

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORT
[VOLUME 5]

**PROCEEDING AND DEBATES OF THE THIRD SESSION OF THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY OF THE SECOND PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE
CONSTITUTION OF GUYANA**

40th Sitting

2.00 p.m.

Tuesday, 21st December, 1971

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

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

Members of the Government – People's National Congress

Elected Ministers

Prime Minister (1)

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

Deputy Prime Minister (1)

Dr. the Hon. P. A. Reid,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture

Senior Ministers (9)

The Hon. M. Kasim, A.A.
Minister of Communications

The Hon. H.D. Hoyte, S.C.
Minister of Finance

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

The Hon. Miss. S.M. Field – Ridley, **(Absent - on Leave)**
Minister of Health

The Hon. B. Ramsaroop,
Minister of Housing and Reconstruction (Leader of the House)

The Hon. D.A. Singh
Minister of Trade

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

The Hon. C. V. Mingo
Minister of Local Government

The Hon. W. Haynes
Minister of State for Co- operative and Community Development

Appointed Ministers (5)

The Hon. S.S. Ramphal, S. C. **(Absent)**
Attorney – General and Minister of State

The Hon. H. Green, **(Absent)**
Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply

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

The Hon. E. B. Mc David, **(Absent)**
Minister of Information and Culture

The Hon. Miss C. L. Baird, **(Absent)**
Minister of Education

Parliamentary Secretaries (5)

Mr. J. C. Joaquin, J. P.,
Parliamentary Secretaries, Ministry of Finance

Mr. F. Duncan, J. P.,
Parliamentary Secretaries, Ministry of Agriculture

Mr. Salim,
Parliamentary Secretaries, Ministry of Agriculture

Mr. J. R. Thomas,
Parliamentary Secretaries, Office of the Prime Minister

Mr. C. E. Wright, J. P.
Parliamentary Secretaries, Ministry of Works,
Hydraulic and Supply

Other Members (14)

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

Members of the Opposition

People's Progressive Party (18)

Dr. C. E. Jagan,
Leader of the Opposition

Mr. Ram Karren
Mr. R. Chandisingh
Dr. F. H. W. Ramsahoye, S.C.
Mr. D. C. Jagan, J. P., Deputy Speaker
Mr. E. M. G. Wilson

Me. A. M. Hamid, J. P., Opposition Whip
Mr. G. H. Lall, J. P.
Mr. N. Y. Ally
Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud, J. P.
Mr. E. M. Stoby, J. P.
Mr. R. Ally
Mr. E. L. Ambrose
Mr. L. M. Branco
Mr. Balchand Persaud
Mr. Bhola Persaud
Mr. I. R. Remington, J. P.
Mr. L. A. Durant
Mr. V. Teekah

(Absent - on Leave)

(Absent)

(Absent)

United Force (3)

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

(Absent - on Leave)

(Absent- on Leave)

Independent (1)

Mr. R. E. Cheeks

(Absent)

OFFICERS

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

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

The National Assembly met at 2 p.m.

[Mr. Speaker *in the Chair.*]

Prayer

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER**Leave to Members**

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been granted to the hon. Member Mrs. Willems for the period 23rd December, 1971 and to the hon. Members Mrs. DaSilva and Mr. Sutton for today's sitting.

PAPERS AND PRESENTATION OF REPORTS

The following Paper was laid:

Customs Duties (Exemption from Import Duties) (No.31) Order, 1971, made under section 8 of the Customs Ordinance, Chapter 309, on the 3rd of December, 1971 and published in the Gazette on the 11th of December, 1971. [**The Minister of Finance**]

PUBLIC BUSINESS**STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS****Devaluation of Guyana Dollar**

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Hoyte): Mr. Speaker, as Hon. Members are aware, the international monetary situation has been very unsettled since August 15, 1971, when the U.S. Government suspended the convertibility of the U.S. dollar and adopted certain other measures to correct the fundamental disequilibrium from which the U.S. economy had been suffering for some time.

In the state of uncertainty which followed the U.S. action, the system of fixed parties was jettisoned and the major currencies of the world were allowed to float away from the U.S. dollar. The Guyana dollar was allowed to maintain its parity with the pound sterling and, as I indicated in the Budget Speech on Tuesday, 7th December, 1971, had appreciated against the U.S. dollar to the extent of about 4 per cent.

Saturday last, at a Ministerial Meeting in Washington, D.C., U.S.A., the “Group of Ten” reached on an agreement on a realignment of their currencies, thus restabilising the rates of exchange which reflect their external value, that is, for international transactions. The Group also agrees that, pending agreement on long – term monetary reform, provision will be made for 2.25 per cent margins of exchange rate fluctuation above and below the new exchange rates.

These decisions will have important implications for the external value issued by the “Group of Ten”, it was specifically recognised “that all countries of the International Monetary Fund not attending (Group’s) Meeting will need urgently to reach decisions with respect to their own exchange rates.”

Guyana, in common with the other countries of the world, has been caught up in the complexities of the situation on and has had to give anxious consideration to the external value of the Guyana Dollars in relation to the new pattern of exchange rates established by her major trading partners in the “Group of Ten”.

These major trading partners are, of course, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and, to a lesser extent, Canada, Consequent on the agreement referred to, the U.S. dollar will be devalued in terms of gold by 7.89 per cent; the gold parity of the pound sterling will remain; while the Canadian dollar will continue to float, for the time being, thus in effect allowing market prices substantially to establish the exchange rate.

Thus, the two most important external currencies with which Guyana deals, that is, the pound sterling and the U.S. dollar, have not moved apart and the value of the pound sterling will now have risen from U.S. \$2.40 TO U.S. \$2.6057, a rise of about 8.5 per cent. This rate is a central rate, and the U.K. will make use of the wider margins of 2.25 per cent on the either side.

Yesterday, the Bank of Guyana suspended dealing in foreign currencies. This action was taken pending Government's decision on the measures necessary to protect Guyana's economy now that the precise degree of changes in parities of all major trading currencies of the world has been established. Of necessity, in arriving at any decision, the paramount consideration was the balance of economic advantage to Guyana.

In this exercise, Government had had to consider a host of relevant factors, giving due weight to each and balancing advantage against disadvantage. Some of the most important input for industry, export earnings and so on.

Crucial to the study, however, has been an analysis of our import – export patterns and, in particular, our export earnings. For example, large quantities of foodstuffs and machinery are imported from non – dollar areas;

Moreover, we export the bulk of our sugar to the United Kingdom, but the surplus is marketed in the U.S.A. at lucrative prices which determine to a large extent the industry's profitability from year to year. And a consideration of prime importance is the fact that, not only is a substantial amount of the inputs for our bauxite industry derived from dollars sources, but the prices of our bauxite exports are in the main denominated in U.S. dollars.

On a careful analysis, Government is satisfied that it is in Guyana's best interest to ensure that our export earnings – particularly of our bauxite products – are not diminished by unjustified appreciation of the external value of our currency. The bauxite industry is vital to the Guyana economy and must be protected at all costs.

In the circumstances, therefore, Government does not propose to permit the Guyana dollar to become overvalued abroad, with consequential detriment to our export earnings, as a result of the change in the relative values of the major trading currencies.

Consequently, as from tomorrow, when the Central Bank resumes dealing in foreign exchange, the following central rates of exchange will apply in respect to the pound sterling and the U.S. Dollar:

G. \$5.2114 = £1

G. \$1.00 = U.S. \$0.50

[**Mr. Ram. Karran:** “U.S. puppets.”] The hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran is ignorant of what is going on here and I would be grateful if Your Honour would ask him to be quiet while I continue reading my statement.

Mr. Speaker: Order:

Mr. Hoyte: The margin of fluctuation – *[Interruption]*

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, this is a most vital statement affecting our economy. At least, let us pay attention to what the hon. Minister is saying. Hon. Minister of Finance, please continue.

Mr. Hoyte: The margin of fluctuation of 2.25 per cent on either side will also apply to this central rate of exchange of the Guyana dollar, it will thus be seen that the Guyana dollar. It will thus be seen that the Guyana dollar will not be allowed to remain at the high level to which it had appreciated in sympathy with the pound sterling. It will now revert to an indirect parity relationship with the U.S. dollar.

As I have said before, the paramount consideration in arriving at these rates of exchange has been the balance of economic advantage to Guyana. Government has already taken action - and will intensify its measures - to protect the economy and deflect the impact of any appreciation in the cost of commodities originating in non - dollar areas. These measures include indentifying new import sources in the context of our changing trading patterns, stimulating local production - particularly of agricultural produce - and intensifying the stabilisation of prices through the agency of External Trade Bureau.

That the Government's decision is the right one for developing countries may be gauged from the fact that many developing countries of the world including India, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia have arrived at the same conclusion as Guyana and realigned their currencies in the same direction.

Honourable Members will appreciate that the agreement arrived at by the "Group of ten" and the consequential realignment of currencies is only a temporary solution to the problems which beset the world monetary system. The need for fundamental reform still remains. I adhere to, and reiterate, the opinion I expressed in the Budget Speech earlier this month:

“. . . it is clear that the system will always be crisis - prone if it continues to rest so heavily on national currencies and thus remain vulnerable to particular national policies. Lasting stability can be achieved only by divorcing the system from particular national currencies and establishing some kind of world reserve currency”.

I hope that the nations of the world. Under the aegis of the International Monetary Fund, will get down to the urgent task of devising an international monetary system which will avoid the recurrent crises to which the present system is prone. *[Interruptions]*

Mr. Speaker: Order, order: *[Interruption]* The Sitting of this House is suspended until order is restored.

21.12.71

National Assembly

2.35 – 2.45 p.m.

Suspended at 2.37 p.m. for fifteen minutes.

2.50 p.m.

On resumption - -

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, regretfully I had to suspend the Sitting of this House. If there is a continuation of this type of behaviour I will have no alternative but to adjourn the Sitting of the House to some other day. As you are aware, we are debating the Estimates of the Expenditure for 1972 and we have a specific number of days in which to do so. It would be to our disadvantage if such a course has to be adopted.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 1972

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply to resume consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 1972 totalling \$197,846,560.

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

HEAD 20 – MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

POLICE

Question proposed that the sum of \$9,194,900 per Ministry of Home Affairs. Police, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Yesterday, when the Adjournment was taken the only Member left to speak on page 58 was the hon. Member Mr. Wilson. As the hon. Member Mr. Wilson is not here, will the hon. Minister of Home Affairs please reply?

Mr. Clarke: Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member Mr. Roshan Ally raised a question on subhead 24, in relation to Passports and other travel documents. I think the hon. Member Mr. Derek Jagan also raised a similar question. In point of fact, the maximum time now taken by the Passport Office to issue a passport is two weeks, but several hon. Members on that side of the House have also been able on request to assist their constituents and friends to receive their passports in relatively shorter periods than the two weeks, which is normally the case now.

The hon. Member Mr. Roshan Ally also spoke about pounds. He mentioned that a fee is normally paid by persons, whose animals are kept there, to the person who keeps the pound, and that fee is not used for feeding the animals. I think the hon. Member misunderstands the purpose of the fee. The person who takes the animal to the pound benefits in some way from the fee, and the feeding of the animal is normally undertaken as part of the functions of the competent authority. Normally, the grass is cut by barrack labourers paid out of public funds, but what I am told is that grass might be cut at this moment for ten animals in the pound, but 20 animals are taken and the grass which was cut will not suffice for the animals taken say at night. Nobody will cut grass then, so the animals do not always get a full supply of food. I believe this is a matter which can be remedied and I am sure that the competent authority in each case would exercise his judgment.

The hon. Member also spoke on subhead 42, in respect of police examinations. He said the item should be deleted because there are really no police examinations. I do not agree with him. I know there are examinations run by the Ministry of Education for and on behalf of the Commissioner of Police. These examinations, supervision and conduct, have to be paid for the police and this \$3,000 is allocated of that purpose.

Emergency certificates from Spring lands, that was another question raised by the hon. Member. These certificates are still issued as he was able to discover from a conversation with officer, but the persons desiring such emergency certificates. Anyone can approach the passport officer and say he wants an emergency certificate, and if everyone does that, then everyone who requests a passport will request to be treated as an emergency case. There must be some way of legitimising emergency cases. I think the hon. Member was given some satisfaction by the officer to whom he spoke. I think in proper cases of emergency, emergency certificates will be issued.

Mr. R. Ally: I think the hon. Minister misunderstood what I said. The customs officer had no forms in his possession so that if persons went there, there would be no forms and they would have to go to New Amsterdam to take out a pass, which is good for a year, but an emergency pass is something different. Something happens and they want the pass at the right moment so that they can go across.

The Chairman: hon. Member, you made this point yesterday.

Mr. Ally: The Hon. Minister did not give a proper reply, whether the customs officer will be supplied with forms.

Mr. Clarke: The hon. Member spoke about an isolated case. If the competent authority does not have the forms at a particular time, this does not mean that emergency certificates are not issued. I do not think it is a case for us to argue about. It is not serious enough for further debate.

Head 20, Ministry of Home Affairs, Police - &9,194,900 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 21 – MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS**PRISONS**

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,180,439 for Head 21 Ministry of Home Affairs, Prisons, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 59 will hon. Member please indicate the subhead on which they wish to speak.

Mr. Jagan: I wish to speak generally on the Head. I think most of the point I want to raise will cover many items on the following page, but I shall deal generally with them.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: I wish to speak on subheads 4 and 7 on page 60.

The Chairman: We are dealing with page 59.

Mr. Jagan: Some time ago we heard that the Government intended to remove the Georgetown prison from its present site and to take it on the East Coast, but I see no provision is made for that in the present Estimates.

My information is that the cells in which prisoners are placed are very small, I understand they are 10 feet by 10 feet and were originally built to accommodate one prisoner, but at present about three prisoners are placed in each of the cells. As a result, there is great hardship with respect to the accommodation of prisoners.

I think that many of the rules governing the conduct of prisoners and so on need immediate revision. I understand that many of them rules have been there for a number of years.

As a result of very minor breaches prisoners are placed in solitary confinement where they are required to remain 23.5 hours in a cell 9 feet by 4 feet.

This is due no doubt to the fact that the prison officers adhere very strictly to the rules, but I think that in view of the modern trend in relation to treatment to prisoners, some revision of these rule should be done so that the prison officers would not enforce them as strictly as they now do.

I was told, also, that with respect to safety in the prison, if a fire were to break out in the prison, each door would have to be opened separately and the keys are kept somewhere in the office of the Prison officers. One can imagine the confusion that would exist in the event of a fire breaking out and each door having to be opened separately.

I wonder whether something cannot be done about this in view of the fact that the prison will probably be there for some time and the Government really cannot afford to build another prison elsewhere. Can some improvement be undertaken with respect to the present prison as far as safety is concerned?

I have raised the question on a number of occasions of prisoners being allowed to have a greater say in industries. Government's intention is that we should clothe, house and feed ourselves. My view is that the prisoners themselves, if given an opportunity, could produce far more food than they produce at present.

I think that the sum allocated in the Estimates should not only be for farms and prison industries. I think that there should be an extension and that the prisoners should be given certain incentives whereby, as I have said before on a number of occasions, when they leave the prison they would have some money to come together or to join forces with other person in forming a co – operative in order to produce.

During his last Press Conference, the hon. Prime Minister have an example of a person whom he had defended and who was convicted and sent to the Mazaruni prison. He said that when the person was released he went into the pig – rearing industry and is now a great farmer.

There are many other persons who would not have an opportunity to do this because when they get out of prison they have hardly any money cannot find jobs. That is why many of them have to turn to crime again. They are forced to obtain money to live and the only thing open to them, since there is no employment for them and since they have no money to join with others to start industries, is a life of crime.

In view of the fact that the Government is now undertaking food substitution on a large scale, does it not think that the prisoners could do far more than they do at present if they are given an opportunity and is incentives are given to them. I am not advocating that prisoners should be given large sums of money so that when they come out they will be capitalists, but if they are given incentives while in prison they could produce a greater amount of food to supply other departments. I think they supply the hospitals with food but other Government Departments could also be supplies.

I saw a leaflet published by the Movement Against Oppression. It was published by persons who apparently should know what is happening in the prisons. I would invite the hon. Minister to have a look at it to see whether the complaints mentioned in it are genuine. If they are genuine complaints, something should be done.

I would wish also to refer to just one passage in this leaflet. I think what is stated here is correct and the Government should accept the suggestion. I quote:

“Considerable sums of money are spent annually in running our prisons. In a country with scarce financial resources we should be aiming at measures which would enable as much of these funds as possible to used to develop the country, while at the same time trying to secure the greatest social gains.”

I do not think the Government could have any quarrel with that. The passage continues:

“We can show this in the case of one item – dietary. This year \$114,000 was voted under this head and a supplementary provision of \$25,000 was approved recently. If prisoners were encouraged to produce most of their own food, a major saving could be made here. At the same time, more of our young men and women would develop a spirit of self – reliance and other socially desirable attitudes.

These citizen could be trained in various skills so that both in prison and afterwards they would contribute to the country’s development.

In such easy the atmosphere in our prisons would grow healthier and relations between prisoners and prison officials improve.”

The Government could have no serious objection to what is stated in the leaflet because the Government admits that there are limited financial resources which should be used to open up other industries. The money that is used for supplying food to prisoners could be subsidised by the prisoners themselves, if they are given greater opportunity.

3.10 p.m.

I hope that the Government would try to encourage the prisoners to do more with respect to food production than what is being done at present.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Home Affairs.

Mr. Clarke: Mr. Chairman, most of the items which are covered in the hon. Member’s statement are in fact found on page 60. I wonder whether you will allow the hon. Member to speak on this item.

The Chairman: Page 60. Hon. Member Mr. Balchand Persaud.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Subheads 4, 7, 10, 12 and 14

The Chairman: Subhead 24.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Subhead 4. Dietary. Two weeks ago when the Government brought to this House Supplementary Estimates calling for more for dietary for the prisoners I made certain observations. I do not know whether the hon. Minister would like me to reiterate those observations because I am certain that he followed what I was trying to get at.

The general observation which I was making was that the food provided for prisoners is not of very good quality. Arguments are being used by the officers of the Prisons that because food is being prepared in bulk it is not possible to have a very high standard. I think that one of the problems in the Prisons is the question of the type of things which are purchased to provide food for prisoners. There have been occasions where the peas, the fish, the bread purchased by the authorities are not of good standard. The fish, in most cases, is smelly and rotten. The bread on most occasions is not properly baked and the general hygiene in the preparation of food is not of a very good standard.

The second point I wish to make is that after a prisoner is given his evening meal at 3.30 in the afternoon he has to wait until next morning at 6.30 before he can be able to have another meal. In the afternoon a prisoner gets about 6 oz of bread, a cup of cocoa and a pint of porridge – that is basically liquid, and the only thing a prisoner is permitted to take in his cell is a cup of plain water. I wish to call on the hon. Minister and the Prison Authorities to provide an additional meal, say at 8 o'clock in the night. There is a period in prison I think between 7 o'clock and 8 o'clock, they call it water toilet period, where the Authorities can be able to use this period to provide an additional meal for the prisoners. Because to be in a cell especially when you do not have the facilities of comfort there, it is very difficult for a prisoner to sustain this very long period of hunger until next morning. Therefore the Prison Authorities should provide an additional meal for the prisoners.

Unfortunately, when I was in prison I had made requests to the Superintendent in Charge of the New Amsterdam Prison and he told me that while they would like to do so they have standing regulations, therefore they cannot provide an additional meal.

There is need to have the regulations changed. Maybe the hon. Minister can set up a special commission to go into the question of looking into the regulation to see how best improvements can be made to have a better place for prisoners so that rehabilitation can take its proper place.

Subhead 7, Training Facilities. I am told that the Government has provided certain facilities at the Mazaruni Prisons for the training of young offenders and there is limited training in Georgetown. Unfortunately, in Berbice there are very limited facilities for training. There are two machines at the prison at New Amsterdam and only one is working, and there are no apprentices to takes part in the training there. Also, there are certain principles which are adopted in New Amsterdam where if a young person is put into prison and he wants to have a specific type of training the Authorities have to make arrangements for him to be transferred to Mazaruni or Georgetown for him to have this type of training, all because of the fact the facilities are not in New Amsterdam.

Those who are on short term sentences, say six months, have to spend the time, in New Amsterdam. As a result they are unable to have any proper training. Those who will have to spend a longer time will either be sent to Mazaruni or in Georgetown, but it takes many months before these arrangement can be materialised. The Government's training programmes in the Prisons should be much more up –to – date for especially the younger prisoners.

Subhead 10, Books. The Government has libraries in the various prisons, but in the New Amsterdam Prison as such, the books which are put in the library are not in keeping with a programme to rehabilitate people. There are certain books which are technical books dealing with carpentry, etc. But there are other types of books which contents are very lewd and

pornographic, and the very good literature is not available. I think the Government should do something to solve this problem.

Another important point is the question of dictionaries. In the New Amsterdam Prison, I am told it is very difficult for a prisoner to be able to have a dictionary. Generally persons in prison, very many of them are not educated, they have to refer to a dictionary especially when they meet words that they really do not understand. From what I gathered the authorities said that they had provided dictionaries but suddenly these dictionaries disappeared from the Prison.

3.20 p.m.

Surely, sir, it cannot be that the prisoners are taking out the dictionaries, because prisoners are searched in and out of the prisons and they are surrounded by high walls. Something is wrong and that is why the authorities are not providing this facility for prisoners. Much more discipline is needed in this direction.

I must make one additional point. I was able to see books written by officers or members of the Government but the book *The West on Trial* by the hon. Leader of the Opposition was not in the library. In fact, one has to make a special request before such books are permitted to be read by prisoners. Books dealing with politics and parliamentary procedures are not permitted in the prisons. There is need for a review on this question of an up – to – date library.

Subhead 12, Clothing, Bedding and Equipment. This is a very sore problem. Prisoners are given a change of garments once per week. Persons who are convicted prisoners, during the course of the day, in their daily work, wear certain clothes and because of inadequate facilities, like sleeping garments not being available, many prisoners have to wear the same clothes to sleep in. That is not healthy. I am certain the officers will say that. Many prisoners can be seen in torn clothing in and out of the prison. When they have time for a period which they allocate for the distribution of medicines, long lines of persons are there for medicines. The facilities are not

up to date. The mattresses are torn and without emphasising all the details there is room for improvement.

Subhead 14, Bakery, in the case of Georgetown and Mazaruni, I understand they make their own bread. Bread is purchase from the mental asylum for prisoners in the New Amsterdam prison and on numerous occasions when the bread is brought to the prison it is found to be raw. Many times the prisoners are given their allocation of bread but many of them do not use it because it is not properly done. This causes a lot of contradictions and problems between prisoners and officers and there would be better relationships between prisoners and officers if things could be better. I think Government should be able to tackle these questions and to ensure that the prisoners themselves establish a bakery so that they will not have to contend with the half-baked bread served them.

Mr. M.E. Singh: Subhead 24, Pig Development Scheme. There are a lot of reports about this scheme. I should like the hon. Minister to give us his report on this particularly in view of the fact that the cost has increased appreciably since 1970 when only \$19,809 was spent as against an estimated \$30,425 for 1971 and \$31,000 provided for 1972. I should like the hon. Minister to tell us what are the earnings from this scheme. One would presume that the earnings go into the revenue of the country. Perhaps he could confirm that, and tell us how this scheme is controlled, particularly, from the point of view of making sure the benefits do not flow into the pockets of individuals, who apparently are in position to help themselves. Let us hear something about this scheme, the control, the revenue, and how the thing works at the present moment.

Mr. Clarke: Mr. Chairman it might be good to inform the hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh that the pig development scheme, which is provided for under subhead 24, is a very important aspect of the training programme for the prisoners at the Mazaruni prisons. The difference between expenditure and income, on the income side, for this year up to September is in the vicinity of some \$4,000; therefore this is a viable scheme. The importance of this scheme to the prisons at Mararuni is not merely reflected in the viability so far as the profits are

concerned, but on the important training area which is provided by this scheme for prisoners. The hon. Member will recall that it was during his last press conference that the hon. Prime Minister spoke about a former prisoner who is now making great strides because of the training which he had been able to acquire at the Mazaruni prisons. The money that is allocated for this scheme is well spent in terms of the high level of training which the prisoners are afforded in this specific area, as well as the fact that it provides an additional area of revenue.

The hon. Member Mr. Jagan spoke for and on behalf of MAO when he brought a certain pamphlet, which I read some time ago, in which there is some information or better, some misinformation about the conditions in our prisons.

3.30 p.m.

The hon. Member premised his later remark on the presumed accuracy of the pamphlet from which he quoted, but those who produced the pamphlet that the hon. Member referred to are very much afraid of even getting close to the prison walls.

In point of fact, the prison in Georgetown is old and is, I think, very badly sited. We really should not have a prison in the centre of the city. I agree with the hon. Member so far as that is concerned. Therefore, I think it is necessary that another site be found for a maximum security prison.

The whole question of modern penology comes in for close scrutiny when one begins to think about the establishment of new prison facilities and, particularly, new maximum security prison somewhere outside of Georgetown, perhaps on the Soesdyke/ Linden Highway or, as first planned, on the East Coast; whether we are going, in addition to that, to change the system to one of a more open nature. All of that has to be decided before a final decision is taken as to what will happen with the present Georgetown prison.

Government is actively considering these very important matters in relation to our prisons and our prisoners and I would ask this House to give us a chance to take the very firm steps which we contemplate towards changing the situation in so far as the prisons are concerned.

In the mean time, we are doing minor work in the Georgetown prison. During this year some work was done and during next year the Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply will continue to carry out those necessary minor works to ensure that the Georgetown prison remains habitable as well as the New Amsterdam prison.

The hon. Member, Mr. Balchand Persaud, unfortunately has personal experience of the block in which he stayed in the New Amsterdam prison, which I can term the “Balchand block”. I can tell him that one of the problems with sanitation there has been the fact that when that block was constructed long before this Government came to power no sanitary facilities were provided.

This Government is going to spend during the next year, as provided in these Estimates, money for putting in certain sanitary facilities in that block and therefore the hon. Member can be assured that, if ever there comes a time when he has to return, that block will have been improved.

Much has been said about an attempt to get the prisons and the prisoners to contribute more to their own upkeep. There is no doubt that modern thinking, as well as our whole development strategy, will support this move. And this is why larger acreages are being taken in at the Mazaruni prison which incidentally is the main training prison in the prison establishment in Guyana.

As the hon. Member, Mr. Persaud, rightly pointed out, only relatively short – term prisoners are kept in New Amsterdam, that is, prisoners serving three to five months at the most, and while there is a need even during this short period to induct some prisoners into areas of

meaningful occupation, serious training requires a much longer period to be of benefit to the prisoners. Therefore, it is only in Georgetown and at Mazaruni that real serious training goes on.

I might mention that at Mazaruni, in addition to the pig rearing scheme which is in operation there, there is also a general crop – farming programme.

There is, in addition, training in mechanics and welding. There is plumbing, printing and binding as is reflected in these Estimates. In Georgetown, a major activity is the production of chain – link fencing. So far this year, prisoners have been able to make and dispose of about \$10,000 worth of chain – link fencing.

If one takes the trouble to look at page 9 of these Estimates, where is reflected the revenue from the prisons, one will find that year after year since 1969 revenue from the prison has been increasing. One will find that in 1969 the actual revenue was \$15,142. It is projected that by the end of this year some \$25,800 will have been taken into revenue from works which go on inside of prisons.

3.40 p.m.

This speaks volume for the high priority which is given to training and to useful activity within our Prisons.

The hon. Member Mr. Balchand Persaud spoke about the food which is normally provided for prisoners and I can sympathise with the hon. Member, the feeling with which he spoke indicates his real concern. I am concerned as he is, that the prisoners should get the best possible diet and since the hon. Member is not a dietician and since he is not responsible for reporting on the quantum as well as the content so far as nutrient is concerned he is not competent enough to come to this House and to discuss these matters. Says the hon. Member Mr. Balchand Persaud, “The food is stink and rotten.” This is obviously untrue. We are not going to

serve rotten food to prisoners. *[Interruption]* I have personally looked into this matter since the hon. Member raised this question on the first occasion and I have found that the prisoners do get several proper square meals per day. What do they get? *[Interruption]* This House would be glad to know that among the items which are given to these prisoners: in the morning they get 8 oz. Of bread each, and the bread is buttered either with butter or margarine. *[Interruption by Mr. Hamid.]* My. Hon. Friend reminds me that if it is buttered it cannot be buttered with butter or margarine; it has to be buttered with butter. But, sir, I had a teacher who said that some people are luckier than others, because while their bread is buttered with ham fat, others' because while their bread is buttered with ham fat, others' bread is buttered with cart grease or not buttered bread. Then they get one pint of coffee or cocoa which ever they choose.

The Chairman: Menu provide for selection.

Mr. Clarke: Yes, sir. In addition, they get porridge and I am told that many of the prisoners prefer the porridge which is served. Therefore the prisoners cannot really honestly complain that they do not get proper meals while in prison. In addition, at Mazaruni more and more of the food which is supplied to the prisoners is being produced by the prisoners themselves. As I said we have there pigs, from that you get pork, there is livestock, cattle, from that you get milk, they rear chickens and they get eggs as well as meat. There is fish: there are two large fish ponds and one small one, and very soon the fish production at the Mazaruni Prison would be greater than that which is consumed by the prison population there. They get fresh greens and vegetable from the crop hon. Member know this, they have visited the Prison before and they what is going on there. I have also been to the prison and I have seen what is going on there.

Those answers seem to cover the remarks which were made new thinking which is abroad in respect of prison reform that Guyana can look forward in the not too distant future to a

new approach in the field of penology and I am sure that when that time comes the support of the hon. Member who spoke today would be a foregone conclusion.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Sir, I wish to seek your permission to remind the Minister that I made a call for an additional meal.

Mr. Clarke: I shall look into the question, sir.

Head 21, Ministry of Home Affairs, Prisons, \$1,180,439, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 61, Head 22.

HEAD 22 – MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES

Question proposed that the sum of \$996,669 for Head 22, Ministry of Home Affairs, Fire Protection Services, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Jagan: I should just like to ask the Minister a few questions generally on this Head.

Mr. Hamid: Subhead 8 and 11.

3.50 p.m.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Subhead 1 item (2).

Mr. D. Jagan: At least from 1969, the Chief Fire officer has been advocating the decentralisation of the Central Fire Station at Georgetown because of congestion not only of staff but also of equipment. In the last Report that was put out by this department. In the last Report that was put out by this department, the Chief Fire Officer had stated that in view of the increase of traffic, and houses being built in the outlying districts of Georgetown, it would take a longer time for the brigade to reach a fire than it would take a longer time for the brigade to reach a fire than it would take a longer time for the brigade to reach a fire than it would previously have taken and the department through the Chief Fire Officer had advocated that there should be sub – stations in outlying districts so that in case of fire, units from these sub – stations could reach the fire at a faster rate and, maybe, save property and lives.

I do not think that the call by the Chief Fire Officer has been responded to by the Government. I wonder how soon the Government intends to carry out some of these recommendations that were made by the Chief Fire Officer. The requests should be looked into by the Government in view of the fact, as stated in the Report, that the Chief Fire Officer had anticipated that after a fire had started, and they had been informed, they should reach the scene the fire within five minutes, but having regard to the increased traffic on the road, it would take a longer time to reach the fire.

That is why at the scene of a fire one hears people grumbling that the fire brigade should have reach there a long time ago. It may not be the fault of the fire officers of the people engaged in this department but it may be because of the congestion about which the complaints were made.

I have seen in the Report that the Chief Fire Officer requested that some very high government building be provided with fire escapes. I think there are still some buildings that are not provided with fire escapes and Government should set an example to private owners of buildings. The Government should take care of its own employees who might be in jeopardy if a

fire should start in one of these buildings. I wonder whether the Government would see to it that these requests of the Chief Fire Officer are into effect as soon as possible.

Mr. Hamid: On subhead 8, Ambulance and First Aid Equipment, this amount seems to be rather small when one considers the inadequate service which the hospital and other Government institutions offer the public. In most cases, it is quite feasible for the Red Cross to come to the assistance of Government by offering its ambulance to cope with the volume of cases in and around the city. When one considers the frequency of accidents throughout the country, one realises that more emphasis should be placed on ambulance and first aid equipment. The amount is very small and I was wondering what answer the Minister could give me in realises to this small amount and what he could promise to do in the future.

Subhead 11, Purchase of Fire Equipment for Government Buildings. This seems to be taking care of equipment for Government buildings only. If one considers the extension of local authorities and two councils, the fact must be noted that there is always a need for more equipment and more modern equipment. My Hon. Friend did say that the country needs more modern equipment but, in fact, local authorities should have a place where fire equipment could be kept so that it would be easily accessible to areas where there are wooden buildings always around. I hope the Minister will recognise the importance of this and place at the disposal of the residents of the city and of local authorities, fire equipment to combat fires on any occasion.

Mr. M. F. Singh: There seems to be some need for explanation in respect of subhead 1 item (12), House Allowances. In 1969, the actual expenditure in respect of house allowances was \$2,783; in 1970, \$29,000; in 1971 the amount provided was \$59,000 but the Revised Estimates show that only \$39,000 was spent, \$20,000 less. The staff in 1971 and 1972 total 313. Why therefore, if we have revised our estimate for 1971 to \$39,000, are we estimating the amount for 1972 at \$59,000? There is no increase in the staff but we are putting \$39,000 for 1971 and we are estimating \$20,000 more in 1972. There seems to be some need for an explanation.

Mr. Clarke: if all the members of the fire brigade qualified for house allowances, that is, if they get married, \$59,000 would be used. Since we cannot anticipate how many of them will qualify for this allowance, we cannot say with any degree of accuracy what amount will be required for 1972.

The hon. Member Mr. Hamid was completely out of place this afternoon when he asked about ambulance and first aid equipment, subhead 8, and he spoke about purchasing ambulances and making more ambulances available. We are speaking of ambulance equipment and first – aid equipment like blankets, stretchers and bandages. He is talking about new ambulances which are made available under the Capital Estimates. If the hon. Member would peruse his Estimates, he would see that there is an allocation for ambulances.

4 p.m.

The hon. Member spoke on subhead 11, Purchase of Fire Equipment for Government Buildings. This is very specific, but he mentioned local authorities and the needs of local authorities. He says this amount is too small to buy things for local authorities. The Government Fire and Ambulance Service provides a service to which every citizen in Guyana is entitled, that is, it gives advice on fire prevention. It does not provide fire equipment for householders.

If the hon. Member wants to make a suggestion that the local authorities ought to have fire equipment in their building and in the property which they own, the Municipal and District Councils Act gives the power to the local authorities to establish that sort of facility and to establish the service, but they can get advice from the Central Fire Service.

The Central Fire Service is always available to give that advice whenever it is requested. I know that some local authorities are already making use of this advice. In New Amsterdam there is a section of the Fire Service and the New Amsterdam Town Council has recently been getting such advice.

The hon. Member Mr. Jagan spoke about fire escapes in Government buildings. This is a very important question. I agree with the hon. Member that wherever Government Buildings do not have fire escapes they should be put, but it is the Ministry of Works, Hydraulic and Supply that does this. I am sure that, in due course, wherever this situation exists it will be remedied.

The hon. Member also spoke about the need for more and better accommodation to be provided for the Guyana Fire Services and the fact that the Chief Fire Officer in his report had stated repeatedly that the station is congested and badly housed. The hon. Member did not stop to consider that this was the reason why it was though necessary to decentralise the services and to establish fire stations in Ruimveldt and Campbelville, which he can go and see if he wants to.

In West Ruimveldt there is a fire station. There is another in Campbelville, which he can look at, and there is another one under construction at Linden, which he can look at, we are decentralising the service and therefore there is not this great need and urgency for additional accommodation at the Central Headquarters by the Stabroek Market. The decentralisation is taking place and I am happy that the hon. Member now recognises that this is so.

Mr. Jagan: I think my very friend misunderstood what I said. I did not say there should be more accommodation at the fire station. I said there should be decentralisation at the fire station.

Head 22, Ministry of Home Affairs. Fire Protection Services, \$996,669, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Assembly resumed

Sitting suspended at 4.05 p.m.

On resumption - -

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: Before we continue I should like to make an announcement. It has been agreed that we will sit tomorrow and Thursday until 10' o'clock, and we will sit until 4 o'clock on Christmas Eve. I make this statement so that members may be able to arrange their affairs accordingly.

HEAD 23 – MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS

Question proposed that the sum of \$474,584 for head 23, Ministry of Home Affairs, Registration and Elections, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Ram Karran: I wish to speak on subheads 4 and 5 on page 63.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Subhead 8, if necessary.

Mr. Ram Karran: I wonder if the hon. Minister will explain the very high increase in the provision under this subhead 4, National Registration.

As I understand the system, registration is done as soon as a person attains the age of 14 years and registration is done again when citizens reach the age of 21 years so that he or she can be listed on the register for elections.

However, it appears to me, from this massive increase here, that the Government is doing something other than the more registration of persons of 14 years and the transfer of the persons

of 21 years to the electoral roll.

The explanation which appears against this subhead states "Expansion of National Registration work". This does not explain what sort of expansion. Do we have more persons of 14 years of age in the country? Or do we have more people attaining the age of 21 years being put on the electoral roll?

As I said, it would appear that this is something more than the normal year to year activity of the national registration function. I wonder if the hon. Minister can say specifically whether registration is now being done overseas with citizens of Guyana who may be living in foreign countries.

4.40 p.m.

Again, dealing with subhead 5 I notice that in 1970 the actual expenditure for the National Elections was just \$1,525. The Approved Estimates for 1971 was \$10,000 and it was questioned last year and it was revised to \$1,000 and it was questioned last year and it was revised to \$1,000, but for the year, 1972 we are increasing it to \$5,000. The hon. Minister tells us it is a token sum, in fact it is indicated here in the Estimates that it is a token provision, but we all know that a token provision is a very small amount \$1, \$10 and that sort of thing. I am prepared to accept \$1,000 as token but when it comes to five times that amount I am sure that the hon. Minister will indicate that a mistake was made. That is all I have to say.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, Subhead 4, National Registration. A very significant amount of money is being requested for national registration under other Charges, \$233,194. We have had big operation, National Registration; we now have a National Registration and

Elections Office with a staff of seventy – five provided for \$174,890 on the previous page and the sum of \$233,000 is being requested here now, for what? The legend states: Expansion of the National Registration Work. Unlike the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran I want to ask what expansion? Is it the kind of expansion while will produce the same kind of lists that were eventually baptised the “Voters List” in the 1968 Elections? Is any part of this money being used to finance a former member of the Guyana Electricity Corporation who I understand is now on a registration operation overseas? Let us know what he is doing overseas at the present moment? What kind of operation is it? Is he on a registration operation or is he under a P.N.C. operation being financed by the Government of Guyana by the taxpayer’s money? We must know the details of that. In how many other countries overseas is there a registration operation going on? Are they again registering non – Guyanese as was done in the 1968 operation? Let us know the reason for this significant increase in the national registration vote and let us know what is the expansion about. What offices are they using? Are they using the Foreign Offices and High Commissioners’ as party offices to spend this money?

Subhead 5, National Elections, \$5,000. Had I given the necessary notice I would have moved for the deletion of this amount. Because until there is a machinery for free and fair elections in the country no sum like this should be provided in the Estimates. I should like the hon. Minister to tell us when he thinks we would be able to have a restructuring of this whole machinery for elections, the abolition of overseas voting, the abolition entirely of proxies to prevent what was perpetuated on the people of Guyana in the 1968 Elections.

Mr. Jagan: Mr. Chairman, the Government claims that it has the majority support of Guyanese people, I should not use the word “Guyanese” but of people living in Guyana because it claims that many of the alleged persons who voted for the party overseas are Guyanese. From what the Government claims here I wonder whether the Government still thinks that overseas voting is necessary having regard to the fact that Guyana as a whole is a laughing stock abroad when people consider how many persons overseas took part in the Elections here. I should like

the hon. Minister to tell us of the sum that is being sought here whether any amount is required for overseas registration, and if so, how much of this sum is require.

Mr. Clarke: Mr. Chairman, the three hon. Members who spoke all asked the same question in relation to the subhead on which they spoke. The amount provided under subhead 4, National Registration, is in respect of what is stated in it legend and read by the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran and the hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh. The hon. Member Mr. Jagan asked whether this money under subhead 4 is being provided for overseas registration. Yes, sir. Part of this money is in respect of overseas registration. Thirdly, I am not aware at present of the amount that is required for overseas as against what is required for local registration.

The hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh wanted to know when would some reorganisation of the Elections Commission take place. The party from which the hon. Member comes is not entitled to a seat on the Elections Commission.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Mr. Chairman, I was expecting to get an answer to this. According to what is publicised, the registration period in Guyana would be seven days and my information is that it is almost throughout the year for overseas. The point I make is that Guyanese here are given a restricted period within a short time of seven days whereas overseas you can register almost any time.

I want to separate the two, I understand that students wishing to take the G.C.E. examination are required to present their I.D. cards, and there is a large number of students who have not been registered during the course of this year. It means that they will be seriously affected when they are about to write the examination in June next year if the registration period is September in 1972. I would wish to urge very strongly that the hon. Minister on the Government consider establishing machinery for registration to be Government consider establishing machinery for registration to be conducted throughout the year. At any stage a citizen must be able to go to the Registration Office or to the Elections Office to have his or her

name placed on the List. This would be in my view a very objective step if the Government were to consider this proposal. But if the Government is not inclined to give consideration to this proposal of allowing registration throughout the year, at least the Government must of necessity concede that a period of seven days is ridiculous and scandalous and there is need for a longer period of registration of citizens of this country.

4.50 p.m.

Mr. Clarke: I am glad that the hon. Member has recognised the importance of registration and will do his duty to those persons whom he has been telling, “do not go and register.” The national register is required to be opened from time to time and to be brought up to date, period is normally given during which persons, who qualify to get on that register, ought to put themselves in order. It is therefore incumbent on all hon. Members to advise all persons who so qualify to take the opportunity to get their names on the register and once they do that, there is no objection to getting their name on the register.

Mr. Ram Karran: In so far as overseas registration is concerned, am one citizens of this country, students and others the Government has deliberately refused their registration. I can call the names of people who are in schools overseas who have been deliberately left out of the electoral list. How is it the Government accepted the names of certain people and other people were left out deliberately, even though they went to High Commissioner’s Office in Canada and in the United Kingdom. We want to make sure that if any registration is being done overseas, that all Guyanese would be given the opportunity to register not only their friends, and then for them to come here, when the voted are cast and rigged and manipulated, to say they got 100 per cent of the overseas vote.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Mr. Chairman, the point I was making is so legitimate that as a Member of this House I am complaining to the Government that thousands of students who were not registered during the course of this year are eligible for registration.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Persaud , you have made your point very clearly.

Mr. Clarke: Mr. Chairman, there are students who do not come within the ambit of the registration. They have to be within a certain age to get on the registration. They have to be within a certain age to get on the register and what the hon. Member should tell this House is that the person about whom he is talking, do not qualify. *[Interruption]*

The Chairman: I had occasion to say I will not tolerate this behaviour and I propose to adjourn the House.

Mr. Clarke: The hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran made a remark which is objectionable because there is no case, that I know of which any Guyanese has been refused registration overseas. *[Interruption]*

Mr. Ram Karran: Mr. Chairman, I am only saying that the hon. Minister says he knows of no resident student in the United Kingdom who went to the Commissioner's Office and was not registered.

The Chairman: But if he says so ---

Mr. Ram Karran: He will never admit it, because it is the Government's policy.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Mr. Chairman, I merely want to clarify for the benefit of the House and record, that the people for whom I am advocating are people who are qualified under the law for registration, and not persons under 14 years. My charge is, that thousands of persons above 14 years have not been able to be registered during the course of this year because of the short period and the limited or no publicity given to the period of registration. I am calling upon the Government to extend that period and to move to have registration throughout the year.

Mr. Wilson: The hon. Minister has been very evasive with regard to the commentaries made by the hon. Member Mr .Reepu Daman Persaud. The question is, will the hon. Minister consider extending the period of registration for more than seven days? Would he consider seven months, or seven weeks?

Dr. Jagan: I should like to ask the hon. Minister certain specific questions. I am sure that the Minister has seen the Granada Television film entitled, "The Making of a Prime Minister". The person who did the registration in Wolverhampton in England, said that he registered only 14 persons and he did not know how the list had over 200 persons. Will the hon. Minister state whether he or the Elections Officer has conducted an inquiry into this matter, because this is a grave situation. An officer employed by the Government getting up before millions of people and making such an assertion. Secondly, in the 1968 Elections, in one district in the Pomeroun, when one box was opened, four parcels of ballot papers wrapped with rubber bands were found in the box. Will the hon. Minister tell the House if there was any explanation to the country on how this took place?

The Chairman: Certainly, hon. Member Dr. Jagan, the hon. Minister should have notice of this question. He has not come here prepared. You refer to Elections in 1968. We are here in 1971. You can hardly imagine the Minister being prepared for a question like this.

Dr. Jagan: Sir, you know as a fact, questions and Motions put to the House are not answered and you, yourself, take the point, when I discuss matters with you, that you cannot call the House, you cannot put those things on the Order Paper. We must, therefore, take this opportunity to ask these pertinent questions otherwise it is a waste of time having an Elections Commission, an Elections Officer. He prepared the Report for the last elections. I would like to raise a point of criticism about him ---

The Chairman: I would not permit you under this Head criticism of the officer.

Dr. Jagan: Proxy lists were supposed to be published four days before voting day. They have not been made available up to now, even to a then member of the Elections Commission, through the Chairman. That is the duty of Elections Officer. If he does not want to do his Job according to the law, if he feels too much pressure on him, then he must in duty bound resign. Any honourable man would do that. Government is clearly using the whole State apparatus not only for purposes of employment, to put their favourites, but also to rig elections in this country.

5 p.m.

The whole question of national registration is a disgrace. So far as the overseas list is concerned, people have said that they checked immigration statistics, they did house to house inquiries and people on the national registration list do not exist. How did they get there?

One of the most reputable poll organisations, which was one of the few who predicted correctly the last election results in the United Kingdom when everybody thought that the Labour Party was going to win, said that not more than 13,000 persons should have been registered in the United Kingdom, but over 44,000 persons were registered. How did they get on the list? How is it the P.N.C. organiser could say that he registered 80 persons and more than 200 were on the list? If the Minister cannot answer, the Election Officer must answer, or he must resign because that is his job.

This country has become a disgrace in the international community that is why the members of the Government do not want legislators to go to meeting of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. Yet we pay large sums of money to belong to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. They do not want the Opposition to go because they are afraid of all their frauds brought out in the international community. *[Interruption]* You are all a disgrace. You bluster a lot and you want to fight.

There were Local Government elections. How do you expect people to co – operate with this rotten stinking situation when Local Government elections are rigged? The members of the P.N.C. cannot win in the Rice Producers Association and therefore them by – pass it and take the money of the rice farmers that is in the Board and give it to the Rice Committees for their handpicked friends. That is why rice production is falling.

They cannot win one seat in democratically held elections in the R.P.A. Their own union which they foisted on the sugar industry, plus the puppet one which they uphold, was not able to win one seat in recent elections for cane weigh ere even in Wales where they are supposed to be strong. Yet they control all the local authorities.

Look at the discrimination that is going on. The Minister had to cancel all the valuations for Leguan and order premises to revalue. A delegation came to me the other day. How do they expect people to give self – help when all these things happens? Self – help has to be a voluntary thing, not two free and two months with pay as is done on the road construction in the interior. They are dividing the Amerindian community today.

The P.P.P. was able to win five out of the nine seats in Moruca at the Amerindian council elections. The members of the P.N.C. did not get around to rigging that one, but like a thief in the night they came when Mr. Stoby was in Georgetown and overnight announced elections for captains. More people voted for the election of captains then in the General Election and in the village council elections. What a disgrace! They obviously think that every man has a price. There is bribery and corruption and that is why the country cannot make any progress.

These sums listed here should be taken out of the Estimates. Let the taxpayers be saved this waste of their money. The Government has a free hand. We are not contesting, nobody contests, so go ahead and run the show, why worry with all these things? Is this only for public consumption or for overseas consumption? Is this what it is for?

The Government is caught up in its own contradictions. It cannot help. It should learn some lessons from China. The Minister has been to China. The Chinese people, millions of them, build things by hand. Millions of people put their shoulders to the wheel and give voluntary labour, they build big dams and all kinds of things because they do not have parasites sitting on top of them in the Government machinery. They do not have parasite landlords and capitalists and foreigners riding them.

But these here, are a group of foreign parasites allied with bureaucratic capitalist parasites, are now being cultivated by this Government. Bureaucrats are becoming capitalists; they have fat salaries and fat allowances. They are making deals.

They did not do that in China and that is how they were able to get self – help on a voluntary basis. People fought to get power. Help them to build. You cannot do it here. You are wasting time; you are wasting time; you are wasting the time of this House and wasting the taxpayers' money. You are taking the country down and down is the gutter and further down in the mud.

These sums provided here - \$233,194 for National Registration and 410,000 for National Elections and Local Authorities Elections – can be very well spent. If the Government used this just to buy drugs and hand those out in all the hospitals and dispensaries the people would benefit more than from this nonsense that is going on here.

National Registration for what? What have the people of Guyana got out of National Registration? What is the purpose behind it? Originally the whole idea of having photographs and identification cards was that there would be no impersonation at elections but now the Election Officer has reported that there were , 19,000 proxies at the last General Election. There were 300 in 1961.

This is how the Government used coercion. You have a pension, you must sign a proxy: you want a piece of land, you owe rent, you must sign a proxy, this is how the members of the Government are working. What. Therefore, is the point of having National Registration? What is the purpose? This is not a big country with tens of millions of people so that you need to identify everybody. This is a small country. Even for security purposes it is not needed; you cannot hide anywhere. Where are you going to hide?

This is a waste of money and I am considering how inefficiently it has been done. Up to now, a large number of people do not have their identification cards just for the simple purposes for which they need them for. When is really achieved by this exercise? What is achieved by the expenditure of this vast sum of money?

The last time we were talking about Carifesta, I had occasion to talk about spending money carefully.

5.10 p.m.

This country is poor, it can very well utilise this amount of money. You will be surprised to know, sir - you go all over the country as I do - little sums of money can change the lives of people, but these people are not giving the small amount of money that is necessary to help people, instead they are spending vast sums for things like this which are meaningless in terms of the welfare of the people of Guyana. The Government must seriously consider this whole situation. The Prime Minister makes a statement: things must be good, look how much is imported into the country. But there is such a thing as distribution of income. One can very well see that in the consumer durables which are bought who is buying it? People are catching hell at the bottom and it still behoves this poor country to waste all this money.

National registration is a waste of time, and so far as Elections are concerned – local authority and national elections – the Government might as well dispense with them because it

has virtually defector done that. When it decides to have free and fair Elections, when it decides that there would be no more proxy gimmicks and dead people and under age people padded on the Voters' list, when ballot boxes are not tampered with, it is only then that such sums are legitimate.

I remember talking to the Chairman of the Election Commission and I heard him say that four wads of ballot papers came out of a box wrapped with elastic. The Chairman said, "Somebody has to answer for this." Up to now nobody has answered. What is the use having an Election Commission? What is the use having elections officers when this kind of rottenness is going on in the country and taxpayer's money is being wasted. I suggest to the Government that it withdraws these Heads from the Estimates and use the money for some other useful purpose. Old –age pensioners in the Berbice River have not received their pension for three months. I was there. This money can be spent more usefully at the moment.

Mr. Lall: Subhead 4, National Registration. I should like to make one observation. We observe that the Government is asking for \$233,194, the Guyanese nation is given seven days in which to register, and if we go back to page 62 item 13, Registration Clerks we will observe that the Government had voted \$23,353 for four such officers. *[Interruption by an hon. Members]* I should like to ask the Government whether it is reasonable to say that these four clerks were employed to work for seven days only. This really needs some examination. I am strongly recommending that since the sum of \$23,252 was spent to employ registration clerk then registration should be allowed all through the year in Guyana.

Mr. Clarke: Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member Mr. Harry Lall made a very misleading statement when he said money provided for registration clerks on the previous page is in fact money provided for the registration exercise just completed. On the staff of the National Registration Office are twenty – three clerks. Therefore, the money provided is in respect of these persons who work in that office.

21.12.71

National Assembly

5.10 – 5.20 p.m.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition has made a great deal of his usual noise about registration and elections. We have become accustomed in this House to hear him. But I should like to say this, that it does not suit his purpose to have proxy voting and overseas voting, because he is not on this side he is over there. If he gets over here it will suit his purpose.

Head 23. Ministry of Home Affairs. Registration and Elections, \$474,584, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 64

HEAD 24 – MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

PROBATION AND WELFARE SERVICES

Question proposed that the sum of \$417,741, for Head 24, Ministry of Home Affairs, Probation and welfare Services, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: I should like to make a few observations on the general situation.

The Chairman: Yes, hon. Member.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Mr. Chairman, This Department is not treated with the importance it ought to be treated with. As a matter of fact, Mr. Chairman, my observations is the Probation Service is now more or less restricted to investigating court cases and matters referred to the Department by Judge and Magistrates.

I do not for one moment suggest that there are not a few cases outside of the courts which do not engage the attention of the Probation Service. The Probation Services is vital for the social and moral upliftment of our community, particularly young people. The time has come for the Probation Service to examine certain social ills that have become very manifest in the society, the community at large in this country.

One area to which this Probation Service can give attention immediately is the area of the large consumption of intoxicating drinks. I am not speaking about adults. I am talking about students attending both primary and secondary schools and young people generally. Then the large consumption of bush rum by people in various parts of the country, resulting in serious deterioration of their health. Then there is the sore question of prostitution which has become a virtual industry in this country. *[Interruption]*

The hon. Minister of Communications asks who owns the boarding houses in this country. I am not advocating for owners, or I am not discussing boarding houses that operate for the purpose of lodging and feeding people, but there is undoubtedly a racket among some so-called boarding houses owners. One has recently been honoured. I do not want to refer specifically to the individual because he would be identified. He was honoured by a promotion, which was published in the Official Gazette, in a Particular business which he is not suited in view of the particular business which he carries on.

Not to move away from the point, I recognise the limitation of the Probation Service so far as personnel is concerned, because one sees from the Estimates that there are 20 Probation officers and 20 probation officers cannot adequately service this country and help in the improvement of the social and moral upliftment of our community. Hon. Member probably read in the newspapers where the Commissioner of Police said they were in possession of evidence of certain people going into the country inducing young, innocent, country girls, informing them that they could come to Georgetown to be employed as waitresses, and cashiers, and what have you. In fact, when these girls come to the city, one or two days they are put behind the cash

21.12.71

National Assembly

5.20 – 5.30 p.m.

register as cashier and probably dressed up as waitresses, and within one week, their bodies are offered for sale by these mercenary and shameless member of our community. At 18, the complete lives of these people are destroyed.

This is a social problem and every Guyanese, and every member of this House, I would like to feel, is concerned about this issue, and I wish to appeal to the hon. Minister to see whether the Probation Service of this country can be of any help on these areas to which I have referred. I recognise some of the causes, unemployment and so on, but despite this fact, the inducement by these people who go into the country areas and fool these young girls in order to make them prostitutes, efforts should be made to examine these areas and wherever the Government and the Ministry of Home Affairs are satisfied that boarding houses are operated on the basis to which I have referred; Government should take steps to close those boarding houses down.

Station G.B.S. was running the programme "Night Ride", and the announcers interviewed some of the prostitutes on the streets. Some of them told sad stories. Their parents are dead, without clothing. The Probation Service can move into these areas, examine the factors, and, where possible, certain financial assistance can be recommended to get these are not some who have the tendencies for this type of trade, but an effort could be made to minimise the growing industry of prostitution. *[Interruption]* I concede my incapacity to carry out the test; there are more qualified people within the walls of this House to carry out such a test. I speak merely because of the very young ones who are today in this industry.

I can appeal perhaps to the Minister to consider increasing the vote for the Probation Service so that more people can be employed, more people can be trained, because there is a shortage of staff and a shortage of experienced and qualified probation officers. The Minister knows retired men are called upon to help. People have gone abroad on courses but there is need for more people to go into the service. There is need to go beyond court cases and to go into the social field of the community.

Mr. Clarke: The hon. Member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud has called upon the Probation Service of this country to look after the question of prostitution, the problem of the drinking illicit spirits, legal spirits and so on, but I think an examination of the position would reveal that the Probation and welfare Service is not geared to deal with cases of this type.

As a matter of fact, the Probation and welfare Service is largely a case work service and what the hon. Member wants the Probation and Welfare Service to do is to take on the job of the problems which are consequent thereon have led in a number of cases to some of the problems to which the hon. Member referred.

I understand that the hon. Member is a Pandit and a religious man and several organisations, some of which he served, have a responsibility to ensure that the problems to which my hon. Friend referred are minimised and are dealt with by these agencies.

The Probation and welfare Service has 20 officers and while I conceive that this number may not be enough to deal with all problems requiring the service, it seems to me that it is wrong to ask the Probation and Welfare Department to take on this additional responsibility, which is the responsibility of the home and of the community at large. It is the responsibility of the home and of the community at large to ensure that some of these social problems are got rid of and therefore the hon. Member ought to look in many cases to himself and to others like himself to bring this service, where it is required, into greater prominence .

The hon. Member said that the Probation Service has been concerned only with case work, or matters referred to it by the courts. The statistics do not support that argument. As a matter of fact, a larger number of cases have been dealt with outside of the area of the courts over the years then represented by the hon. Member.

If you take the years between 1965 and 1970, you find that 184 matters were referred by the courts in 1965. In 1966, 199 matters were referred, 133 in 1967 and 320 in 1970.

Matrimonial matters were also dealt with by this department because, as hon. Members know, this department deals with matters relation to matrimonial causes. In 1965, 449 such cases were dealt with as against 184 which were referred to the Service by the courts. In 1970, there were 929 such other cases as compared with 320 in 1969. Obviously the department is not dealing with cases referred to it by the court, but there are a substantial number of cases which it deals with and disposes of during each year.

At the moment, six officers of this department are at the University of Guyana and one officer is overseas attending courses in connection with their work. We are continuing to train more and more people in this area so that we can improve the service and improve the area of expertise which is available to provide a better service in the Probation and welfare Department.

I believe that is all the agencies in Guyana - all the social and religious organisations as well as the people as a whole - do their job in relation to matters like the high degree of consumption of alcohol by juveniles, there would not be the large number of young people who get involved in the evil of prostitution. If we all got involved, all of us at all levels of the society, we could make a great impact in this area, but we have not been doing our work.

I think the probation and welfare Service, through the number of matrimonial cases which it disposes of, does do a great deal of work indirectly in the area of bringing some amelioration to the situation. Therefore, I would suggest to hon. Members that we proceed in that way. It is recognised that there are a large number of such persons and I would urge, in addition to what the hon. Member said, that we ought to look to increasing the number of people available in the Probation and Welfare Department so that, by and large, all the agencies that can help to provide better service generally, in terms of the ills which my hon. Friend referred to, will get involved.

The Chairman: Page 65.

Head 24, Ministry of Home Affairs. Probation and Welfare Service \$417,741, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

5.40 p.m.

The Chairman: Page 66. There is one correction I should like to make on that page. The Explanatory Notes should read: “2” instead of “1”.

DIVISION X11 – MINISTRY FO HOME AFFAIRS

Question proposed that the sum of \$473,000 for Division X11, Ministry of Home Affairs, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Will hon. Members kindly indicate the items on which they wish to speak?

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Subhead 2.

Mr. Ram Karran: Subheads 2, 9 and 18.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Subhead 2, Prison Improvement. The Government is seeking the sum of \$15,000 for Equipment. The year 1972 is sort of the end of the Government's 7 – Year period for its Development Programme. In 1965 when submitting its Development Programme the Government said that it is prepared to spend \$2 million in the allocation for the building of a new Prison. So far over the years no sums have been allocated for the building of such a Prison.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, I do not wish to interrupt you, but the hon. Member Mr. Jagan made that same point on a prior head.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Mr. Chairman, I do not intend to repeat what the hon. Member Mr. Jagan has said. I merely wish to say that the Government under the Ministry of Home Affairs, stated in its Development programme that it will spend \$13,084,640. By the end of this year 1972 the Ministry of Home Affairs under Capital Development will only spend \$7,304,940, a shortfall by 40 per cent, actual amount \$5,777,694. On the question of Prison Improvement the Government can give an explanation, why it has not been able to fulfil its programme.

Mr. Ram Karran: I merely wish to ask the hon. Minister under subhead 2, if he can say what form of improvement this envisages.

Dealing with subheads 9 and 18, I wish to observe that while it is important for the Police to be equipped for the necessary paraphernalia for the detection of crime it is seen at subhead 18 that traffic lights are to be installed by instalment payments, and that in the case of subhead 9 a foreign loan is anticipated. In view of the fact that so many lives are lost on the road every year and the urgent need to have traffic lights installed at several points in the country, not only in Georgetown, first of all, I want the hon. Minister to indicate to us what is the programme for the installations of traffic lights and whether the Government will not speed up the installation of traffic lights so as to avoid, where possible, the carnage on our roads.

Mr. Clarke: Sir, Subhead 2, I referred to the prison improvement to be done at New Amsterdam Prison during a previous reply. I said we are going to build a sanitary block. This sum is provided for that block.

The Chairman: Subheads 9 and 18.

Mr. Clarke: Subhead 9 is to purchase equipment for the Police. It is anticipated here that we will get a foreign loan. Some of this equipment is already on order and we expect to receive early next year some equipment for our land transport, as well as for water transport. I do not

know whether there was a specific question asked by the hon. Member on subhead 9. I did not hear what we asked on subhead 9.

The Chairman: what he said was that so much money is being spent on subhead 9 and only \$35,000 is being spent on subhead 18.

Mr. Clarke: equipment vote is always a very large vote. The hon. Member knows that equipment for Police on land, sea and air are always very large amounts, because it is road transport, that is there are orders for vehicles outstanding. It covers water transport. The Police already have one plane which equipment might become necessary.

The sum of \$35,000 is our estimate for the instalment payment for traffic lights. This \$35,000 will pay for traffic lights which we already have. I understand the hon. Member to ask what is the programme for the instalment of traffic lights. I think the Traffic Department is continuing to examine the situation and wherever traffic lights appear to be desirable, I am sure that they would be recommended and in that case they would be installed. Obviously, there seems to be some arrangement by which traffic lights are installed and then they are paid for over a period, as this legend seems to indicate. As traffic lights seem to appear necessary by the Traffic Department I am sure that they will be put up. I cannot say immediately how many there should be next year and how many the following year. I do not have that information.

Mr. Ram Karran: I wish to thank the hon. Minister for his attempt to answer the questions but to ask whether in view of what we said in connection with subhead 9 that a loan is anticipated, are we to understand that if the anticipated loan does not materialise having regard to the fact that some of the current estimates? I thought that so far as the traffic lights are concerned that it would not be an ad hoc exercise by the Police department but that the whole thing would have been examined scientifically with respect to the development and growth of traffic.

The Chairman: That is what he said.

I understand him to say that whenever the traffic authorities think that a light is necessary, one would be installed and we would pay for it later. At the same time could I ask the hon. Minister if traffic lights are built here or if the Government still has the erroneous idea that foreign things are better than local things and we are ordering traffic lights from abroad?

Mr. Clarke: Sir, the hon. Minister asked and answered his question.

Mr. Wilson: I want to make a specific suggestion to the hon. Minister, apart from traffic lights. In Sheriff Street, there is need for a traffic light at the railway crossing, a blinking red light, or he could get his experts to consider a type of traffic light which will go on - - -

The Chairman: Is there not some decision that the Mahaica Georgetown railway is to be phased out?

Mr. Wilson: Even if that is so, we do not know how soon it will be. While the trains are running the light could be installed. I have been told that a system of traffic lights could be devised whereby the very approach of the train would bring on the traffic lights. That would help to save lives.

Mr. Clarke: the Hon. Member's suggestion would be noted; but my impression is that the police have already examined that crossing to see whether traffic light would be the answer to the number of accidents that occurred there during the last month. These accidents were not the result of the absence of traffic lights but because users of the road failed to observe the stop sign which is there, and if the road users would observe the stop sign, the accidents would not occur.

The hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran asked whether traffic lights were being produced locally. The answer is yes, I think the hon. Member knows that, and we are using them. The hon.

Member has also asked and I will explain for his benefit again, that the traffic department is continuing to examine the situation to see where traffic lights become necessary - -

The Chairman: Apparently the hon. Member wants you to use the word, “scientific” - -

Mr. Clarke: Wherever the traffic department feels traffic lights should installed, they be put. The traffic department is continuously looking at the situation with respect to traffic in this country and wherever the traffic department advises that lights would be a solution to the problem, they will be put in.

The hon. Member asked if the loan that is anticipated does not materialise, whether the equipment will be paid for from local sources. The Ministry of Finance which prepares these estimates has indicated that a foreign loan is anticipated. I believe they must do this on a firm basis. I believe that the money will be available, the orders have already been placed, and we hope to get some of these vehicles next year.

Division XII, Ministry of Home Affairs - \$743,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 25 – MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Question proposed that the sum of \$838,682 for Head 25, Ministry of Local Government, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Will hon. Members please indicate.

Mr. Wilson: I should like to make general comments.

Mr. Hamid: Items (9) and (18).

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: I should like to make a general observation.

The Chairman: I was just reminded that we have taken 26 minutes. The time allocated was 10 minutes and we are 1,700 minutes behind.

Mr. Lall: Item (11).

Mr.M. F. Singh: Items (9) and (11) if they are not covered.

Mr. Wilson: I should like to speak on three matters, depressed areas, extra nuclear areas, and the scientific systems of grants to local authorities. With regard to depressed areas, it is correct for the Government to have embraced within the ambit of local government all areas in the country, but it would appear that the Government has no policy, no intention of doing anything to improve the conditions in the depressed areas within certain local authorities and certain districts councils. I should like to know what plans the Minister has for assisting depressed areas within district councils, to elevate them to desirable standards of decency and efficiency.

6 p.m.

With regard to extra – nuclear areas, I am sure that the hon. Minister is ware that the residents in these areas are entitled to services, such as maintenance of roads, water supply and drainage, through the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund. We understand that the local authorities are now moving in the direction of making preparations to collect rates from residents in these areas.

I should like to ask the Minister whether his Government has any intention of using the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund, to which the residents the extra – nuclear areas are entitled. To offset against whatever rate are due by them? That is to say, if a resident's property

in an extra – nuclear area is assessed to such an extent that he had to pay \$15 a year as rates, is the Government considering whether it should pay some proportion of that sum from what the resident is entitled to out of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund because of the fact that that fund represents a part of his wages?

On the principle of grants, I went to say that there is mention of grants to local authorities, but I think it is time that the Government should advise some principle of making grants to local authorities according to certain standards, whether on the basis of the road miles, on population or on drainage, canals and the like. Is the Government considering making grants to local authorities by some definite yardstick instead of this *ad hoc* system of making grants to local authorities, and having the size of the grant it determined by sentiment and political connections.

In certain areas where like Buxton perhaps liberal grants are given. In certain other areas where the Government thinks that it has not got political support it denies grants or gives very meagre grants. People should know that because of factor A, B or C they are entitled to this or that size grants. We want the Minister to say whether he is considering the allocation of grants on some scientific principle or some objective principle and not subjectively.

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. Hamid.

Mr. Hamid: Speaking generally on these items I would wish to say that last year the sum of \$26,928 was allocated for subhead 1 (11), Valuation Officers and the meagre sum of \$13,737 was spent. The sum of \$26,164 is earmarked for this item in 1972.

One remembers that when local authorities were established under the Marshal plan and election were held, members of the People's National Congress stressed the importance of people within the area supporting the P.N.C. at the Local Government elections. Many promises were made. Arrangements were also made for valuing properties of the residents in the areas.

Several years have passed and it seems as if this matter has not been settled in most areas. Certain valuation officers hop into local authority areas and value haphazardly. They make their assessments by looking at an individual's head to see whether he may be a supporter of the P.N.C., the P.P.P. or the U.F. His property is assessed on that ground.

This is not a standardised system. This is a system that penalises residents in the areas, especially when they are farmers and their lands have to be cultivated. Even when there are adverse weather conditions, they are told that they have to pay fantastic sums of money as rates for the land they occupy. It is very difficult for farmers to realise that there is no proper drainage and irrigation and yet they are thrown out of the land.

I hope that the Minister will see the importance of this particular division. It has long been known that property should be assessed on a proper basis as that every property may be assessed in accordance with a standardised principle and so that persons will know how to appeal against valuations.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: I wish to make a very brief contribution. With the implementation of the Marshal Plan, several nuclear and extra – nuclear areas have brought under local government. The position, however, is that residents of nuclear and extra – nuclear areas are still tenants of sugar estates and are therefore not owners of the land upon which their houses are built.

That is not the only point. The residents in these areas owe the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund Committee money for the houses in which they are living and there is a type of hire – purchase agreement existing between the tenant sugar workers and the estate authorities.

These persons are paying annual rentals to the sugar estates and the sugar estates are obliged under the Sugar industry Labour Welfare Fund to provide them with certain services and facilities. At the moment these facilities are received from the sugar estates, but, the areas,

21.12.71

National Assembly

6 – 6.10 p.m.

having been brought under local government, the local authorities in the areas where there are extra – nuclear and nuclear housing scheme have levied taxes against the residents.

Many of these people are pensioners and are unable to pay the taxes charged by the local authorities. They face a serious dilemma in that if the Ordinance is put into force their houses may be put up for sale.

On a few occasions I have called upon the Minister on this question, He has been very kind to receive my reports and, wherever possible, he has intervened to help, but this is becoming a national problem and several areas are affected. The residents are complaining about discrimination in the levying of taxes.

I recall that an amendment was proposed to the assessment ordinance to remove certain provisions that required the yardstick to be set beforehand for the basis of taxation, but now the persons who value these houses are free to assess, probably on their own information and using their own basis. There is a charge of discrimination in assessments; there is a hardship on people who work sometimes two or three days a week on the sugar estates and on pensioners who are unable to pay the taxes.

6.10 p.m.

I should like to ask the hon. Minister of Local Government how early legislation will be introduced to allow passing of the nuclear and extra nuclear areas from the various sugar estates to the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund Committee so that the land can be finally transported to the people who are occupying them at the moment as tenants, and they can become the owners of these lands and holders of the transports. Pending this process, if officials of the Ministry of Local Government can speak to the various local authorities that are involved to withhold action against these people who have got, in my view, a genuine case so that finally the process can be smooth in keeping even with Dr. Marshall's own report where he said they should not go harsh

in these areas because people are not accustomed to this type of administration, and the fact that the estates are still the owners.

The last point I wish to make deals with education. I am certain the people are not aware of their rights in these areas. The result is they receive the taxation, they are against the taxation, the taxation is too high and they do not comply with Local Government Ordinance to appeal within the specified period provided by law. When they realise that it is too high it is not fair and they try to make representation, the period allowed for appeal is passed and so they do not know what next to do.

I think it would be a vital services of the C.I.S. and the Government – owned radio station to educate the people of this country particularly new areas that are under the control of local authorities now, and additional areas that will come under the control of local authorities subsequently, to educate them on the provisions on the various Ordinances that are operative in these local authority areas.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Lall.

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, I should like to draw the hon. Minister's attention to the disgraceful valuation system which now obtains. This is a complaint brought to me by several sugar workers. I should mainly like to point out the Plaisance industry area.

I want to mention two cases; one of a business enterprise in the Plaisance area and one of a resident in the Industry area extra nuclear housing scheme. A three – bedroom house was valued at \$12,000 and a factory that generates income was valued at \$7,000. Something is radically wrong with the valuation system. I am now in the process of arranging for a delegation to meet the Minister, but if the Minister wants some evidence to support my contention then I am will to give the Minister the facts that were put to me.

I am worried because 1972 might be a very disastrous year. Since people's properties were valued they were not told what percentage they will pay, they were not told anything. This thing is something new put to them. They know that the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund has to pay for the various services such as roads, water supply, and sanitation. The sum of \$4.80 is given back to the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund Committee for sugar exported from this country and this fund is getting every year an amount exceeding \$1,000,400. This does not account for the repayment of loans borrowed to the tune of over \$600,000 per year.

Now sir, the sugar workers would like to know, we would like to know, I should like to know, what will be the faith of the sugar workers. I made representation to my friend, the hon. Prime Minister when he was acting Minister of local Government. He said, "Man, Harry we are going to look into this." I do hope that the Prime Minister is looking into this.

I should like to know what is going to happen with the pensioners. The other day I pointed out to this House that the Rehabilitation Fund is getting \$7.20 while the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund is getting only \$4.80. Then we have another fund, the Price Stabilization Fund, which I think should go towards paying the arrears of pensioners of the sugar Industry to be sold at auction? Is the Government going to allow this? I shall say, "no". If the Government allow it then you will have industrial chaos, we are asking that the Government should examine all these factors. The Government should examine the question of the rehabilitation Fund and consider whether it should not decide to re – allocate this Fund, take some of that money expended to the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund and let the sugar workers get more services. I should like to pose a question to the Government. Will the local authorities look after the services of the extra nuclear areas? *[Interruption by Mr. David Singh.]*

Your Honour, I am asking you to ask the hon. Minister of Trade not to heckle me, because he also is living in the Industry area and the other day while passing, I saw his car was swimming.

I am advocating for him too. I would like to know who will administer the services in the extra nuclear areas, whether they will be the local authorities of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund Committee, because I see Uncle Ish, and Uncle Charran, and so on, have been appointed again.

I want to know if the valuer went to value the property of the sugar estates and at what amount it was valued. We want to know that in relation to each sugar estate and we want to compare it with the valuation of the poor man's property. We are calling on the Government to look into these questions before imposing taxation on the poor sugar workers, Sugar workers praised the other day by the hon. Minister of Finance for their grand performance, but words are not all. Deeds do the work. I am asking the hon. Minister of Local Government, I am asking the entire Government to examine, the question of valuation, the question of taxation, the question of who will foot the bill for servicing these areas. These are the questions to be pondered upon because, as I have told you, sir, over \$1,000,400 is given to the sugar workers every year for these services, and we would like to know who is going to be in charge of these services. The Government must table a White Paper so that all and sundry can know what to expect. Thank you, sir.

Mr. M.F. Singh: *rose - - -*

The Chairman: Are you going to be very long, hon. Member? We have only 5 minutes.

Mr. M.F. Singh: I will be very brief Mr. Chairman, some of the points have been covered by the previous speakers. Speaking on subhead 1 item (11), the Estimates reflect an authorised complement of 4 valuation officers. In the 1971 Approved Estimates, the sum of \$26,928 is shown for these 4 valuation officers. In the Revised Estimates, that sum was cut almost into half, \$13,737 which leads one to believe that there are vacancies in this complement. How many vacancies are there? If there are vacancies, it would seem to suggest that there may

well be arrears of work in this particular field in which these valuation officers are supposed to operate. How serious are the arrears of work?

The fact that the Government is providing in the 1972 Estimates the same \$26,000 approximately, does that mean the Government expects the vacancies to be filled in 1972? If so, will the hon. Minister tell us? I note there was no significant increase in acting allowances. It may be that there is a serious backlog of work in this particular field. Will the hon. Minister let us have the explanation?

The Chairman: hon. Member Mr. Stoby, will you be very long?

Mr. Stoby: No, Sir; I would like to speak on an exercise that took place in the Mabaruma – Hosororo area. I understand a committee was appointed to assess property in the area. The people dissatisfied with the way in which their properties were assessed. There was such discrimination, those who belong to the ruling party had their property assessed far below the real value and those persons who are not supporters of the Government and their property assessed at a high rate. One important factor is that some of these houses are on land and it is the sort of cases which the Government should look into.

Nobody disagrees with assessment or with paying rates and taxes, but we feel it must be done in a proper manner. Some houses – benab is another name - have been valued as low as 25 cents and they have to pay rates and interest, so one can imagine to what extent this exercise took place and also the manner in which it was conducted. After several protests from the residents, the District Commissioner had to get the list revised. I wonder whether the hon. Minister is aware of what took place during the year and if he will give some explanation, whether he will see that there is new survey carried out in that area.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, you will recall that I said it was agreed by all parties in the House that we will sit tomorrow until 10 p.m. as well as Thursday, but on Friday until 4 o' clock in the afternoon. I should like to inform members of the progress we have made concerning the consideration of the Estimates in Committee of Supply. As members are aware, we have ninety – one Heads and Divisions to consider within a period of seven days.

6.30 p.m.

Our third day now ends and I am advised that we have completed consideration of only 22 heads and Divisions. There are, therefore, 69 Heads and Divisions left to be considered in the four remaining days.

The total time allocated on our schedule for the consideration of these 69 Heads and Divisions is 1,760 minutes. Sitting up to 10 o'clock tomorrow night and on Thursday night and up to 4 o'clock Friday afternoon and again up to 10 o'clock on the last night, we will have available to us during our remaining four days, a total time of 1,095 minutes. Our time, therefore, is short by 665 minutes which, in terms of the sitting hours, means two full days sitting up to 10 p.m. each day.

I merely indicate this as that members may know how to apportion what time is remaining to the various subheads, if not, as is well known, on the last day all the Heads will be put.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved “That this Assembly do now adjourn until Wednesday, 22nd December, 1971, at 2 p.m.” [**Minster of Housing and Reconstruction**](Leader of the House)

Adjourned accordingly 6.32 p.m.
