

**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**

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**44<sup>th</sup> Sitting**

**2 p.m.**

**Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> December, 1971**

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**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**

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

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

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,  
Minister of Health

**(Absent - on leave)**

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-operatives and Community Development

### **Appointed Ministers**

The Hon. S.S. Ramphal, S.C.,  
Attorney- General and minister of State

**(Absent)**

The Hon. H. Green,  
Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply

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

The Hon. E.B. McDavid  
Minister of Information and Culture

The Hon. C.L. Baird  
Minister of Education

### **Parliamentary Secretaries**

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

Mr. P. Duncan, J.P.,  
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture

Mr. A. Salim,  
Parliamentary Secretary, Agriculture

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

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

### **Other Members**

Mr. J.N. Aaron  
Miss M.M Ackman, Government Whip  
Mr. K. Bancroft  
Mr. N. J. Bissember  
Mr. J. Budoo, J.P.  
Mr. L. I. Chan-A- Sue  
Mr. E.F. Correia  
Mr. M. Corrica  
Mr. E. H. A. Fowler  
Mr. R.J. Jordon  
Mr. S.M. Safee  
Mr. R.C. Van Sluytman  
Mr.M. Zaheeruddeen  
Mrs. L.E. Willems

(Absent- on Leave)

### **Members of the Opposition**

#### **People's Progressive Party**

Dr. C. B. Jagan, Leader of the Opposition  
Mr. Ram Karran  
Mr. R. Chandisingh  
Dr. F.H.W. Ramsahoyte, S.C.  
Mr. D.C Jagan, J.P., Deputy Speaker  
Mr. E.M.G. Wilson  
Mr. A.M. Hamid, J.P., Opposition Whip  
Mr. G.H. Lall, J.P.  
Mr. M.Y. Ally  
Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P.

(Absent)

(Absent)

Mr. E.M. Stoby, J.P.

(Absent)

Mr. R. Ally

Mr. E.L. Ambrose

Mrs. L.M. Branco

Mr. Balchand Persaud

Mr. Bholā Persaud

Mr. I. R. Remington, J.P.

Mr. L.A. Durant

Mr. V. Teekah

(Absent)

### **United Force**

Mrs. E. DaSilva

Mr. M. F. Singh

Mr. J.A. Sutton

(Absent -on leave)

### **Independent**

Mr.R. E. Cheeks

### **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*]**

**Prayers**

**PUBLIC BUSINESS****MOTION****APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 1972**

*Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply to consider the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 1972, totaling \$197,846,560.*

*Assembly in Committee of Supply*

**The Chairman:** When the Adjournment was taken last evening, we were on Head 40, Ministry of Education, page 114, and the hon. Member Mr. Teekah was speaking on subhead 13.

**Mr. Teekah:** When the Adjournment was taken last evening, I was about to ask the hon. Minister of Education if Government had any programme for developing a national system of free secondary or post-primary education for all the pupils in the primary schools of Guyana. I was asking whether there was any timetable set by the Government towards this objective because at the present time, just under 12 years, the Common Entrance Examination is a very high hurdle which kicks off a very large percentage of students at the end of the primary school period and prevents them from going on to free secondary education.

As a matter of fact in the majority of cases, very few persons proceed from primary school into some other school be it secondary, technical, or otherwise. At this point, I wish to call upon the Government and particularly the Ministry of Education to see how best the Common Entrance Examination could be abolished so that students would be able proceed freely from the primary department of primary schools to the post-primary department right up to the G.C.E. level of secondary education or to any other point in any other stream of post-

primary education. I think what should be envisaged is a system whereby the students proceed without any hurdles onward from the primary education level to those streams corresponding to their aptitudes

I know for a fact that Government has plans to build six multi-lateral schools which would take care of what I am talking about but this number is only six and six schools cannot take care of the over 163,000 children in the primary schools at the moment. I know this is going to be a long process of development but I should like to make a proposal to the Government. I propose to the Government the setting up of a pilot scheme in three areas, at Black Bush Folder, at Matthews Ridge, and at Santa Rosa. This is just a temporary measure but it is better than doing nothing at all. At Black Bush Folder there are three large primary schools.

Rather than the child reaching 14 years and being forced to leave school, he should continue in the post primary department of these schools.

The problem of accommodation would have to be faced but I would suggest that the Ministry introduce the shift system whereby, say during the morning period, the first part of the day, children who are pursuing primary education could attend school, and during the afternoon period of the day those who attend post-primary departments of the primary schools would then attend school. The Government could beat the problem of overcrowding which would come up.

This is a pilot project which I would propose to the Government. If the Government just on the development of the multi-lateral school system, this is going to be an extremely long time. It is costing so much money the Government cannot hope to have this done for just now. As a temporary measure I am suggesting this pilot project to see how successful it would be in tackling the problem of secondary or post primary education.

Another point on this subhead is that there are two schools, St. Ignatius Government Secondary School and North West Government Secondary School, which are presently not having their full complement of students. As a matter of fact, at St. Ignatius, I think there are less than twelve students at the present time although there are two teachers there. At the North West Government Secondary School, there are fifty to sixty pupils with eight teachers. Clearly, there is much room for children and Government ought to look at these schools with a view to giving them their full complement because there are several children who need secondary or post-primary education.

Subhead 15, Evening Courses in Science and Other Subjects. This is a very good exercise but at the present time there are not as many evening classes in science subjects as could be obtained with the present number of well-equipped Government secondary schools or Government-aided secondary schools and I would strongly suggest to the hon. Minister of Education that an evening class in science subjects or other subjects, whatever this subhead means, should centre around every Government secondary or Government-aided secondary school in this country because the potential is there.

### 2.35 p.m.

There is a laboratory in each of these schools; the qualified teachers are there and there is nothing at all to prevent evening classes in these subjects being centred around these schools. There is no logical explanation to be put forward why there could not be such classes in every area where these schools are.

**Mr. M.F. Singh:** Subhead 2, Transport and Travelling. We note that the Revised Estimate for 1971 is \$82,000 and the Estimate for 1972 is \$95,000, an increase of \$13,000. Will the hon. Minister tell us what additional travelling it is envisaged will be done in 1972, over and above that done in 1971? Is there some new project which will involve additional travelling to the tune of \$13,000? What does this increase represent?

**The Minister of Education (Miss Baird):** The hon. Member, Mr. Vincent Teekah, suggested that the Ministry of Education owned no water transport and therefore the duties of Education Officers in the districts were curtailed. I want to inform the hon. Member that it is true that the Ministry of Education at the moment has no water transport for its officers, but the officers hire boats so that there is no question of neglect of duty in the areas concerned.

The hon. Member suggested that the sum of \$750 is provided for school libraries. I think he will be relieved to learn that provision for libraries in the schools is made under Head 42, subhead 3. The sum of \$15,000 has been allocated for school libraries. The sum of \$750, under subhead 6, Library and Publications, is used for buying books and journals for offices.

There was some reference made to discarded books and the suggestion was that Guyana's schools are using books discarded by other countries. I am not in a position to say whether these books are discarded or not, but I think it was an unfair comment to suggest that these children were exposed indiscriminately to reading material, regardless of its relevance to the local situation. It is true that the schools receive gifts of books from which the teachers make a selection. We avoid the use of those books that are culturally loaded and we restrict schools to the use of books that provide scientific content.

With respect to Broadcast to Schools, I have to inform the hon. Member, Mr. Teekah, that there is no decrease in the funds for our broadcast to school. Indeed, if broadcasts are used intelligently, we believe that they can be a powerful influence on the education of our children.

If the hon. Member would look at subhead 17, he would see that the sum of \$50,000 is provided for the publication of materials, that is, those booklets which are distributed to teachers, time-tables, records of music and so on.

The hon. Member seems to be unaware that high-powered radios are supplied to all schools with the help of West Germany. One can reasonably expect, however, that new schools



will not have radios for a short while. Some schools, on the other hand, provide themselves with additional radios and the Ministry of Education ensures that these sets, which are provided by self-help, are free from duty.

There was a reference to the expenses for the National Council for Education. I want to emphasize that education in Guyana is in a state of ferment and that several new developments are in progress at the same time.

Apart from those mentioned before in this House, namely, the establishment of a Curriculum Development Unit and the Test Construction Unit, the Ministry of Education is currently giving active attention to the setting up of a National Council for Education. Our last meeting took place yesterday.

Perhaps it would interest this House to learn that very soon after I assumed office in September, I examined the terms of reference of a proposed National Council for Education, as this was set out in 1963. I discovered that the role of the Council, as conceived at that time, is not compatible with the role it will be required to play in the present circumstances. It is with respect to the determination of role and function of such a Council that the Ministry is presently concerned. As soon as this is worked out, we will be in a position to name members of a National Council for Education.

I should like to point out that the Guyana Scholarship Examination is a competitive examination and this year one scholarship was given to Agriculture. On the other hand, several conditional scholarships have been offered in agricultural science. Thirteen people are at present studying agricultural science at the U.W. I. alone. I should like to remind the hon. Member that the Prime Minister has offered scholarships to students at Bartica to study at the Guyana School of Agriculture. Perhaps, in time, the University of Guyana could expand to provide agricultural education.

The Government was criticised for bringing Amerindian scholars to the city. I should remind the House that it was the P.P.P. Government that decided to bring free place winners to Georgetown. The Ministry of Education recognises environmental differences, as the hon. Member Mr. Teekah pointed out, between the living conditions of Amerindians and that of children on the coast lands. This is why the Government takes the position that Amerindian children with problems of adjustment to the particular patterns of the school organisation in the city are transferred if their problems are brought before the Ministry; to other schools where we think the social climate will enable them to adjust readily.

To suggest that all Amerindian children cannot benefit from exposure in Georgetown --

**Mr. Teekah:** I did not say that.

**Miss Baird:** The implication of your statement was that Amerindian children, perhaps, cannot benefit from exposure in Georgetown. I would suggest that that is to ignore the factor of individual differences in the behaviour of human beings because, at the moment, there are three children in the city schools who are in sixth form and they are competing for the Guyana Scholarship Examination.

It was suggested that Government should, perhaps, set a deadline for the implementation of total free secondary education. To say the least, I think this is unrealistic. The hon. Member should appreciate that the provision of free places will depend largely upon our economic strength and upon the influence this would have on the provision of school places and facilities, the quality of teacher education, and the number of teachers to be trained.

I think the significant factor in the Ministry's efforts to provide free places is, of course, the evidence which indicates a progressive increase in the number of free places provided. In 1965 there were 680 free places; in 1966, 863 free places; in 1967, 1,341; in 1968, 1,810; and in 1969, 2,500. This gives an increase from 1965 to 1969 of 290 per cent.

I have to remind the hon. Member that the anxiety to give an impression that secondary education is being offered to more children led the Government of 1963 to offer a poor type of post-primary education after the age of 12. This Government is now faced with an utterly confused situation, while it tries to upgrade courses so as to enable the products of

**2.45 p.m.**

that period to enter into the Government Training College. I think I have said this before, that the Ministry of Education will not be railroaded into making any provisions for education that will not be keeping with what we think is good for the country.

Mr. Chairman, the St. Ignatius School has a very small number on roll. On my recent visit to that District I learnt that the school deteriorated after the uprising at Rupununi. As a result of investigations with the people in the districts, visits to the primary school, looking at the boarding accommodation and the provisions for boarding and the provisions for secondary education, the Ministry of Education is, at the moment, revising the approach to education in that district. Perhaps some time next year we will be able to provide primary/secondary education and professional education to a level so that we will be able to select from that group of students our teachers and our nurses.

The comment on evening classes will be a brief one. Evening courses are looked after as everyone knows by the Adult Education Association and they respond to the need of districts. At the moment, classes are set up in three districts; Georgetown, Anna Regina, and New Amsterdam.

**The Chairman:** Page 115

**Mr. Teekah:** Subheads 17, 18, 19, 24, 27, 28 and 29.

**Mr. M. F. Singh:** Subhead 240.

**The Chairman:** The hon. Member Mr. Teekah.

**Mr. Teekah:** Mr. Chairman, subhead 17, Publication Unit Printing and Publication of

Materials. The Government, I know has been collecting material in the Publication Unit in order to prepare Guyanese oriented textbooks. The hon. Prime Minister said at his last Press Conference that locally produced textbooks would be made available in the year 1972. As far as I know, all that has been done so far is a collection of material. I know for a fact that two officers have been around collecting local material on the various subjects on education. But to say that these would be produced early in the new year and the follow-up - the standardization of textbooks I do not think this is a reasonable statement.

In that so far as I am aware too, there has not yet been appointed any textbooks writers. I should like the hon. Minister of Education to say whether a textbook writer has yet been appointed for the various areas, for example, social studies, arithmetic, literature, and so on. Have these writers been identified? Have they started on this programme? If they have started, how early do we expect the first supply of locally-produced Guyanese oriented textbooks? And as a consequence, upon the production of locally-produced textbooks will there be standardization of textbooks in the schools of Guyana?

A small point about standardization of textbooks. I think is the hon. Minister of Education who said that as far as the argument for standardization of textbooks is concerned one must bear in mind that children must be exposed to the widest possible areas, to as many books as possible. This I contend does not require non-standardization of textbooks. What is necessary is a very up to date Public Free Library in the various areas and good school libraries. This is what is going to take care of exposing the child to a wide area of learning as possible.

With regard to subheads 18 and 19 I will take them together. I think that much more money should be voted under these two subheads – Sports Training and Sports and Games. We cannot escape the fact that Guyana is down at the cellar in sports. The public, frequently as a good gesture, donates sums of money to assist in the field of sports. But I want very strongly to emphasise here that Government as its bounding duty should provide an adequate amount of funds for sports. In all countries of the world sport is not just left like that, at the discretion of the public to contribute money. If money is got from public contributions, then competitions could be carried out, but the Government takes a firm hand in this area. Up to now Guyana does not even have a national sports stadium. The Ministry of Education, I am informed at the present time, looks over this area of sport. Therefore, I want to call here for a national sports stadium with an all-weather track, because these are some of the things that are bothering most of our athletes and these are some of the urgent requirements in the field of sport.

2.55 p.m.

I should like to call upon the hon. Minister of Education to propose to Cabinet the appointment of one education officer responsible for physical training in each county at least. There are ten education districts but there should be an education officer in each county whose sole responsibility is for physical training. These things would contribute to our being placed in a better position in the field of sport. When I talk of doing well, I am not talking just about inter-territorial competition or inter-school competition, but international competition.

We are doing well in cricket. We must do well also in other fields of sport.

Subhead 21, Exhibition Fund, University of Guyana: I ask the hon. Minister what are the organisations that are given this grant. On subhead 27, Grant, University of Guyana, certainly this sum of \$2,000,000 is far from being adequate. We were told at the end of the last triennial budget of the University of Guyana that full-time classes will be started at the university from October this year. October came and no full-time classes began. The whole of Guyana has been

looking forward to the very early date when the University of Guyana would become a day school.

I remember the People's National Congress, when in opposition, used to taunt the P.P.P. Government about the night school, Jagan's night school. What is the Government doing with respect to the University of Guyana becoming a full-time institution with day classes? How early does the Ministry of Education envisage full-time day classes at the University of Guyana? The hon. Minister of Education, speaking in the general debate, said that the University of Guyana is an autonomous institution and the Government would not interfere with the relationships, but this is talking with tongue in cheek because it is the same Government of Guyana which reconstituted the Board of Governors in June of this year. It is the same Government of Guyana which put the hon. Minister of Works, Hydraulics, and Supply on the University Board. It is the same Government that put the wife of the Prime Minister on the University Board. It is the same Government that appointed these people and it is the same Government that appointed the same Board which is now causing so much confusion at the University of Guyana. It has stalled several of the service courses; it has caused the Bachelor's Degree in Education course not to have started yet although 58 students wrote the examination.

I cannot see how the University is an autonomous institution when the Government reconstitutes the Board which governs the University, and puts a Minister there. I cannot see how the University is autonomous when the Ministry of Education says co-operatives as a subject must be taught at the university, and co-operatives has to be taught. I am not saying the university should not be under the control of the Government. What I am saying is, it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education to see that the university becomes a full-time institution and has day classes. It was the hon. Minister who was saying it was autonomous and they do not want to interfere. They have already interfered. They have changed the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Proceeding on this same subhead I would call upon the Government, because I know it is

its duty and it is specifically the Ministry of Education's duty, to educate the Guyanese citizenry, to give stipends to those students who cannot afford to upkeep themselves at day classes. Most students work in the day and study in the evening. Government should investigate the areas of need. I am not saying every single student must be given. Carry out at least a means test.

I should like to stress the point that selection of students should be done on the basis of merit. There was a crisis there earlier this year when the Government wanted a particular preference to be given to certain students on the basis of perhaps ethnic or political convictions. But the selection at the University of Guyana must be done solely on the basis of merit. Not on the basis of politics or ethnic origin. These two are terribly wrong.

Last of all, I want to ask the hon. Minister of Education to look into the frequent complaints. I have had cause to bring one of these cases to her attention and so far nothing was done, whereby several teachers who have applied for entrance to the University of Guyana, having been accepted at the institution, cannot get transfers from Government schools in the outlying districts to areas close to the institution.

**3.05 p.m.**

This is a difficult problem and I should like the hon. Minister to look in to it. There are many teachers who reside in the Essequibo and Berbice areas who have been accepted as students and have applied for transfers but cannot get transfers. The Government should look into this problem and develop a policy whereby some arrangement will be made to bring teachers closer to the University when they are accepted as students.

Subhead 28, Grants to Students. Many complaints have been to the office of the Leader of the Opposition about discrimination in the awarding of grants. I think that the House would be glad to hear from the hon. Minister of Education what are the criteria used to award grants

to students and if these criterias are in fact, kept.

Subhead 29, Grants to Aided Secondary Schools. I should like to emphasise the point that there are many private secondary schools which play a very important role in secondary education in this country, but only a small number of these schools are getting aid from the Government. The Government itself, with its present school and with these Government-aided schools, cannot cope with the number of students who require secondary education.

Since there are many private secondary schools which are giving secondary education to the nation I want to suggest to the Government that aid to it should look into the possibility of granting more aid to private secondary schools. The technical officers may be in a better position to advise the hon. Minister, but I would suggest that schools with at least 200 or 250 students should qualify for Government aid. I mention 200 or 250 students because, at least, it will be a stable institution with that number of students. It does not matter if you say the institution should have 300 students, because I know there are many schools with 500, 600 and 700 students that are not receiving any aid at all from the Government.

I therefore contend that it would be a wise thing if the Ministry could look at these schools to see how long they have been in existence and how stable they are. I do not want to suggest that mushroom schools should be given aid. I am suggesting that schools which have been in existence for a long time and which have a large number of students should be given Government aid. Better equipment would be provided in these schools if Government gave some aid. On the same question, I wish to call for a more strict control by Government over these Government-aided secondary schools. At the present time most of the Boards of Governors do not meet at all. Since Government is aiding these secondary schools, it should ensure that the aid which is given is well spent. Therefore there should be a tighter control with a view to ensuring (1) that adequate facilities are provided to the students who attend these



schools; (2) that the secondary schools curriculum is adhered to; and (3) that the Government's nominee to these Boards is able to carry out his functions by the regular meeting of these Boards.

I am told by the Government nominees themselves that at present there is nothing which compels the authorities, the proprietors or principals of these schools, to call these Boards to meet at regular intervals. Therefore, the Government's nominees cannot investigate what is happening at these institutions. For that reason, Government should exercise greater control over these schools, all in the interest of developing education.

**Mr. M.F. Singh:** Under subhead 24, Grant to Voluntary Organisations, I wish to supplement the question asked by the hon. Member Mr. Teekah. It is noted that the sum provided in the Approved Estimates for 1971 was \$4,000. The sum estimated for 1972 is \$8,944, which is more than twice the previous amount. The legend states "Previous provision inadequate."

Will the hon. Minister specifically say whether there are more voluntary organisations added to the list, or whether the grants to the existing organisations have been increased? So that we could have a specific idea of how the money is apportioned, could the Minister tell us the names of these organisations and the amounts they receive? The sum provided for 1971 was \$4,000 and the Revised Estimate is \$7,000. Is this due to an increase in the number of organisations or to an increase in the quantum to existing organisations? Could the hon. Minister tell us the exact number of organisations, their names and the amount given to each?

**Mr. Checks:** I am asking your permission, sir, to say a word on subhead 29, Grants to Aided Secondary Schools.

**The Chairman:** you may proceed

**Mr. Cheeks:** Will the Minister state whether she knows that the present policy of Government, namely, refusing to grant to the Principals of certain secondary schools permission to raise their fees is imposing very severe limitations on the facilities that these secondary schools can offer?

The amount of money spent on, say, Queen's College, the Bishops' High School and any one other secondary school, Anna Regina, for instance, is more than the amount granted to all the aided secondary schools put together. The sum of money spent on one boy at Queen's College is over \$400 per annum and the amount spent on the average child in the private secondary school is under \$50. It is about \$40 per annum.

The pressure comes from above and from below. The Government has limited the amount of grants it is giving to the secondary schools. Certain schools are refused permission to raise their fees, even by 10 per cent. Not all are refused permission, only some.

This brings to mind what was said a few years ago by Mr. Germanacos who was sent by the United Nations to investigate and make recommendations on the secondary school system. He said that, as Government aid expanded, the private secondary schools will gradually fade away. I am suggesting to the Minister that Government cannot afford at this time for the private secondary schools to fade away, because it cannot now accommodate all the children who are seeking secondary education.

I ask the hon. Minister to consider those two points: either allow the schools to increase their fees slightly or increase the aid allocated to them.

**3.15 p.m.**

**Miss Baird:** Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member Mr. Teekah seems to be confused between what is meant by supplement material and textbook. I have before in this House that

the Curriculum Development Unit is engaged in producing supplementary material that means material which will supplement the content for the curriculum. I think I went on to say that the material really had to do with increasing the historical understanding of our pupils. This material has to be produce in book form, and perhaps that is why the hon. Gentleman is asking me to give a deadline or the introduction of locally produced textbook in the schools in social studies, science and things like that.

I think I said before , and I am going to repeat it, that I called attention to the fact that production of textbooks will take a long time because Guyana has not, at the moment got the personnel that will produce the kind of educational textbook that we need. It does not call only for the knowledge of the subject matter but there are techniques that these people must cover before they can be allowed to produce educational textbooks. What is happening in the Curriculum Development Unit is that it is producing supplementary material and it must be produced in some form, in a book, to be used in schools. I think I said too, that in 1972, the pilot study, 800 books will be introduced in a number of schools among nine-year-old children. This project, will of course, be evaluated before we release it to the whole country, because we believe that material must be tested on the children for whom it is intended.

The hon. Member Mr. Teekah challenged me to say that writers were appointed. I think it is easy for him to see that if material is produced somebody had to write it and since July of this year four writers were appointed to the unit. At House 5 Queen College, you will find at the moment over twelve writers working producing material that will be used in schools. If the hon. Member visits that Unit he will be given a schedule which will indicate the kind of material that is being prepared and the periods which we hope to introduce them in the schools.

With respect to standardization of textbooks, I really do not understand what some people mean by standardization of textbooks. When one listens to arguments on the standardization of

textbooks one has to accept that it means many things to many people. So far, the argument for the standardization of textbooks is an economic one, and rightly so. But the educational value of standardization of text books is never really considered. I want to suggest that if this Government standardizes textbooks, the Government will be guilty of depriving the mass of children in this country of rich educational experience that they deserve to have. Other groups of people can afford to buy textbooks for their children and the kind of social climate in their homes and the exposure which these children have, to travel, to discuss and so, on that will put them at a greater advantage over the mass of children who will be limited to using just a few selected textbooks.

The Government of this country has worked out proposals for combating these problems. One proposal is to educate parents and this will soon start next year, perhaps late January. We intend to run programmes which will educate parents on what standardization means, what effects it will have on the children's educational progress. At the same time, it calls for the education of teachers to teach them how to select textbooks so that there will not be indiscriminate selection of textbooks. This will tend to control the number of books that teachers will select. The other strategy we intend to use is to encourage more schools to organize to have co-operative bookshops which will certainly reduce the cost of books.

With respect to the query on Grants to Voluntary Organization, the sum of \$2,000 is given to Adult Education Association and \$2,000 to the Theatre Guild and salary for the Co-ordinator for Adult Education amounts to \$4,944. I should say here that the Co-ordinator will be appointed during next year.

The information I have to give on sports is just a factual one. The National Sports Council is provided with a coach to look after sports. As a matter of fact, there is one national coach for cricket and there are two other national coaches for general sports including cricket.

Under the item "University of Guyana", I repeat, the University of Guyana, like all other

Universities, is an autonomous institution. As such, the Ministry of Education respects the autonomy of the University. Since I have taken office, I can assure you that there are frequent dialogues with the University personnel. From them I have gathered that they have already worked out a plan for day courses, but it is for the University to say when it intends to begin the day courses. The Government of this country will not interfere because that is an internal arrangement of staffing. The law gives the Government freedom to make appointments to the Board of Governors. For the information of the hon. Member Mr. Teekah, I want to inform him that the wife of the hon. Prime Minister is a distinguished classical scholar in social sciences who will contribute substantially to the ordinary functions of the Board of Governors.

I think the hon. Gentleman knows again and will accept that if the University is an autonomous body the Government cannot control the selection of students. I think he knows that students are selected on entry requirements and on an examination and/or interview.

With respect to the suggestion that students who enter the University of Guyana are not given transfers, I wish to say that we have many students from outlying areas, particularly in the Corentyne, who are now studying at the University of Guyana.

**3.25 p.m.**

Grants to students are usually given but these grants are given to assist really needy students. With respect to grants to aided secondary schools, it is surprising that the hon. Member Mr. Teekah suggests increasing grants when his party demonstrated a move towards establishing a state system of education. Going on to the other point about aided secondary schools, I have to report that we met the members of the Association of Masters and Mistresses, who teach in aided secondary schools and now we will have to meet the heads of these schools to work out a sort of timetable for their functioning.

The hon. Member Mr. Cheeks queried about the business of raising fees in aided

secondary schools. A committee is currently looking into this and I think schools have been informed that the committee is at work and as soon as it has finished its business, I propose to ask the heads of schools to come in to discuss the recommendations.

**Mr. Teekah:** The hon. Minister is not telling the truth about the Government's relationship with the University. Mr. Chairman, it is a fact that when \$800,000 was voted this year by Supplementary Estimates, the Ministry of Finance froze the sum of money, did not release the money to the university at the same time and the university had to wait over a long period before it was given that sum of money. And it was in dire need of the money!

Secondly, the University has asked for more than \$2 million this year and it is only getting \$2 million. In fact, last year for the 1971 Budget the university asked for \$2 million. The sum of \$1 million was put in the approved estimates and by doles through Supplementary estimates, it got \$800,000 more.

It is not true that the university's functions are not affected by the Government. It is the Government which is restricting the amount of money which the university needs for a greater intake of students and to provide dayclasses, and it is the Government which has reconstituted the Board of Governors of the University of Guyana, disrupting the work at the University.

**The Prime Minister (Mr. Burnham):** Chairman, I recently had a conversation with the Vice Chancellor and I am a little sick of these people who prove St. Paul's dictum that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. The Vice-Chancellor of the University has assured after discussing with him the estimates, that the present allocation is sufficient because of certain other arrangements which are in train, and I do wish that these ill-informed if not uninformed persons would not come here discussing these matters of which they know nothing - those who sought unqualified to enter the university.

*Head 40 - Ministry of Education - \$4,448,395 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

## **HEAD 41 - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

### **IN-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMME**

*Question proposed that the sum of \$182,799 for Head 41, Ministry of Education, In-Service Teacher Training Programme, stand part of the Estimates.*

**Mr. Teekah:** There are many teachers in this country who are not trained and one would have thought that a good in-service teacher training programme would take care of this problem. I have enumerated in this House previously the number of in-service training centres closed down by the P.N.C. Government. The in-service training centre which was existing at Linden was reopened recently. This is very good. I am not against opening an in-service training centre at Linden because in 1963 there was a centre at Linden, then named Mackenzie, but I want to draw to the attention of this House the dire need for a training centre in Essequibo.

In the Essequibo District proper, there are 44 schools, in the North West District there are 31 schools, in the Interior Education District there are 51 schools, a total of 126 primary schools in addition to secondary schools. Is it asking too much to have one centre in Essequibo? Whatever forced the Government to have a teacher training centre at Linden, I exhort the Government to use the very imagination, and argument and reason to have at least one centre in the county of Essequibo where there are 126 schools. This is all.

**Miss Baird:** Mr. Chairman, the projection of the Germanacos' team was that the pool of suitable teachers for training would dry up by 197, and so the eight centres that existed in 1963 had to be progressively reduced as the number of teachers available for training decreased. Any new centre that will be opened will be determined by the need of the area. At the moment,

we envisage a newrole for the in-service teacher training programme.

**3.35 p.m.**

As I have said before, we have had a great deal of difficulty in finding people academically qualified for entry into the pre-service stream. Therefore, part of the function of the In-Service/Teacher Training Programme will be to make students eligible academically for entry into the pre-service stream and, secondly, another role for the In-Service/Training Programme will be to give further education to teachers, to give them the opportunity for re-education. Those people who have been recently trained will have a chance to be re-educated and to examine new developments in education in terms of the meaning of what is going to be taught in schools now, and how it is going to be taught. We consider further teacher education a necessary part of the programme to reorganise education in Guyana.

*Head 41, Ministry of Education, In -Service Teacher training Programme-\$182,799, agreed to ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**The Chairman:** Page 117.

**HEAD 42 - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
PRIMARY, MULTI-LATERAL AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

Question proposed that the sum of \$15,208,896 for Head 42, Ministry of Education, Primary, Multi-Lateral and Secondary Schools, stand part of the Estimates.

**The Chairman:** Will members please indicate if they wish to speak!

**Mr. Teekah:** Subhead 1, items (1) to (8), subheads 3, 5, 6, 7, 10 and 11.



**Mr. M.F. Singh:** Subhead 1, items (1), (6) and (10) and subhead 6.

**Mr. Yacoob Ally:** Subhead 6.

**Mr. Teekah rose --**

**The Chairman:** Before you proceed, I wish to remind you that we have 20 minutes before the Adjournment today and we have Heads 42 to 51 together with two Divisions to complete. There are four speakers. I do not know how we will complete them.

**Mr. Teekah:** Is this all the time that is left?

**The Chairman:** We have 20 minutes today and probably a very limited time, not exceeding half an hour, on Tuesday of next week. Please proceed.

**Mr. Teekah:** First of all, about Head Teachers. I wonder why in these Estimates --

*[Interruption]*

**The Chairman:** Order, please! The members' time is being restricted and interruptions will only put them off further. Please permit members to proceed with the business.

**Mr. Teekah:** Will the hon. Minister of Education explain why there is still the designation "Head Teacher" under this Head when the term normally used for this category of teacher is "Head Master"? In all the official documents these persons are described as "Head Masters". [**Mr. Green:** "That is what you have brought this House to? "]

**The Chairman:** I grant certain indulgences because of the high standard of his debate

on the last occasion. Let the hon. Member proceed. He has only 20 minutes and you are robbing him of that time.

**Mr. Teekah:** There are many schools in this country today which do not have head masters. I want to urge the Government to ensure that head masters are appointed in these schools as early as possible. I said earlier that there seems to be an acute shortage of personnel in the Ministry of Education and that has resulted in many acting appointments. There are many acting appointments and, in some cases, no head master at all. In the case of the No. 56 school, I brought to the attention of this House the conduct of the head master and since then he has been transferred and to this day no one has been appointed to fill the vacancy created.

I want to stress a very important point relating to our teachers, that is, all teachers under items (1) to (8). We are living in a Republic today and it seems to me that many teachers do not really understand the role they have to play in the schools and in the community. This is something which ought to be looked at with concern by the Ministry of Education.

In many cases, head masters and teachers feel that they are doing a favour by teaching students in the schools. Teachers do not think it is their duty to exert patience with the students under their control; they brutalise them, they are excessively rude to them. Not only are students rude to the teachers, but the teachers are rude to the students also.

Teachers must understand that there is a need for reorientation. After all, we are not in colonial times when teachers were accepted as aliens in the schools and aliens in the community; they were big fellows, they were different. Teachers must understand that it is their job to teach the students, to serve the students. The role of the teacher is to serve the students and the community. Too many cases have been exposed and reported where schools are closed because of the misconduct, or the improper conduct, of teachers. We know of the Covent Garden School; we know of the No. 10 Mahaica Creek School; we know of the Bonasika School and the Two Brothers Government School. I can name schools where there was a total

boycott of students, where students refused to attend the school because of the misconduct of a teacher or teachers.

I want to ask the Minister of Education to view these problems very sympathetically, to look at students not as upstarts when they ask for their rights. We are living in a time when every man is supposed to be politically enlightened; we are not living in the colonial past when one person was considered superior for one reason or the other, when a person because he was born rich, or had more education, exercised a perennial seniority and privilege over others who were less privileged or less fortunate.

I want to criticise very sharply the Ministry of Education and the Government for an incident in one specific case, the Bonasika School. The students at the Bonasika Primary School boycotted the school and a delegation of parents went to the Ministry of Education to complain against the misconduct of a teacher. Three members of the delegation of five persons who went to the Ministry had firearms.

I want to make a call for the abolition of something which has been affecting students more than anything else, the question of corporal punishment. I want to make a strong call upon the Ministry of Education to abolish corporal punishment as a measure of discipline. The time is long past when corporal punishment must be a measure of discipline in schools. In no socialist

**3.45 p.m.**

society in the world is corporal punishment accepted as a measure of discipline. I recently returned from Socialist Korea in July this year. Korea is in the Third World. I visited a number of schools while I was there and I asked my interpreter if they flogged children, and he wondered what I was talking about. He said, "Flogging children? That used to happen when we had Japanese colonizers; they used to flog us in schools. It does not happen now, we are a Socialist nation. We do not flog children; that is cruelty". In every Socialist country there has

been the abolition of corporal punishment. And I here and now call upon the Ministry of Education to abolish corporal punishment, because very often we have complaints from parents of students who have been badly treated and who have been very cruelly whipped by teachers. There was a most recent case at the school at Enterprise, East Coast which I took up with the Education, and I literally had to use a steam-roller to get Miss Cadogan to go to the school to investigate the matter. Therefore I should like the Minister to state the enlightened policy of the Ministry on the abolition of corporal punishment.

Another point about teachers is that they must be recruited, again I stress, on merit, I want to cite a case at the Skeldon Secondary School where over thirty teachers were dismissed in September this year. These are teachers who have four and five subjects G.C.E., who were dismissed in preference for teachers who just have College of Preceptors. I visited the school and I took this matter up with the Minister of Education on my return to Georgetown, and the Minister said she will investigate the matter. When she investigated the matter she replied and said, "Well Mr. Teekah, you see these teachers were dismissed in preference to teachers who have been trained; they were not trained and the untrained teachers were replaced by trained teachers." I told the hon. Minister that this was not so. Again, I contend that has not been the case. Of those teachers who were appointed from the September term at the Skeldon Scots School only about five of them were trained teachers and they were filling vacancies of about thirty-five and those who replaced the teachers who were sacked only five were trained.

It is not true to say that they were replaced by trained teachers. It must be the policy of the Ministry if it is to have the respect of the Guyanese nation, if it is to have the best brain in the teaching profession; it means that recruitment must be on the basis of merit and not on political or ethnic considerations. These are certain negative aspects of the teaching profession which I have highlighted.

I should now like to raise very important matters which I would deem positive in the favour of teachers. When a person does something wrong he ought to be criticized, when he

does something good he ought to be praised. When the teaching profession does something good, it ought to be praised and when it does something wrong it must be severely criticised. I want to stress the point about increasing the salaries of teachers. The hon. Prime Minister earlier this year assured the teaching profession that the Government would raise the salaries of teachers. The Guyana Teachers Association sent a memorandum to the hon. Minister of Education – I have here a copy of the memorandum – making certain specific proposals to the hon. Minister. Up to the time when I address this House during the general debate on the Budget the Guyana Teachers Association was not in receipt of a reply from the hon. Minister. Now teachers wonder why the hon. Minister is dragging her feet on such an important matter. Cost of living is going up every day, the cost of living has been going up since teachers salaries were revised, since the Guillebaud recommendations were accepted by the PPP Government. And since then, there has been devaluation in 1957, and there has been devaluation of the Guyana Currency again during this week. Therefore, the cost of living has been rising every year and it means that the teachers' salaries have been static. Government has actually given two interim reliefs, but interim reliefs means interim relief and something which is interim which means it is temporary and interim relief ought not to run for a whole year or for to years. The case for a revision of teachers' salaries is extremely strong, and the Government cannot continue to drag its feet on the question of revision of teachers' salaries.

Secondly, I want to stress that in considering the revision of salaries the Government must ensure that graduates, as a matter of fact, the whole teaching profession in the primary system must be equated with the secondary system and this is particularly so as far as graduates are concerned. Because at the present time, a graduate in the primary school starts off with \$319. His counterpart in the secondary school starts off with \$388. They both have the same qualifications but because one has been placed in a secondary school he gets \$319, because the other is placed in a secondary school he get \$388. Is this not discrimination?

The maximum of a graduate in a primary school is \$356; the maximum of a graduate in a secondary school is \$528. Mr. Chairman, these persons have the same qualifications, they have

the same degree, but because one is unfortunate to have been placed in a primary school he cannot get as much salary as the one who has been fortunate to get into a secondary school. This is causing an impoverishment of the teaching profession in the primary schools, because most teachers as soon as they are to be graduated at the University of Guyana they start angling and making arrangements, start getting in contact with somebody, pulling strings, to get into secondary schools because the salary is higher.

3.55 p.m.

**The Chairman:** Are you going to wind up, hon. Member?

**Mr. Teekah:** Yes, sir. Therefore, I want to strongly urge the Government to review the salaries of teachers with a view to raising their salaries and also to leveling up the salaries of teachers in primary schools with the salaries of teachers in secondary schools. One other point. I want to quote from the White Paper on Education, which was passed in this House in 1968. On page 11, it states:

"Discussions have been held with the Christian Social Council representing the Governing Bodies of Denominational Schools and the Guyana Union of Teachers regarding the establishment of a Teachers' Service Commission in accordance with the terms of the Constitution. Agreement has already been reached", I stress this, agreement has already been reached, "on the establishment of a Commission which will function for teachers in primary schools in like manner as the Public Service Commission for Civil Servants. Eventually a unified teaching service will be established within the control of the Commission."

This was written in 1968 by the then Minister of Education, Mrs. Winifred Gaskin, and approved by the Government of Guyana. In this document it was stated that agreement had already been reached on the Teachers' Service Commission. The year 1971 is now closing. To this day, the Teachers' Service Commission has not been appointed. Can the Minister or the Ministry of Education defend this?

**The Chairman:** As agreed, hon. Member Mr. Teekah, it is time that we conclude today's Sitting.

**Mr. Teekah:** If it is to give time to the hon. Minister to reply, I do not mind stopping here and not asking any more questions on this page.

**The Chairman:** We will consider this on Tuesday.

### CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

**The Prime Minister:** Mr. Speaker, before the House adjourns over the holiday season, will you permit me to indulge in offering the traditional greetings and good wishes on the part of the Government to yourself, your spouse, your family, and all of the Members of this House, and on this particular occasion I would, at the risk of doing injustice to the Constitution, describe the Sergeant-at-Arms and the Stenographers as Members of this House.

We usually have very sharp differences springing very frequently from our different ideological positions, or from the need for certain political postures to satisfy those who are our adherents. But certainly, at Christmas time, we can forget these differences and we can, in spite of our various and varied religious persuasions, recognise that this is a period of goodwill, of friendship, of camaraderie. And so, when I on behalf of my Government express these wishes, I would like it to be understood that I feel that at least for this period we can be friendly, loving, and comradely, and perhaps, as the years go by and we practise this spirit, or seek to give expression to this spirit every year, we will eventually make it part of our life for all the year. This is not asking too much for though we may differ in our approaches we should recognize that we are all human beings, are all Guyanese, and all sons and daughters of God.

I therefore wish all the Members of this House, a Very Merry, Happy, and peaceful Christmas and, as I said before, these wishes automatically go out to our permanent institution,

the Sergeant-at-Arms, and to our Stenographers. If I may digress for a moment, I would wish to see a contemporary history of this House written by our Sergeant-at-Arms and Stenographers --

**Mr. Speaker:** That is already being considered.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr. Speaker, whenever you rule in this House, you rule **excathedra**. We shall have an opportunity during next year to exchange many words but we shall not with a prophetic eye look into the year 1972.

**The Leader of the Opposition (Dr. Jagan):** I too wish to join in wishing you and other members of your staff, including the Sergeant-at-Arms and the Stenographers, members of the Government and Members on this side of the House, a very Merry Christmas and I do hope that the opportunity will be taken by all to have a very pleasant holiday. Many of us are so accustomed to being at the grindstone that sometimes we forget to take time out to enjoy ourselves. At least on this occasion for a few days we can bury the hatchet and join with other Guyanese in the spirit of this season, to enjoy ourselves and to share the spirit of goodwill which abounds at this time. I wish again, all the Members, a Very Merry Christmas.

**Mr. M.F. Singh:** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of myself and the United Force, I would like to extend the compliments of the season to yourself, family, your staff of Parliament Office, particularly our hard working Note takers and, indeed, all Members of this honourable House. I would like to extend a Merry Christmas and I hope you will enjoy this Christmas, not perhaps as the Prime Minister would not want me to say, in the traditional way, but at least have a jolly good time.

**Mr. Cheeks:** I wish, Mr. Speaker, to extend my sincerest wishes for a Very Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year to you, to the Government and the other members of the Opposition.



24.12.71

National Assembly

4.05 p.m.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition, hon. Leader of the Government, hon. Leader of the United Force, hon. Member Mr. Cheeks, hon. Members: On behalf of the staff of Parliament, my family and myself, I wish to thank you most sincerely for your kind wishes for Christmas, and on behalf of my staff, my family and myself I wish to extend to you and the nation very best wishes for Christmas.

In keeping with the Government's tradition of having meaningful statements made, I wish to take this opportunity of inviting you to local liquid refreshment. I wish to invite, also, the visitors advising the Ministers of Government, the representatives of the Fourth Estate, the Press, and the staff of Parliament, to join with me after the Adjournment in showing tangibly the goodwill which should exist, not only now but throughout the entire year and which we as Guyanese should manifest to the world. [**Hon. Members:** "Hear, Hear"!]

#### ADJOURNMENT

**Resolved,** "That this Assembly do now adjourn until Tuesday, 28th December, 1971 at 2 p.m. [**The Minister of Housing and Reconstruction** (Leader of the House)]

*Adjourned accordingly at 4.05 p.m.*

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