was that a Conference was held here and it was agreed by the countries concerned to pay increased prices to the Caribbean countries. Why should we do this at the expense of our own farmers?

Fair enough, we want Caribbean unity and what have you but we must not do this and suffer, what I feel and what is a fact, the third largest crop in this country, the coconut industry.

The Government has done nothing at all for the coconut industry during its terms of office and those incentives to crops, the increase in production, increase in acreages have been removed by the P.N.C. Government and this is also reflected in its own Report. I wonder if I can also urge the Minister in this same breath to re-introduce the incentives given by the People's Progressive Party when it was in office. I wish to remind the Government that we have the capacity so far as mills are concerned, Wieting and Richter, and the Maharajah Oil Mills have the capacity to produce enough oil in this country from copra, soya bean or as the expert said from nuts and so on. Why do we not move to reach that stage of self sufficiency in oil? I feel that we can produce more than enough for home consumption if the industry is encouraged and if the prices are reasonable and I am not advocating attractive price. I am only advocating reasonable prices that will really encourage the farmers to produce more. If this is done we will be able to export oil from this country.

5.15 p.m.

But what has happened during the P.N.C. regime is, they had a new Oils and Fats Agreement which has put the country in a worse position. In that agreement, the Government has agreed to buy copra from the Caribbean countries. They should not have agreed to such a thing and I do not feel I can speak more strongly to the Government on this occasion.

I wonder if I can bring the Minister out and let him announce here and now, increased prices for copra in this country. I recognise the difference in the coconut industry, that certain nuts are just good for water coconuts. There is a difference, but I am speaking about nuts that indeed can reach the stage of copra and oil. The Government can talk about sorghum and soya bean. Much has not been achieved even in this field. I do not ignore the fact that there is some

effort at Kibilibiri, but the effort is so small that we can ignore it. It is far from reaching near where we should be. The facts and the figures are here to tell the story.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development and Agriculture

Dr. Reid: Mr. Chairman, it seems as if the concentration is on G.M.C., Pomeroon floods, and the coconut industry. I want to say that the conference that has just been held has not come to any conclusion about increased prices for copra for those who produce surplus copra. Guyana's coconut industry is being given some incentive in rehabilitation of the farms proper and not in a price. Farmers have been selected for rehabilitation because that is a strong factor in the increased production and that is better husbandry in the coconut industry.

The Oils and Fats Agreement is an old Agreement and is not a new factor between Guyana and the Caribbean.

Water coconuts should not interfere with the production of dry nuts and I would not want to see the day when we suppress the sale of water coconuts, because this is a useful commodity on the market.

The subsidy to the G.M.C. is necessary and important. The hope is that it is passed on to the farmers, and it is obvious in the prices paid by the G.M.C. for several of their products, for example, over the last year, the price of plantains Grade 1 rose by 4 cents, the price of pineapples rose by 4 cents, that of cassava, by 5 cents, and many of the other products by 2 cents or more per pound. The G.M.C. is always looking at the prices paid to farmers and when one looks at the selling price from the G.M.C., it is very attractive. Many of the people, who buy food and commodities from the farm, tend to go to the G.M.C. instead of going to many of the other places because when one compares these prices with the prices on the open markets, there is quite a substantial difference. The G.M.C. is serving a useful purpose and warrants the subsidy that Government pays.

The G.M.C. has been trying to hold open-air markets and Leonora is one of the places where open-air markets have been held. New branches are springing up. Last year, there was a new branch at Anna Regina and this will be the programme to set up new branches at the open air markets give us the evidence of the necessity for these branches.

Pomeroon, as well as several other places, experienced severe floods during this year. The rainfall we have had during this year has exceeded any we have had over the past fifty years. There is no factual evidence that the Tapakuma Scheme is responsible for the flooding of the Pomeroon. The professional officers have not agreed with this but efforts have been made to relieve Pomeroon by trying to redirect some of the Pomeroon waters into the Atlantic Ocean, and this substantial work has commenced.

There is work going on right now at Somerset and Berks to put a new sluice so that some of the water through the Cozier Canal can be redirected in case of severe floods. Other works are going on in places like Aberdeen Canal where draglines are now working to open up those canals, so that more of the Pomeroon waters can be redirected into the ocean in case of severe and heavy rainfall.

Rehabilitation on the farms themselves is also in progress. Work is going on to rehabilitate certain farms by empoldering them. This work was being done even before the floods, but the floods were so unusual that even some of these new dams were destroyed. Farmers are now at work with help from the Central Government, to make better and larger dams, and empoldering groups of grants so that the flooding from the savannah waters would not interfere with these farms. If a farmer says that no work is being done in Pomeroon, probably he is not living in Pomeroon.

Farmers were given food assistance during the floods so as to help them, as well as some of the people who worked with them have also been given this help. And I think, for the first time, Pomeroon has been given this kind of substantial assistance. We are confident when this

work is completed, Pomeroon would not suffer as it has suffered in the past. This has been heavy flooding, but Pomeroon has been known to be flooded several times.

We are concentrating on the plan to increase our oil production not only in trying to rehabilitate the coconut industry by better farm husbandry but also by introducing new oil seeds, and though my friend says that soya beans are not very important, we are satisfied with the work that is being done. Since this is a new crop, the acreage has to be increased cautiously, and every season more acreage is put under soya beans. But we are not stopping there. We have also got oil seeds from palm oil that will be ready to be put into the ground before mid-next year. The seedlings are already growing in this country. We have had to import these seeds as far away as Africa, and next year, these will be transplanted.

As far as the price of copra is concerned, we have given that answer in the fact that our rehabilitation of the industry is to concentrate on better coconut farm husbandry.

5.25 p.m.

Mr. R.D. Persaud: The hon. Minister has the reputation of taking that same line in rice. He said that there was no question about increasing the price of rice; the farmers must increase their income from yields. All the fancy words he used about husbandry and what have you are tantamount to the same thing. He is telling the people the same thing. He will wait until the industry is completely destroyed, failing to play the role he should play and then he will come back to say, "Now I will give you a very small increase."

The Government is making a serious mistake in the coconut industry. I have spoken to almost all the people – *[Interruption]* – to all the substantial farmers in order to get their views on this matter. This does not exclude people who are closely associated with the Government. All of those who are very expert in this field, who are directly involved, point to the fact that unless the prices are increased there can be no progress.

The Government, as I said, is taking the same position on rice and it is a wrong position. I will refer to it further on in my contribution. I therefore want to ask the hon. Minister now to reconsider that position because it is wrong. Good husbandry must continue; there must be technical advice; there must be other improvements in the industry. We have no quarrel with the Government on that, but very vital to the success of the industry is the question of prices for copra.

I now move to the question of the Aberdeen Canal in the Pomeroun. The Minister is not really serious when he says that the Pomeroun people never received as great assistance as they have received from this Government since the fold. I have gone there myself. I went to the people who were directly involved in the self-help project at Aberdeen Canal. They told me in no uncertain terms that for months and months they were making representations for a dragline, a bulldozer and so on and they were told by the Government that they must take their own hands and dig and use shovels. One young man told me, "If I am to continue with this project I will die before it is finished."

It is because of the Government's neglect and its refusal to heed the pleas of persons who are their own supporters, persons who are involved in some of the independence projects in the Pomeroun river, that we had the serious flooding in that district. I am not saying that flooding would not have occurred, but all these things contributed to the extent of the flooding.

I visited one of the areas where the Garraway family was involved. I met them working on a defence from the sea. There was the problem of inter-lot drainage. If they had not worked overnight their homes would have been under water from the sea. I was present and witnessed it with my eyes. That is why I give the same. They would be glad to see Dr. Reid so that he could tell them exactly what he is telling us in this House. He might not be able to come back here and contribute to the debate. They were so mad with the Government and its disinterest in them that the people showed it. They gave full expression to their feelings when I went there.

The hon. Minister must tell us what financial aid the Government gave to the farmers in the Pomeroon so that they can rehabilitate themselves. I know that food parcels were given. I went to nearly all the centres in the river. I spoke to people.

I do not want, at this stage, to debate the inadequacy of the supply. Some people were getting and others were not. Food parcels were stolen from one school and nobody in that area received. The people need substantial help because even permanent crops were damaged in the flood. Citrus trees were damaged. Indeed, as the experts will advise, it was not only a question of floods but after the floods the sun contributed to a greater destruction of the farmers' crops, both permanent and otherwise.

I want to urge the hon. Minister most sincerely to look seriously into the situation, to consider the difficulties and hardships that are experienced by the farmers in the Pomeroon area with a view to seeing how the Government can offer tangible help so that the people can rehabilitate themselves.

Despite my plea, I did not succeed in getting the Minister to go on record this afternoon with respect to the price of copra. If he does not want to do this now I hope he will take the matter up with Cabinet and let us have an announcement soon.

Mr. Bhola Persaud: I would just like to mention certain points with regard to drainage and irrigation.

The Chairman: I am sorry that the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran is not here because the time allocated for this is 30 minutes. We have already spent 40 minutes on the Head and it is not yet completed.

Mr. Bhola Persaud: I shall not be long. He spoke on the question of digging a new sluice for the Cozier Canal at Aberdeen.

The Chairman: Your Hon. Colleague made that point.

Mr. Bhola Persaud: He failed to let this House understand that there are two main causes of the flood. First, they have not dug out an outlet at the Pomeroon River. Secondly, the pump at Three Friends was wrongly placed. The flood was a result of that. He did not want to let the House know this.

I can assure this House that this is just throwing water on a duck's back. If we have rainfall and floods this will not help.

Dr. Reid: Mr. Chairman, I do not know since when the hon. Member has become the consulting engineer for this country. Our information is that the Three Friends sluice is doing excellently in that part of Guyana. So is the Aberdeen Canal on which my friend is laying emphasis.

One would think that this is a canal that has appeared only two or three years ago. This canal has been there since the time of the Dutch and Pomeroon people themselves will tell you that this is the first time that they have seen a dragline in that canal, re-digging it. In many other places new canals have been built and old canals rehabilitated. This is the first time these people have experienced these things.

What my friends wish to see is a hand-out of sums of money. The system that is being followed is working in the interest of the farmers. Groups of grants are being empowered. This is of substantial assistance to the farmers in the Pomeroon.

Head 27, Ministry of National Development and Agriculture - \$991,558, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 28 – MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND AGRICULTURE
AGRICULTURE

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,026,485 for Head 28, Ministry of national Development and Agriculture, Agriculture, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. R.D. Persaud: I would like to ask the question with respect to the positions in these important technical sections in the Ministry of Agriculture. I would like to speak on item (21) on page 84, subhead 6 on page 86 and subheads 33, 39 and 40 on page 87.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Subhead 1, items (30) and (31).

Mr. Roshan Ally: Subhead 16 on page 86.

Mr. Sutton: Item (40) on page 85, subheads 30, 31, 36, 40 and 42 on page 87.

Mr. Wilson: I wish to make a general remark on the section headed, Field and Extension, items (46) to (52) and subhead 9 on page 86.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Sir, probably the hon. Minister can tell us what is being done in so far as varieties are concerned. Because it is my own view that we have reached the state of absolute confusion. In spite of the fact that the U.N. expert came here and he was devoting himself to his experiment at Mon Repos with a view to providing us with a number of consonants naming those varieties, we also experienced the fact that the Government again decided that one variety must get all the attention in the rice industry and that was Blue Belle. We warned against it and we told the Government that this would lead to a drop in production and such a drop will affect our export market. Thereafter, they phased out, if I may use the word, Blue Belle and they started propagating Star Bonnet. Again, we warned the Government and it did not heed our advice. We have been proven right.

I wonder if the hon. Minister of Agriculture will honestly admit that the advice we have given from time to time has been correct in so far as the rice industry is concerned and I am not going into all the details. You will recall, sir, that facilities were only given to persons who were planting Star Bonnet despite the fact that we only had market for about \$10,000 tons, the Jamaican market, but we were trying to get the whole country to plant Star Bonnet. The result is we have seen continued decline –

The Chairman: Hon. Member, last year in the debate you did not say 10,000 tons, Jamaica wanted at least 20,000 tons.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: I stand corrected even if it was 20,000 tons. We have advised the Government that it should gear its production to produce that 20,000 or even 25 to 30 thousand tons but not to tell the whole country to grow Star Bonnet. In fact, the Minister would say that they did not tell the whole country. But what was happening in fact was if you did, you were given prizes, cups, awards, fertilisers, and loans once you were producing Star Bonnet; but those who were producing D110, D79 no attention at all was paid to these people, they existed on their own, they were like sufferants so far as the Government was concerned.

The Government appointed Rice Action Committees and originally on some of those Committees at least Members of Parliament were on them. I remember the hon. Member Mr. Saffee was on one Committee, the hon. Member Mr. Budhoo was on one Committee and probably I will be correct to say that because they were making the line of those farmers they were removed from those Committees. But what have we now? A Mr. McGowan whose name featured frequently in the local government debate in this House who has absolutely no knowledge, no experience, and who has never planted one grain of rice in all his life is the Prime Minister for rice on the Corentyne. He is the Chairman of a Rice Action Committee.

People have been coming to complain to us. If people were getting loans from the Rice Action Committee without discrimination they would not come and complain. But the fact that they complain points to the fact that there was discrimination. In the production of rice politics was involved so that before you can get loans you have to be members of the People's National Congress. Such a policy cannot help the rice industry. These are the factors that have been contributing to the absolute destruction of this industry. Indeed, not only Mr. McGowen there is a Mr. London, another man who has never planted rice in his life; he is Secretary of G.A.L.A. and he is another Chairman of the Rice Action Committee. *[Interruption by Mr. Hoyte.]*

The charge I wish to make is that members of this Rice Action Committees who really have no interest in rice are using their position to get land and loans and paying people to plant for them. It stinks, it sounds badly. The point I make is even if the concept of having Rice Action Committees was good the actual administration of it shows that there is partisanship in the functioning of these committees. I understand that the auditor could not really verify even the accounts of the Rice Action Committee. I do not want to make open statements but I understand this is so. I do not want to go into all the details and state figures. I pointed out that we do not know how these accounts are audited. The money is not being expended directly by the R.M.B. which accounts I assume is being audited in accordance with the Rice Marketing Board Ordinance, but this Rice Action Committee in my view has no legal status, it is more or less committees appointed haphazardly by the Ministry. It is wrong in principle for such Committees to be charged with Government finances. I advocated before the scrapping of the Rice Action Committees, the Minister did not heed then to my suggestion that they should discontinue. But now in 1973, now that the national Agricultural Bank will be established I see no reason why the Rice Action Committee should continue.

5.45 p.m.

If these committees are to continue to stimulate and to encourage, let me give the Government that much, for the sake of argument, then they have no right to deal with finances. Let them

stimulate and encourage purely on a community basis. They have no right to be in charge of the distribution of Government's finances. Any such operation leaves much to be desired and persons qualified in the accounting field, and probably the Director of Audit when the Report comes up for the period when the Rice Action Committee has been operating, will be alarmed so far as the operation is concerned. The Government does not bother when we say these things but time proves us right, as it has proved us right so far as the rice industry is concerned.

Two increases were announced during this year, and without going into all the details of production, we say those increases are like a drop of water in the ocean and have not served to encourage the farmer. The farmers want the increases, but the increases for the various grades of rice ought to be reasonable so they will be able to earn enough for the money they put in, the effort, the energy in the rice industry.

The Government will not deny that since the announcement of at least the last price increase, without going into the first one, the Minister answered this in the Budget Debate, that instructions were given on the question of grading so that normally, people who used to get Grade "A" now get Grade "B". In effect, it would mean instead of receiving an increase of \$1 per bag, the farmers will be losing 50 cents per bag once the Government robbed them in the grading. This is what is happening so far as the rice industry is concerned. I want to urge the Government to have a second and serious look at the prices for rice with a view of offering farmers reasonable increases and let those increases be announced early.

The hon. Minister of Co-operatives and Community Development, (Mr. Haynes), when he was contributing to the debate on the Budget Speech, made the point that the farmers must not only be the tool of production, indeed, they should be involved, they should be the ones who should make the decisions. I told him that it sounded very well, and from my seat I said: "Equate that concept now with the Rice Marketing Board."

The Rice Marketing Board has been seized from the farmers and the Rice Marketing Board is now a Government body with two or three representatives, who cannot indeed successfully represent the farmers' causes because those who constitute the majority on the Board will take direction from the Government. The Government is talking about co-operatives and the co-operative movement. Let the Government this afternoon make an announcement that the Rice Marketing Board will be converted into a co-operative, and let the farmers of this country be the people in the rice co-operative organization, in keeping, as the hon. Member Mr. Wilson rightly commented, with the whole concept of not only a co-operative but with a Co-operative Republic. This will give the farmers the courage and inspiration and impetus to really let production rise.

Probably the hon. Minister will want to tell us if it is not true, because of the fall in production that we had to refuse markets abroad. We had the manager of the Rice Marketing Board, and he cannot deny this, who went and was able to secure additional markets but we did not have the rice to satisfy those orders, as a result, we could not supply. But this is the situation in the country and the Government is the body that must be blamed for the crisis in the rice industry.

Reverting to that page with the various offices, will the hon. Minister tell us – the last time I pointed out that I have my detail as to who is who – if there are vacancies existing under these various heads of Planning and Programming, Research and Laboratories, Veterinary and Animal Husbandry, and at the same time, tell us how many expatriates are still servicing in these departments? Not that I say anything against them, but we would like to know if we have enough Guyanese in training to take these positions.

I have no question on page 85 and I go to page 86, subhead 23. Dairy Farming Expansion Maintenance Expenses must be related to the provision in the capital development, so I do not think I have to speak about it again. There is provision of \$1.4 million for dairy farming expansion programme. Again the Government did not heed my advice. The result is, milk

production dropped to its lowest in the course of this year. Farmers had to go on strike and it was only then that increases were given them. We say if this was done before, the position would not have reached this stage.

In this development of the dairy industry, what I would like to ask the hon. Minister is whether the Government would give loans to farmers involved in the production of milk, because many farmers particularly on the East Coast, they were told that there is a boat and they could get loans for the development of the beef industry, but a large number of farmers in the Mahaica-Mahaicony and even in West Boast Berbice have expressed to the officers who spoke with them, the fact that they are involved in milk and they would like to get the same facilities. But nothing has been done.

I want to urge that the prices of milk, not only be increased, that is not the only requirement in this area, but the farmers need loans so that they can expand. Indeed, in the report available to the Government, it was pointed out that the coastal belt is best suited for the development of the dairy industry. But the Government cannot point to any action to expand development in any of the areas on the coastal belt because we made the point before and we repeat it, that we can produce enough milk in this country for our consumption, and excess, so if the Government had established by now a condensary, our excess milk could have been converted to milk powder, from milk we would have been able to produce butter, cheese.

There is a shortage of ghee. Sir, you are not unaware of the amount of ghee being used in this country but people are not getting enough. We should be able to produce enough ghee to satisfy the demand but it is because of the fall in milk production that all the other by-products suffered. Here again, I urge that deep consideration be given to, one, farmers' loans, two, additional lands for pasture and, indeed, more attention from the technical advisers to be paid to them so that they can be inspired into producing greater to achieve the Government's objective, what it wishes to achieve, of feeding the nation.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Persaud, the full allocation for this Head is 50 minutes. You have taken 25 minutes already. We have the hon. Member Mr. Sutton, Mr. Balchand Persaud, Mr. Roshan Ally and Mr. Wilson to speak and the hon. Minister to reply.

Mr. R.D. Persaud: I shall try to cut down on some of the items. On subhead 33, Subsidy to Guyana School of Agriculture corporation, without going into detail I should like to ask the hon. Minister what steps, if any, have been taken by the Government since we last made suggestions with respect to the Guyana School of Agriculture Corporation. I pointed out that there was need for a more intensive course with additional subjects on the curriculum and, indeed, the establishment of a Faculty of Agriculture in the University of Guyana.

Neither in the Budget Speech nor in any of the statements in the Press coming from the Government spokesmen have we read anything with respect to the establishment of a Faculty of Agriculture at the University or, indeed, about the improvement of the present tuition and diploma course at the Guyana School of Agriculture. Probably the Minister will tell us what is being done because, as I said, after two years at the School the students are without experience and without knowledge to advise the farmers. Farmers are in a better position than the fellows with diplomas who come out of the School of Agriculture. They need more intensive training and all experienced farmers will admit this.

Subhead 36, Subvention to Cane Farming Development Corporation. The cane farmers have innumerable problems. The Government has not recognised the Cane Farmers Association so that the organisation could be the mouthpiece of the farmers. There were farmers from Potentia on the West Bank very recently complaining that advantage was being taken of them at Wales Estate. They were charged large sums of money for transportation of canes from one area to another. It was made very difficult for them to remove canes for a distance of two miles and the estate vehicles would take the canes. As a result, the cost of producing canes has increased tremendously for poor people and they have no place where they can complain. Of course, the

Minister will talk about the National Cane Farming Committee, but that again is another Government creature. What is needed is a people's organisation.

If the Government continues to impose the National Cane Farming Committee on the cane farmers it is tantamount to denying the cane farmers the right to have an organisation of their choice and leaders of their choice. The Minister will tell me that there are X farmers and Y cane farmers. This is not the answer. Let the cane farmers say whom they wish to represent them in the cane farming industry.

As I said, time does not permit me to refer to the very grave problems that these farmers are facing but, with respect to the Cane Farming Development Corporation, the same argument applies in so far as the grant is concerned. My information is that this body merely deals with finances. Probably one officer sits as a director of the Sugar Producers Association. Those of us on this side of the House feel very strongly about this matter. The cane farmers must name their representatives to sit with the sugar producers and the Government must not appoint a civil servant.

This was so in the past. I do not know if the position has changed. Let the Government tell us. The Government, I am sure, is not in a position to say that the farmers have chosen. I advocated a year or two ago that this should be done. If it is changed the other question is: Who appoints the present representative if there is a representative?

The final point is that the Government can probably now do away with the Cane Farming Development Corporation. Let the Guyana Agricultural Bank function. We do not need several agencies; that is bureaucracy building. Let the Agricultural Bank be the institution for lending money to cane farmers.

I turn to subhead 39, Cane Grove Emergency Flood Relief Committee. The sum of \$500 was voted in 1972 and the provision for 1973 is \$500. What is the Government doing with this

sum of \$500? Had I been in any way associated with the Government I would have said, "Leave this item out completely before this disgraceful sum of \$500 is put down."

The Minister will not deny that the people in Cane Grove are in a precarious position. They are actually starving. Two weeks ago I went to the area, Cane Grove and Virginia and spoke to the farmers. I visited the various areas and I was able to see depression not only in the crops and on the land but in the faces of the farmers themselves.

I wish to advocate that the Government carry out a survey in Cane Grove because, from the floods which affect the farmers, some of the land has been proven to be toxic soil. Farmers who originally took those lands for rice cultivation could not cultivate rice and, as a result, have been in arrears of rent. They are not farming on the land and if they are not farming it follows that they are not producing. If they are not producing, from where will they get money to pay the rent?

Despite the hardship caused by the flooding, despite the depression of the Cane Grove area, despite the fact that the people are without the means of pay, the Government on the 5th October, 1972, has been sending notices to the people demanding rent and threatening action in the Supreme Court.

At least 2,000 acres have been proven to be toxic soil. I think it was Dr. Saoul who issued a certificate which I have seen in the farmers' possession. There is a justified claim for waiving of all the rents on at least that portion of 2,000 acres. The Government should encourage the farmers to go into dairy farming. That is how I feel a Government interested in agriculture should act.

The farmers have problems; they cannot plant one type of crop, but the land is suited for something else. Go in; advise them, so that they can change to dairy farming. I have spoken to

some of them and they are willing to have this change. The Government should withdraw the notice. I hope that I will never have in this Parliament to come before the hon. Minister and say, "Look, these farmers have now been summoned." Let this matter be ended. These farmers need help from the Government.

Mr. Sutton rose –

The Chairman: Hon. Member, please try to be brief.

Mr. Sutton: I shall restrict myself to a few direct questions. I am dealing with subhead 1, item (40), Bee Officer, together with subhead 13, Apiary, on page 86. A little further on in the Capital Estimates I note that the Government is apparently making an attempt to develop the honey industry by making provision to provide five additional apiaries.

It is known by all who are interested in the production of honey that it is almost impossible at the moment to get a hive or colony of bees from the Government owing to the demand. The Department is not able to meet the demand and one is told, "I do not know how long you will have to wait but the co-operatives must be given the first option." As a result of this I see that provision is being made to provide five extra apiaries.

If that is so and if they are doing to expand this sector meaningfully, would not one expect that there would be an addition to the staff? Is the Minister satisfied that one Bee Officer will be able to take care of the situation? Perhaps he will tell us, if these five additional apiaries are established as anticipated by 1973, whether it will not be necessary to have people added to the staff and, possibly, have a Bee Division created whereby apiaries can be properly serviced and all who want bees will be able to get them.

Subhead 21, Fisheries Division. We note the amount which has been requested for this Department is the same amount as last year and it causes me to ask a question bearing in mind that the trawlers will be required to bring a certain amount of fish; I think it is 100,000 lbs. which will be available at 12 cents per pound. Could the hon. Minister tell us if the benefit of this price would be passed on to the public in a large degree so as to make the dent in the cost of living as additional protein is so necessary?

Page 87, subheads 36, 40 and 42, Subvention to Cane Farming Development Corporation, National Cane Farming Committee, conveyance by air of Hinterland Agriculture Produce. One asks the question whether it would be desirable to have an embracing corporation or committee to serve these two purposes, and again whether it is not desirable to have these Cane Farming Controlling Committees, the membership largely contributed by the cane farmers themselves as mentioned by the previous speaker and if necessary have Government nominees and estate nominees to see that the interest of the Government is taken care of. Because it is now becoming questionable by the cane farmers themselves, whether these committees are, in fact, operating in the true interest of these farmers because they have little factual representation on the matters that concern them so vitally. Perhaps the Minister would tell us how the subvention to the Cane Farming Development Corporation operates. What system is used so as to ensure that the farmers will benefit directly which no doubt is the intention of the Government.

Subhead 42, Conveyance by Air of Hinterland Agriculture produce, \$100,000. Could the hon. Minister tell us on what terms do the farmers in the hinterland qualify to get benefit of, I presume, a part of this assistance in the transportation of their produce by air? Is it available to all farmers in the hinterland? Or is it available to Government controlled farms? Or how does this help operate to the benefit of the farmers in the hinterland directly? And whether a farmer can take for granted if he operated in the hinterland where there is no accepted means of transportation he would be given assistance to transport his produce by air. And also where a farmer has been operating in an area where there is possible transportation by sea would it not be reasonable for him to expect if the farmer who was getting his stuff transported by air – is it free?

Is it subsidized? To what extent? And how does he compare *vis-à-vis* his competitor, the other farmer in another district who is having his produce conveyed by ship or other means of transportation as the case may be.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Subhead 1, item (13).

I merely wish to ask the hon. Minister whether periodic visits are being made by the officers responsible for livestock development to the various chicken farms in the country so as to check on the conditions under which the chickens are kept and on the sanitation of the farms?

The second point is whether the Government has set any standards that the farmers can follow in relation to the plucking of chickens on these farms, the freezing of them, and the transportation from the farms to the markets and to the shops so as to ensure that proper health standards are maintained.

Mr. R. Ally: Mr. Chairman, I just want to ask two short questions. I should like to ask the Minister what is the position with the Moco pest that we have at the Mara District. I was made to understand that this matter was reported to the Minister of Agriculture and the Pests Prevention Department since 1965 and nothing has been done, this pest is still there and it is attacking suckers in that area. I wish if the hon. Minister can give us some information on this. The hon. Minister himself has been to Black Bush Polder and has seen what is taking place with the people's coconut trees. I was made to understand that the Minister himself went into the matter and a visit was paid to the Black bush Polder area by the Pests Prevention Department about two years ago. They cut down a coconut tree and took a part of the trunk with them. On to this day the farmers are still puzzled to know the reason for this pest. They have heard nothing from the Department or the Ministry concerned. It costs the farmers a lot labour-wise, and everything else and all the coconut trees are dying out like that. Sir, I do not know whether you will permit me to make any general observation now.

The Chairman: We have already finished 50 minutes on this Head, the Minister has not replied, and the hon. Member Mr. Wilson still has to speak.

Mr. R. Ally: Sir, I am a bit puzzled to know why at any time I ask to speak there is no time and I am not allowed. I am appealing to you, sir.

Mr. Chairman: If you would make your points like the hon. member Mr. Balchand Persaud we will get through. Hon. Member Mr. Wilson.

Mr. Wilson: Since I have gone to live at Betterverwagting I have come face to face with the gap between the Government's pronouncements and its performance on this question of agricultural revolution. When I went there at first I saw a number of the villagers with their lands full of grass and in my mind I criticized the people for keeping the land like that. I always do some planting; it is good. It is because of my desire, my hobby and I have about a quarter acre of land which I am trying to plant.

6.15 p.m.

It would appear that the Government has not taken any step to examine why the land is like that. I heard the hon. Member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud say something about toxic soil. I understand since 1934 when they had the flood, something happened to the soil there and so it is not too productive. The land is very clayey. I went to the agricultural station and got the chemist to send a man to take some tests but I have not got the results of the tests; it is nearly a year.

The agricultural field assistant, I sympathise with the young man, seems to be running from Atkinson to somewhere on the East Coast, such a wide area to serve, he cannot come as often to help. I should like to suggest that the Government uses its field assistants by distributing them a little better, so they could pay more regular visits to persons who are endeavouring to

plant, to assist them in getting their soils tested and the necessary advice, if the Government is really sincere about its pronouncements about agricultural revolution.

I would pass on to subhead 8, Purchase, Production and Distribution of Seeds and Plants. I have been trying to get seedlings. I went to the station, you cannot get. You come to the Gardens, you cannot get. The government says: plant black eye. Before I went to Europe, I couldn't get black eye. I returned only today; I went to the Corporation, they have no black eye to plant as seeds. I cannot get. Yet the Government talks so much! I am actually frustrated and I sympathize with the poor people who are not able to go through all the effort necessary to do the impossible, under the circumstances that the government is carrying on.

Dr. Reid: To begin with the rice industry: this is a long story. It comes up every time and these days we do not hear anything more about the destruction of the rice industry. We are hearing about the increase prices, so something must have happened. He talks now more about increase in prices than the industry being destroyed.

It is obvious that rice or any crop depends to a great extent on the weather and he could tell me some of the reason for the drop not only in rice but in sugar as well. The fact is there has been heavy rainfall during this year. The varieties that he mentions are still being worked on, but at no time – I know my friend would be in a position to say – did we tell the farmers to plant only Star Bonnet, because we have been saying that it can only be planted where we have good water control. We have been making that point all over, no use presenting to a farmer a variety in an area where there is no proper water control.

Our assistants to farmers went out in the rice fields and demonstrated better land preparation, not for any one variety, but for all the farmers who were cultivating rice. However, we said if fertilisers would not increase his production, if it is a variety that does not respond to fertiliser, then it is no point burdening the farmer with purchasing of fertiliser. We are not salesmen who go out and tell them buy fertiliser anyhow. If the variety does not respond to

fertilisers, it is no point misleading the farmers. We will continue to experiment with new varieties because this is how it has to be in this field of research. You do not stay with one thing forever. The changes must go on.

We do not accept all the new varieties because they must be properly tested and given time to prove themselves before we introduce them to the industry. But those who want to destroy the industry do not mind what you do. You can introduce them any time and if the reaction is bad, they will rejoice. Government cannot take that chance.

Government must be completely satisfied that a variety will stand up and it will not segregate, there will not be a reaction, reverting to undesirable grain before it is given to the farmers, and we insist on that.

As far as technical advice is concerned, all farmers get technical advice. There is no discrimination. Everybody gets that. The Rice Action Committee will continue to operate. From time to time we will examine them, change members, and so forth, but the Board will continue to have Rice Action Committees and this time they are very closely associated with local government of the people in the districts.

As far as complaints are concerned, there is no guarantee that what we do will prevent people from complaining. Nobody can give that guarantee. People being what they are, will want to complain to certain people even more than they need to complain, because of their own reasons. They know why these people get in there to hear complaints so they give them complaints, but when they talk of discrimination, we have gone to places like Port Mourant Follow-Up Co-op, No 43 Co-op, and have done substantial work.

There were no instructions to the Rice Marketing Board about grading. It is the same type of grading. The prices have nothing to do with it. The Rice Marketing Board has not been seized from the farmers. Now there is greater involvement of the farmers in what is being done.

Dairy farming is being looked into. The milk price has been changed after serious consideration and thinking, and there has been some increase in production. It is working well.

The Guyana School of Agriculture is performing well. Its students are doing well in the field which is the evidence. As far as my friend is saying, what next to do with it, we have already planned the movement of the Guyana School of Agriculture and we do need his advice of associating this school with the University of Guyana. In time, this will be a reality.

The National Cane Farming Committee must be doing a good job because peasant cane farming is on the increase. When it is on the decrease, you blame the Government. When it is on the increase, too, you blame the Government because there is a greater number of farmers participating in the programme.

6.25 p.m.

We have already said, when planning for the Agricultural Development Bank, that all loans will be directed to the Agricultural Development Bank. We have made this decision already.

With regard to the Cane Grove Emergency Flood Relief Committee, subhead 39, there is an allocation for the Committee. That has nothing to do with the rehabilitation works that are going on at Cane Grove. This sum of \$500 could not put a new pump at Cane Grove. This could not dig the canals and drains at Cane Grove. This is the work that is going on. If the Committee is to function the Committee needs to travel. You do not need a Committee that cannot visit at all. It must have some assistance when travelling around so that it may help the farmers.

The honey industry is moving upward. I am glad that my friend, the hon. Member Mr. Sutton, took note of the honey industry. More Africanized have been established not only on the

coastal areas but in some of the more productive areas like Waini and Kibilibiri. New breeding stock has been brought into the country and in time more people will certainly get. As a matter of fact, some persons took the opportunity to buy their own breeding stock. If the hon. Member Mr. Sutton had been involved in the production group he would have been able to get his supply immediately.

With regard to the fishing industry, the benefit of this price will go to the consumers in one way or another because any surplus of fish that comes in will be processed into salted fish and consumers will get the advantage of this price.

The subvention that the hon. Member mentioned is the part that Government puts into the Cane Farming Development Corporation. That is Government's portion of the fund. The fund is administered by the National Cane Farming Committee which has cane farmers, officials, sugar producers and so forth on it. They make the decisions. The political arm of the Government does not decide who must get and who must not get. That is done by the Committee.

Transportation from the hinterland is subsidised, as hon. members are aware. I am in no position to tell what is the difference in the cost of transportation from the coast and transportation from the hinterland. That is quite a question because some of us live in one area and some in another and what one man pays from Essequibo to Georgetown and from other places to Georgetown is too wide a question for us to give an answer here.

Poultry farms are regularly checked by officers. Standards have been discussed with poultry rearers, especially the larger producers, as far as processing is concerned. The poultry farmers are a very progressive group of farmers. We have agreed with some of the conclusions that came from the meetings. The industry will, therefore, do better and better.

There was a question on moco disease in suckers. I wonder if the hon. Member Mr. Roshan Ally knows that even in human beings there are some diseases that can be traced back to

centuries and even though millions and millions of dollars have been spent on research, no one has come up with a remedy for them. These are things like polio and cancer. Even though we work hard on moco disease there is no guarantee that we will get a cure next year. This is one of the hazards in human beings and much more in plants and animals. Work is continuing on the moco disease to find out the cause and to see how it can be remedied.

Meanwhile officers are advising farmers to practise cleanliness on the farms. They are advised not to use on a sucker that is not diseased the cutlass that has been used on a diseased sucker. This is to prevent the spread of the disease.

The same thing applies to coconut diseases. We must be able to understand that even though work is going on in relation to these diseases, there is no guarantee that remedies will be found immediately or at any stated time.

As a matter of fact, it is sometimes confusing for people who deal with diseases to learn that a remedy that might work in one area does not work in another area. For example, you will see that at Black Bush the same symptoms that are seen on the East Coast. You will treat the trees on the East Coast and get a response and you will treat the trees at Black Bush without getting any response. Further work has to be done.

It is unfortunate that the hon. Member Mr. Wilson wanted his land to be tested at a particular time. He did not get results as fast as he wished. This does not mean that he must be frustrated. I thought he was made of stranger mettle and that he would not be so easily frustrated. He lives in circumstances that are frustrating on that side of the House, but he is not frustrated.

We have brought into the country new equipment for quick soil analysis. There is a need for this not only at Beterverwagting but all over the country. It is hoped that as this is put into further use, we will be able to have reports on the soils in every part of the country.

20.12.72

National Assembly

6.25 – 6.30 p.m.

There was a question on vacancies. There is a vacancy for a rice breeder. We are hoping to fill that in time. All vacancies are to be filled. We still have three expatriates; two are from India and one from Africa. We will continue to employ expatriates when there are no local people who can fill those vacancies.

Those are the answers as far as I can remember the questions.

Head 28, Ministry of Development and Agriculture, Agriculture - \$3,026,485 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Assembly resumed.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, “That this Assembly do now adjourn until Thursday, 21st December, 1972, at 2 p.m.” – [Leader of the House]

Adjourned accordingly at 6.30 p.m.
