

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

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

The Hon. B. Ramsaroop,
Minister without Portfolio and Leader of the House

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

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

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

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

The Hon. A. Salim,
Minister of Local Government

Appointed Ministers

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

The Hon. H. Green,
Minister of Public Affairs

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

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

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

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

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

Parliamentary Secretaries

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

Mr. P. Duncan, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Minister of Information,
Culture and Youth

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

Mr. C.F. Wrights, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Works and
Communications

Other Members

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. E.F. Correia
Mr. M. Corrica
Mr. E.H.A. Fowler
Mr. R.J. 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

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

Mr. Ram Karran
Mr. R. Chandisingh
Dr. F.H.W. Ramsahoye, S.C. (Absent – on leave)
Mr. D.C. Jagan, J.P., Deputy Speaker
Mr. E.M.G. Wilson (Absent – on leave)
Mr. A.M. Hamid, J.P., Opposition Whip
Mr. G.H. Lall, J.P.
Mr. M.Y. Ally
Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P.
Mr. E.M. Stoby, J.P.
Mr. R. Ally
Mr. Balchand Persaud
Mr. Bholu Persaud
Mr. I.R. Remington, J.P. (Absent)
Mr. L.A. Durant
Mr. V. Teekah

United Force

Mr. M.F. Singh (Absent – on Leave)
Mrs. E. DaSilva
Mr. J.A. Sutton (Absent – on Leave)

Independent

Mr. R.E. Checks (Absent)
Mr. E.L. Ambrose
Mrs. L.M. Branco

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER**Leave to Members**

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been granted to the hon. Members Mr. M.F. Singh and Mr. Sutton for today's Sitting.

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS**PRIVATE BILLS****ASSEMBLIES OF GOD IN GUYANA**

Mr. Bissember: On behalf of the Attorney and the Superintendent of the Assemblies of God in Guyana, I present a petition seeking to have introduced in the National Assembly a Bill to amend the Assemblies of God (Incorporation) Ordinance, 1958 (No. 18), to provide for the controlling authority of the body to be in Guyana instead of in the United States of America.

The Clerk: The Petition reads as follows:

“HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF
THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The Humble Petition of:

REV. MILTON JOHN KERSTEN, of A180

Barima Avenue, Bel Air Park, and

REV. ERROL BHOLA, of 331 East Street,

Georgetown,

RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH:

- (1) Your petitioners are the Attorney and the Superintendent, respectively, of the Assemblies of God in Guyana;

- (2) That at the annual Council meeting of the Assemblies of God in Guyana held on 20th July, 1965, the following resolution was passed:

‘Whereas under Incorporation Ordinance No. 18 of 1958; the Assemblies of God in Guyana was legally incorporated under the General Council of the Assemblies of God, Springfield, Missouri, U.S.A., Be it therefore Resolved that necessary steps be taken in harmony with Springfield, Missouri, United States of America, to incorporate locally.’

- (3) The Assemblies of God in Guyana requests amendment to Ordinance No. 18 of 1958 to incorporate locally, apart from the General Council of the Assemblies of God, U.S.A.;
- (4) This action has been approved by the General Council of the Assemblies of God, U.S.A.;
- (5) The Assemblies of God in Guyana wishes to be able to acquire and dispose of property of Guyana;
- (6) Your Petitioners are the Promoters of a Bill which seeks to amend Ordinance No. 18 of 1958;
- (7) Your Petitioners are desirous of having the said Bill introduced in the National Assembly and enacted by the Parliament of Guyana.

WHEREFORE your Petitioners humbly pray that the Honourable Members of the National Assembly may be pleased to allow them to proceed.

AND your Petitioners, AS IN DUTY BOUND, WILL EVER PRAY.

Date 22nd November, 1972.

Petitioners

Milton J. kersten,
Attorney
Assemblies of God in Guyana.
Address: A180 Barima Avenue,
Bel Air Park.

23.11.72

National Assembly

2.05 – 2.10 p.m.

Errol Bhola,
Superintendent,
Assemblies of God in Guyana.
Address: 331 East Street,
Georgetown.”

Question –

“That the Promoters be allowed to proceed with the Bill” –

Put, and agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS – FIRST READING

The following Bill was introduced and read the First time:

Local Authorities (Postponement of Elections) Bill.
[The Minister of Home Affairs]

2.10 p.m.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

FINANCIAL PAPER NO. 5 OF 1972

The Speaker: The Assembly will resolve itself into Committee of Supply to consider Financial Paper No. 2 of 1972.

Assembly in Committee of Supply

The Minister of Finance and Trade (Mr. Hope): Mr. Chairman, in accordance with article 80 (2) of the Constitution, I signify that Cabinet has recommended for consideration of the Assembly a Motion for the Approval of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 5 of 1972, Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates for the period ending 31st October, 1972, totalling \$7,188,422, and I now move the Motion.

The Chairman: The Motion is proposed.

We shall now consider page by page the Schedule of the Financial Paper. Page 1, will hon. Members please indicate the items on which they wish to speak? Page 2.

Mrs. DaSilva: item 8, Ombudsman. On behalf of the United Force, I wish to make enquires as to what is the position regarding the report by the Ombudsman, that is being awaited, the report that has been asked by a citizen of Guyana. We understand that the report is ready. We would like to know if this is correct and when it will be laid before this House.

[The hon. Minister offered no reply.]

The Chairman: Page 3

Mr. Jagan: Item 13

Mrs. DaSilva: Item 14

The Chairman: There is a correction to item 11. Will Members kindly make the correction, "B7" to replace "A7" in line 4. That is in the legend. Hon. Member Mr. Jagan.

Mr. Jagan: Your Honour, some time ago, the G.D.F. had put out a bulletin and I remember that the editor of the bulletin had said that because of the persons who were recruited in the G.D.F., the force itself is being ridiculed, so to speak, because criminal elements are recruited in the G.D.F. and as a result the morals of the Force is being affected.

The Chairman: We shall have to refer to the page and date of that publication.

Mr. Jagan: Mr. Chairman, I do not think this is a matter which will be denied. The G.D.F. had put out a newspaper.

The Chairman: In accordance with the Standing Orders, I think you should give the page and the date of the publication.

Mr. Jagan: Mr. Chairman, I am not quoting. I am just referring to the item that appeared in it. The Green Beret. What I really want to find out is whether the Government or the hon. Minister could ensure that persons with criminal records are not recruited. I think only last week or during the course of this week a member of the G.D.F. was convicted in the High Court, the offence does not matter but after he was convicted, it was disclosed that he had nine convictions. Even the hon. Trial Judge said that he was amazed and he wondered how such a person could have been recruited into the G.D.F.

This question has been raised some time ago. It was alleged on this side that members of the G.D.F. were so recruited. I think the Government never denied, I do not know whether it had denied it, but it has come out that at least one member of the G.D.F. had previous convictions and it is our information that there are many other persons in the G.D.F. who have been convicted on a number of occasions. This is why no doubt, the officers in the G.D.F., the publishers of the Green Beret had occasion to refer to this fact. I should like to ask the Government that whoever is concerned with recruiting persons in the G.D.F. this should be taken into account and only persons with clean records should be engaged in that type of employment.

Mrs. DaSilva: It has been reported to us that the handling of foodstuff, especially perishable items of foodstuff, by the Transport and Harbours Department leaves much to be desired. Could the hon. Minister tell us what plans are being made, if any, for the handling of foodstuff? [Interruption] It states in the legend: "To provide for additional expenses and freight payable to the Transport and Harbours Department." By the G.D.F. it concerns Transport and Harbours Department freight charges. The point is that the freight charges are high and it is being said that because of the high freight charges, because of the bad handling resulting in the rapid deterioration and sometimes great loss to the people who buy provisions from the interior, the North West and places like that, which necessarily come by the Transport and Harbours Department, the cost of living is increased, because these things make the cost of the items more expensive. Could we be told in this House what provisions are being made to improve the facilities for handling perishable goods, and maybe in keeping down the high freight charges?

The Minister of Public Affairs (Mr. Green): To deal with item 14, I would have hoped that the hon. Member would have asked an intelligent question so that --

Mr. Green: I withdraw. The hon. Member Mr. Derek Jagan referred to the criminal element and suggested that this was affecting the G.D.F. First of all, that has nothing to do with the funds requested here. Indeed and in fact, this sum was requested for a special exercise that has to do with the closing of the hydro-electric dam at Tumatumari. If I may comment on the question asked, it seems as though the hon. Member who speaks not only as a member of the P.P.P. but also as a brother of the leader of his political party --

Mr. Ram Karran: That is not so. The hon. Member is speaking as a Member of the House.

The Chairman: I uphold that. He is speaking as a member of the Opposition.

Mr. Green: As a member of the Opposition, he should recognize that there are inconsistencies in his point of view.

Because I recall recently, Mr. Chairman, that it was the leader of that political party who gave the nation the impression that the criminals to whom my hon. Friend just referred were the people who were given no opportunities by this Government. But he comes here to criticise the government for a deliberate effort, I say made by this Government to rehabilitate persons who had unfortunate periods in their life into the Army and other sectors of the society. In any situation you will have disappointments. And I am disappointed that a member of a political party who quite recently was making a big song and dance concerning a known criminal would come here and criticize this Government for recruiting people into the G.D.F., persons who were unfortunate because of the society that we inherited.

I would add no more except to deal with item 14. I find it difficult to reply to the hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva because the problem to which she alluded should be directed to the hon. Minister responsible for the Transport and Harbours Department. In fact, she has asked nothing that has to do with the G.D.F.

Mr. Jagan: Is the hon. Minister denying that there was a complaint by the officers in respect of the morale of the Force because of criminal element? This party never said that the criminals must not be given an opportunity to be employed. What I am saying is that there are certain types of employment which should not be opened to them. Would the hon. Minister tell us whether the Government is aware of the fact that persons with conviction are recruited into the G.D.F.

Mr. Green: Yes, Mr. Chairman. And a conviction can be of many types and he did not specify the type of conviction.

Mr. Jagan: Mr. Chairman, having regard to what the hon. Minister has said could the hon. Minister say whether if a person is convicted of an offence which involves dishonesty would such a person be considered for recruitment into the G.D.F.?

Mr. Green: That is a question the discretion of the Chief of Staff, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Page 4

Mr. R.D. Persaud: Item 18

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Persaud

Mr. R.D. Persaud: Mr. Chairman, - -

The Chairman: Before you proceed can we take page 5. I want to make a correction. Under Item 18, "Grade II" to be deleted from paragraph (c) of Section B.

Mr. Jagan: Mr. Chairman, are we dealing with item 18 on both pages?

The Chairman: Yes, hon. Member

Mr. R.D. Persaud: In the President's Address it was stated that within the first few weeks of this Session the Budget will be presented by the Government. If that is true, as one would expect it to be seeing that it came from the Government in the form of the President's Address, why is it the Government just a few weeks before the presentation of the Budget is coming to this House for such an exorbitant sum under these supplementary estimates?

The Chairman: I did not hear what you said.

Mr. R.D. Persaud: I was saying that the Budget will be presented very shortly why a supplementary estimates at this stage? We have been making the accusation in Parliament when the Budget is presented that before the year ends the Government would come back for money under many of the heads.

In fact, the Budget each year has not been reflecting the true financial arrangements or position of this Government. And this is supported by the fact of this document before this House this afternoon for such a large sum of money. Let me therefore place on record our very strong criticism of this type of financial arrangement on the part of this Government.

On item 18, itself, I discovered that the Government is creating new posts and probably regarding posts for the Foreign Service. It does appear to us that our belief that the government is moving for early elections is supported by this provision, in that it is strengthening the foreign

offices at the moment. This we believe is for the purpose of General Elections, and that is why so many new positions. We say that if the government is moving to register persons overseas and prepare for elections - - [*Hon. Members (Government)* “Nothing is wrong with that.”] The Government members are supporting this they say nothing is wrong with it. But it ought to be done in the proper way, that is, it must come to this House and put it in the estimates, that you want increased staff in order to register voters overseas and to prepare for general elections. Do not come under the disguise of these position spelt out in this document before this House.

In fact, we would hope that before the next general elections is announced that the Government will tell this House that no longer persons living abroad will be permitted to vote in Guyana’s elections. [*Interruption*] Statements of this type undoubtedly must hurt, but we have got a duty on this side of the House. The Government is asking for positions like Senior Executive Officer, two posts of Principal Foreign Services Officer, 5 posts of Executive Officer, 3 posts of Executive Office, in fact all these men are being up-graded or positions are being created so that these people can help government in rigging next general elections. It is only yesterday, I said in this House that one of the two Ministers of Agriculture has gone abroad and from announcements it was stated that he has gone to examine applications for lands.

2.30 p.m.

Imagine, it is extremely difficult for people to obtain visas to go to Canada and the United States, and they have gone abroad to examine applications for land. Persons who actually stow away, from reports, to get into countries like America and Canada, would they return here to accept land under the present conditions of Guyana? This Government is not fooling anybody. This government is only fooling itself. The function of the hon. Deputy Prime minister and Minister of Agriculture abroad is to campaign for the next General Elections and to contribute to increased rigging to ensure that the P.N.C. is returned to office. In view of these observations, I should like to say that those of us on this side of the House are not prepared to support this provision under item 18. My criticism and concern about item 18 are supported, if

you will permit me as I am on item 22 page 5, because you see the provision for expenses for printing and distributing of information material was \$11,000.

The Government is asking in the month of November, November is almost coming to an end, and we have only five weeks before the year is at an end, for an increase of \$6,000 for printing and distributing information. This is not information material, but this is in fact propaganda for elections. I know that an hon. Minister has gone on record as saying that there is no distinction between the party and the State, but let me make this point. It is immoral and scandalous for this Government to use taxpayers' money for propaganda for election purposes. This is what item 22 reflects, in that the taxpayers of this country are going to pay for propaganda material for the P.N.C. in its campaign overseas for the next General Elections. Later on, I will point to another very high item for publication and printing in those very Estimates.

Mr. Jagan: I am not too sure whether I should say "Mr." or "Sir" Lionel Luckhoo because I remember distinctly that if –

The Chairman: In the contest of Guyana, "Mr."

Mr. Jagan: I see that in the Government publications and newspapers, he is referred to as "Sir" Lionel Luckhoo. I wonder whether he is still in the Foreign Service and, if so, what is his designation.

The Minister of Mines and Forest (Mr. Jack): First of all, it would appear that the hon. Member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud entertains a growing apprehension concerning what he considers to be imminent elections, and did I really have the power, I would put him out of his concern by giving him such assurances, but really, I cannot. It does appear that he would not have objected to these provisions had he not felt that they had some bearing on the elections. On this I can give him an assurance, that these particular provisions of the Foreign Affairs Ministry have no immediate bearing upon the elections. However, if the voters, viewing the successes which have attended the efforts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, care to include considerations

of those successes when they had to cast their votes, it would not be for us to tell them not to do so. But that is an entirely different matter.

It seems that his objection has really been based, as I say, upon saddling us first of all with something that we are not doing and have no intention of doing, and then criticizing us because of this peculiar apprehension. These changes are responsible for the improved efficiency of a department which, I would claim, even the Opposition must have looked at with some degree of admiration.

Now let us look at item 22. Obviously, this year we have had the Non-Aligned Conference, there are increasing publications put out, a lot more paper work has been done, and therefore it is necessary that we have an increase of provisions. Surely, the hon. Member does not believe that if we wanted to use a certain sum of money for publications for election purposes that it would be a small amount as this is, so let me assure him once again, that this is entirely for governmental purposes and has nothing to do with any elections, past or future.

The hon. Member Mr. Jagan has asked a question concerning the state of Mr. Lionel Luckhoo's employment. I know him to be a lawyer in private practice, and that is as far as I can go at the moment. Thank you.

The Chairman: What about item 22?

Mr. Jack: Item 22, I have just dealt with that, Expenses for Printing and Distributing of Information Material. As I said, this has to do with the increased work we have done with the Non-Aligned Conference and other printing we have had to do.

Mr. Jagan: I am sure the hon. Minister must be able to tell us whether Sir Lionel Luckhoo is in the service of the Government.

The Chairman: He said as far as he is aware, he is a lawyer in private practice.

Mr. Jagan: Yes, but I am not asking whether this gentleman is in private practice. I want to know whether he is in receipt of money from the State as a person employed by the Government.

The Chairman: Before you proceed, there is a correction to item 25, the first line in section “B” of the notes. Insert “on the unfixed establishment” between “regarding” and “of” so that the line will now read as follows: “The regarding on the unfixed establishment of one post of Driver...”

Mrs. DaSilva: Item 24.

Mr. Ram Karran: I want to ask a simple question on item 24.

Mrs. DaSilva: We of the Opposition are quite accustomed, it has been going on now for quite a long while, when we seek to get information, which it is our duty to do and which it is the duty of the Government to provide to us in order that we can pass it on to the people who vote for us and to the citizens of Guyana, all we are subjected to is a lot of ridicule and abuse, and a slipping around and sliding and trying to get out of giving a pointed answer to the specific question asked. I have a specific question to ask. I do not know if their reason, and their habit, and their custom of carrying on like this is a way of trying to get out of giving an answer. This is a straight question and I would appreciate a straight answer.

I am not saying anything for or against the Non-Aligned Conference, the good it might have done or the good it might not have done, like the Carifesta exercise, all congratulations and praise to it. I say it is a wonderful getting to know you exercise, but on the question of dollars and cents, the taxpayers, as I said yesterday or a couple of days ago, are entitled to know how the money of the citizens of Guyana is being spent and this Government falls down very badly on giving this type of information.

2.40 p.m.

As I asked a couple days ago for the Carifesta balance sheet to show what the position is, I ask a question now with regard to the expenses for the Conference of Foreign Ministers. The

amount already voted the supplementary amount is \$216,050. Now the House is being asked to vote the sum of \$52,000. The question I should like answered is this: Is this double amount of money spent on the hosting of the Non-Aligned Conference, or will there be more provisions sought for in this House at a later date? Secondly, would the hon. Minister be good enough to tell this House if any contribution was made by any of the participating nations? If so, how much?

Mr. Jack: Mr. Chairman, the voted provision is \$216,050. What we ask for is \$52,000 more. The Conference has been over for some time now and it would therefore be obvious that this is the final amount.

With regard to contribution, let me explain that under the method of the organization of the Non-aligned Conference, the various Members do in fact contribute to the whole Movement and to the various Conferences. The exact details of how much each one contributed I am not in a position to give but I would be able to do that at a later date by giving you what is the formula. But there is contribution. It is a contribution made to the entire Non-Aligned Movement as such, and it is not a contribution only with regard to a specific conference.

Mr. Ram Karran: I merely want to confirm that Guyana has nothing more to spend on this head, that this is the final amount.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, may I say I appreciate the way in which the hon. Minister answered the question and I would exhort all his other colleagues sitting in front of him to take example from him and do it the way he does?

Now I should like to ask the hon. Minister a supplementary question. I did not quite hear what he said at the end. In fact, I was having a word with my friend across there the hon. Member Mr. Persaud. Will we be presented with a balance sheet of the information of the Non-Aligned Conference expenses?

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva, you cannot get a balance sheet for this; that obtains only in a business. You may get a statement of expenses which is something far different.

Page 7. I should like to make a correction on item 25. Line 22, that is coming near to the end. Change \$67,740 to read \$62,660. Will Members please indicate?

Page 8. Page 9.

Mr. Ram Karran: Item 29

Mrs. DaSilva: Item 29

Mr. Ram Karran: Sir, as we all know the last Development Plan has expired. We were told for some time now that the new plan to be operative from 1972 to a 12 – year plan was to come about. We are in 1972 and I assume without a plan and I am very glad to see that some preparation is being made. Will the hon. Minister of Economic Development give us some indication as to when this plan is going to be ready for presentation to this hon. House and who is in charge of its preparation? Is the hon. Minister in charge? Or does he have some top flight economist, some reputable person having regard to our experience with our last development Programme? When we get that answer we may be in a position to ask supplementary questions.

Mrs. DaSilva: The hon. Member made many of the points I wanted to make but I was not going to go quite as far as when it would be ready. I was not going to go quite as far as when it would be ready. I was going to ask if we can have some sort of progress report as to how the new development plan is going. Is it not the duty of the Government to tell the nation?

Mr. Jack: Mr. Chairman, the development plan will be ready early in the next year. It is being prepared by the Ministry of Economic Development. The Head of the Planning Division is the Chief Planning Officer. With regard to a progress report, I can say that the bulk of the work has already been accomplished. That is why I said it would be ready early in the next year.

The Chairman: Page 10. Page 11

Mrs. DaSilva: Item 35.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva

Mrs. DaSilva: We understand the last population census was taken in 1970 and the next one is due to be taken in 1980, which is ten years from now. If this information is correct why the undue haste with it? I appreciate the fact of the transfer, getting the books straightened out and so on for the end of the year. But why are we working on population census - -
[Interruption]

The Chairman: Hon. Members, please have some silence so that the Minister would be able to hear what is happening. Can you kindly repeat your question?

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, I merely said the last population census was taken in 1970 and we believe the next one is not due until 1980. We appreciate the fact that this transfer is being done in order to straighten out the books etc. and put them in order for the end of the year. But we want to make a comment and statement to the fact that we hope what is going on in the matter of the population census does not mean it is an excuse for padding the number of people who are alive and live in Guyana, not the dead and the unborn and things like that, it would be a straightforward population census.

2.50 p.m.

Mr. Jack: The hon. Minister of Finance will answer this question since this particular subject is now transferred to his Ministry.

Mr. Hope: I thought I heard and understood the hon. Member's question when she put it first, but I thought she corrected herself in a repeat. In fact, it is a new item and all that is being done is to transfer the responsibility for statistics to the Ministry of Economic Development from the Ministry of Finance. She went on to make some comments which I do not think call for any answer from me.

Mr. Ram Karran: Will the spokesman for the Attorney-General or the Ministry of Finance give us more details with respect to this vote of \$68,197? What is this case about? This Government frowns upon the Privy Council. One would like to know, it is in respect of what?

Mr. Jack: As the note quite clearly states, this is not dealing with a case but with cases. If my hon. And learned Friend wants to get a list of all the cases this provides for, then he should put forward a proper question and not ask for it in this way. No one comes to this forum at a time like this with a list of twenty or forty cases itemized.

The Chairman: Page 13. Page 14. Page 15. Page 16. Page 17.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Items 46 and 48

Mr. Ram Karran: I wanted to ask a question on item 48 but my colleague may well take care of it. In case he does not, I will speak.

Mrs. DaSilva: Item 48

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Item 46, Publishing and Publicising. I make the same criticism which I made earlier on a similar vote, more or less, under Foreign Affairs. I can well appreciate the transfer of various heads from the Prime Minister's Office to the Ministry of Information, Culture and Youth, but at the end of November, to ask this House to give the Ministry of Information \$40,000 for publishing and publicizing, even if it was advanced – this Ministry had \$63,000 at its disposal for publishing and publicizing – it means that this Ministry will be spending \$103,000 on publishing and publicizing. When one examines all the materials coming from the Ministry of Information, Culture and Youth, one can see the majority of them are more or less pushing the aims and objectives of the party as distinct from the Government.

The other point I wish to make is that we have been informed, I do not have some of those publications in my possession now, that the Government has two types of publications. The Government prints and publishes and distributes certain information for Guyanese consumption, and it prints and publishes certain information for overseas consumption, but the point I wish to make is that if the government is disseminating information of the Government's programme, of the Government's achievement if it has any to its credit, why is it the Government is withholding those publications even from the Members of the Parliament. If the Government can justify a stand: "well, we want people overseas to know what we are doing", we have no objection to the Government sending certain information overseas, providing that this

information that goes overseas can be of benefit to this country. The Government does not have to publish and propagate overseas, its programme here. What, in fact, the Government has been doing can be likened to a reply to a document which the Government confined only to the foreign press, and the Government treated the local press with discourtesy by directing the Ministry of Information that that document should not find itself in the hands of the local newspapermen. What kind of double standard is the Government involved in? The Government has been taking advantage of this particular Head. The Government has been guilty of using this particular head for party propaganda as distinct from the normal information that should come out of the Ministry of Information.

With respect to item 48, (New) domestic Public Relations Programme, looking at it at first glance it does appear to me like another election vote. I want the Minister of Information to explain this particular item, item 48, which calls for \$353,610 to provide for the creation of a subhead to reflect expenditure in connection with a domestic Public Relations Programme. I should like the Minister to explain because if the explanation is not given, then I will conclude that it is another election vote. If it is not satisfactory I will still be left with that conclusion.

Mr. Ram Karran: I wonder whether the hon. Minister will explain that reference to the overseas public relations programme. How is it this country got along all these years?

The Chairman: We are not dealing with item 49, we are dealing with item 48.

Mrs. Dasilva: When one person is suspicious, one says maybe he is mistaken. When two people become suspicious, I think an explanation is due and I feel, like the hon. Member Mr. Persaud, that an explanation is due to this House about this new item, Domestic Public Relations Programme.

The Chairman: The hon. Member is asking the same question.

Mrs. DaSilva: Yes, sir, I am merely supporting him. With all respect, when you said to the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran that we should save time, the next page, item 49, maybe we could save time by incorporating that because item 48 belongs to at home and item 49 is overseas. Same thing.

The Minister of Information, Culture and Youth (Miss Field-Ridley): item 46 deals with our local publishing and publicizing primarily. I do not think any reasonable person would think that this vote is large. As a matter of fact, I feel having looked at the kind of work I would like this Ministry to do, that we need much more funds than this \$63,000 plus \$40,000, which I think the hon. Member calculated so very well for us.

We do one overseas publication called Guyana News. If it has not been supplied in the past to the hon. Member, it would be my pleasure to present him with a copy of one every month. It is a monthly magazine. The only reason why we do a magazine specially for overseas is that we have found, and communications experts have found, and public relations experts have found that Guyanese overseas have a slightly different interest and way of looking at Guyanese news to Guyanese at home. Some things are important to the Guyanese abroad that are not quite so important to the Guyanese at home and vice versa. It is not that we have dire secrets that we are publishing to the overseas public nor are we suppressing any hidden skeletons at home. It is just that we cater for two different kinds of interests.

3 p.m.

But if he does have the overseas interest as well as the local interest I will present him with a copy.

On subhead 48, this sum of money has been voted for the proposed reorganization within the Ministry to supply it with what it badly needs, a Public Relations section and a Domestic Public Relations Programme. Unfortunately, from my point of view, but perhaps fortunately from the point of view of members on the opposite side it is unlikely that more than a minimum amount of this money will be spent this year. We are recruiting and we are planning, but very little of this money will be spent on this project.

The Chairman: Page 18

Mr. Ram Karran: I wish to make the observation with your permission, on item 49, on which I attempted to speak before we actually go there. The hon. Minister seems to have very little idea herself of what the vote under items 48 and 49 is all about. It is begging the question to tell us, in the first case, that for this year hardly any money or a small portion of this money – I am referring to item 48 – will be spent. That is not the point. What is the money going to be used for? The Government being convinced is one thing but to convince the House and the nation that you are spending this money is another thing. *[Interruption]* But God knows what you are going to do next year. We need hospital beds. We have two men sleeping in one bed. You have two women getting baby on the same bed, and this Government is squandering money. Why does this Government want a public relations programme overseas? You want one internally, you will want one in your bedroom next. This is rubbish for the Minister to tell us, “I am satisfied.” Perhaps the Government is satisfied. But my god, are you going to get to the stage where you are going to get the people who have to contribute this money to be satisfied. We need so many things. And this Government is squandering the money left, right and centre and they come here and tell us that they are satisfied. That is not good enough.

The Chairman: Already you have made your observation. Page 19, page 20, page 21, page 22.

Mr. R.D. Persaud: item 62

Mrs. DaSilva: item 63(b)

Mr. R.D. Persaud: One of the questions I should like to ask is what yardstick government uses for the distribution of grants to youth organization.

The Chairman: What are you speaking on?

Mr. R.D. Persaud: Item 63

The Chairman: I am sorry

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: I read in the Press a week ago that the Guyana Hindu Youth Organisation was complaining that it has not received grant for two years from the Government. Will the hon. Minister kindly give an explanation why this organization which was in receipt of grant for so many years why the grant has been suddenly withdrawn?

Mrs. DaSilva: Maybe because of our very nature members of the Opposition are entitled to be suspicious. Therefore, it would help a lot to allay our fears and to do the great service to the Government because it could tell the nation what it is doing. I wonder if the hon. Minister would find it possible to say which voluntary youth organisations, name them by name, receive grants.

Miss Field-Ridley: This vote is used to give grants to needy, active, non-political youth organisations that make a meaningful contribution to the development of youth work in the country. I will need notice to give a list of all the youth organisations. But among them are groups like G.A.Y., Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A. and the Dorcas Club.

Mrs. DaSilva: I appreciate the Minister's problem. I particularly like the emphasis she made on non-political so we take it that no youth - - - *[Interruption]*

The Chairman: Hon. Members, I do not want to compete with you but I cannot hear.

Mrs. DaSilva: I wish to congratulate the Minister and say I appreciate her having answered the question. It would appear that my remark earlier bore fruit, the hon. Minister Mr. Jack, then the courtesy of the hon. Finance Minister and then the hon. Minister of Information, Culture and Youth. It shows great improvement in this House. I am particularly re-assured by her that no political organisation is receiving grants. I appreciate she cannot list the names of all the organisations like that.

The Chairman: She said if you give her a notice.

Mr. R.D. Persaud: I wonder if I can crave your indulgence and ask the hon. Minister to state specifically why the Hindu Youth Organisation was not given its grant for two years.

The Chairman: The hon. Minister said you have to give notice of that. I am not telling you what she said.

Mr. R.D. Persaud: I will give her notice and hope that you put in on the Order paper.

The Chairman: I have repeatedly said in this House that I do not place matters on the Order Paper.

Mr. Ram Karran: We need to change the Constitution and I hope you will join in that request. You can see from your very question that the Government is not prepared to put Opposition Motions on the Order Paper and you as Speaker should do something about it.

The Chairman: Do you want me to amend the Constitution? If you vest me with the power.

Mr. Ram Karran: We want to solicit your support.

The Chairman: Page 23

Mr. Ram Karran: I wonder if this has anything to do with Morris of Munich? We had a Judge in his capacity as Olympic President or some such office –

The Chairman: if you frame your question properly I will allow you to ask it but not if it deals with any extraneous matters.

Mr. Ram Karran: All I want to ask the hon. Minister is if she can explain the actions in the alleged incident concerning Morris of Munich, where Guyanese entering Olympic activities, a judo practitioner, was made –

The Chairman: Page 24: When you learn to phrase your question properly –

Mr. Ram Karran: Sir, I have been at this thing for fifteen years. I wonder whether the hon. Minister can tell us if it has anything to do with the Olympic Committee and the Olympic Games.

The Chairman: If you put your question properly –

Mr. Ram Karran: I apologise, sir, I wish to ask her if she can give an explanation as to why the judo competitor was not allowed to take part.

Miss Field-Ridley: On the first question, let us say this is the vote that is used for the promotion of sport and games within the country and we do from time to time assist organisations on a proper request to finance any undertaking in which they are involved. Perhaps I should make the point here that the Olympic Committee is an independent sporting association. It has international affiliations and its constitution proclaims it as free from all political and governmental intervention and interference. I cannot give an answer to the second question. I was not a Munich nor am I a member of that independent association.

The Chairman: Page 24

Mrs. DaSilva: Item 69. I use this Ministry of Home Affairs – Probation and Welfare Service Head to ask a question and to seek some enlightenment from the hon. Minister of Home Affairs. Could the hon. Minister give any indication to this House as to what work is being done

amongst our young people, especially in our high schools, to combat the growing problem that is arising with the incidence of drug taking?

The Minister of Home Affairs (Mr. Clarke): I am glad that the hon. Member raised this question because I suppose she must be referring to a very recent publication in one of our daily papers in relation to the taking of drugs by students. For a long time now, the Ministry of Home Affairs, as also the Ministry of Health, has been concerned with this problem and there is a committee which is constantly examining this problem. The committee comprises representative from both the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of health, as well as other agencies, I think the Ministry of Finance – Customs, and other agencies in the community concerned about this problem. This committee keeps under constant surveillance the whole question of the types of drugs which are available to be purchased over the counter in our drugs stores. I should like to say that while it is true that some of the drugs which produce harmful effects on people are still being got over the counter by students and by our young people, it is not true to say that these drugs are not controlled in that for all such drugs, prescriptions are required before they are dispensed.

What one finds is that some of these young people are able, because of the access which they have to such drugs purely on a personal basis or on a family basis, to get such drugs, and from time to time instances, like the one recently reported in the press, do occur. I should like to allay the hon. Member's fears and to say that Government is concerned and is taking every measure possible to ensure that this problem not only is contained but is eventually stamped out.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, may I ask a supplementary question. Thank you, hon. Minister, for the explanation. You spoke specifically about the drugs, and the procuring of them from drug stores, and the Regulations governing such things. Could you tell us something about what is being done with the control of what is known as pot and the bringing in of marijuana cigarettes? Is any effort being made to tighten up at Timehri, at ports, at borders and so on?

Mr. Clarke: The answer is yes. The Police Department has got a special squad dealing with this question and quite recently the hon. Member may have noted that a very senior police officer, who is in charge of this department, has benefited from further training and exposure to the problem as it affects other countries. The matter is being handled by the police.

The Chairman: Page 25. There is one correction. Item 71 section "B" line 4, "January" should be substituted for "September."

Mr. Lall: Item 72. I wonder if the hon. Minister could tell us here what provision the Government has made to increase the price of cane produced by cane farmers of Guyana. Since the Government is paying a sum of \$58,184 as subvention to the Cane Farming Development Corporation, it is the duty of the Government to see to it that the cane farmers receive proper prices for the cane supplied to the sugar companies in this country. For the Government's information this was included in the Bank of Guyana Report for 1971, that the price this year for sugar in the United Kingdom market will be increased to \$91 Guyana per ton as from 1st January 1972.

3.20 p.m.

Also the price of sugar from the United States of America has been increase by \$41 (G) per ton from 1st January, 1972. Therefore, it is obvious that the can farmers were helping to produce sugar in this country and should share in this huge amount that the sugar producers are getting for sugar because the cane farmers are producing over 30,000 tons of sugar in this country. I do hope the Minister responsible for agriculture will be in position to tell this House what provision the Government is making to increase the price to cane farmers in Guyana.

The Minister of State for Agriculture (Mr. Kasim): Mr. Chairman, I am very grateful to the hon. Member for bringing this matter to the House. I can assure him that this matter is being investigated to see whether we can do something to help the cane farmers.

Mr. Lall: This is money from the cane farmers because this is retroactive from 1st January, 1972, and not to help to give cane farmers what belongs to them.

The Chairman: And what the hon. Minister is saying is that he will have the matter investigated. Page 26, item 76. Will hon. Members please make the corrections? Substitute the word “January” for the word “September”. Hon Member Mr. Harry Lall.

Mr. Lall: Item 77. I should like to raise this matter dealing with the contribution to the International Sugar Agreement. I should like this Government to set up an all-time commission to enquire into the sale of sugar from this country, and the amount accrued for the sale of sugar, because we have seen some contrasting figures. The official figures given by the Bank of Guyana Report was that 338,000 tons of sugar was shipped from this country in 1971 and \$86 million were accrued for sale, then the production of sugar for 1971 was nearly 369,000 tons. But sir, reading the figures supplied by the Low-A-Chee Commission by the S.P.A. it was stated that the amount accrued for sugar was \$86 million and other revenue was \$7 million which made it \$93 million.

But Your Honour, mention was made about the by-product from sugar, that is, molasses. Molasses to the end of November, 1971 was \$3½ million. This excludes what was sold to Diamond Distilleries, to Albion Distilleries Limited, and to Stockfeeds Limited. This is the amount exported from Guyana up to November, 1971. That was exceeding \$3½ million.

These figures were taken from the Statistical bureau of Guyana. Therefore, the amount for rum exported exceeded \$5 million for December, exceeding \$5½ million, then you have for local sales of sugar an additional 31,000 tons that is remaining. That will give you around let us call it \$4 million. The amount for rum and molasses exported for the end of November will be \$99 million. We are not talking about local selling price for rum. We are not talking about the local selling price for molasses. In the interest of the workers who are the real producers of sugar, rum and molasses of this country once again, I am asking the Government to set up an all-

time commission to go into the sale of sugar and the amount accrued for the sale of sugar and its by-product in the interest of the sugar workers.

3.30 p.m.

The Chairman: The hon. Member has asked a question. Will the Government consider setting up a full-time commission to investigate prices in the sugar industry?

Mr. Kasim: Mr. Chairman, this falls under the Ministry of Finance and Trade.
[Interruption]

Mr. Hope: Mr. Chairman, I would think the Government would want to consider.

The Chairman: Page 27

Mrs. DaSilva: I take the opportunity of using this head of Ministry of Communications – Post office, and maybe if the hon. Member Mr. Kasim does not feel it is under his responsibility to reply to this, he will refer it to whose duty it is to do so, and not just pass it over. I wish to refer to Personal Emoluments. It is a short question but a vital and important question. It is a question which we of the United Force have been asking over and over again. We will continue without apology to ask over and over again. We are told that the job evaluation exercise is finished. Would the hon. Minister tell us when we are going to get the proper salary scales for the civil servants? We are continually having this piecemeal revision. The books have to be straightened up for the end of the year, we appreciate this, but there are many instances where new jobs are being created, some are being upgraded, when will the overall exercise be done and the revision of salaries announced? We are told the job evaluation exercise is finished. Could the hon. Minister enlighten us?

The Minister of Works and Communications (Mr. Hoyte): In deference to the request by the hon. Member, I would refer her to the proper Minister who would be the Minister of State for the Public Service.

The Minister of State for the Public Service (Mr. Mingo): the hon. Member said the job evaluation exercise is finished. This is not true. The job evaluation exercise is still going on.

The Chairman: Page 28

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: A very short question. Will the hon. Minister of Works and Communications, who is in charge of communications, concede that it is a terrible thing to have the employees of the Post Office going to work without boots? Will he say if their grievance is now satisfied or they have got more demands on the question of uniforms?

I think there was a threat that they were going nude unless their demands were met.

Mr. Hoyte: I am not quite sure what the question is but I would, in answer to what I understand to be the final part of the question, say that I believe this matter is now resolved because uniforms have been issued and the union, which represents the category of persons concerned, has expressed satisfaction. This is one of the things which happen from time to time with Estimates and I should like to take this opportunity to explain what happened. Between the time of the submission and approval of Estimates and the end of the year, new posts were created and new people drafted into the postal service, so that the amount approved in the Estimates by this honourable House was not sufficient to purchase the quantity of uniforms which was necessary. However, this amount is being asked for in order to straighten that matter out.

The Chairman: Page 29

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Item 85, Stores and Equipment. I am sure the hon. Minister is aware that the lift at the Post Office has been out of operation for a number of years.

Is the Government making any effort to put that lift into operation? Important departments are really housed in that building, for instance, Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages. Old people have to go there to obtain their birth certificates and it is a terrific strain for them to walk up those long steps. I see equipment here and I wonder whether the hon. Minister has in mind to repair that lift and put it into working order.

Mr. Hoyte: I regret that I am not aware, as the hon. Member seems to believe, of the fact that this lift is not in operation. Nevertheless, I will have the proper officer look at this matter with a view to reporting to me.

The Chairman: Item 90 spans pages 30, 31, 32, 33 and the first item on page 34. Page 35, Page 36.

Mr. Teekah: Item 98, Personal Emoluments, starts at page 35. The hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva wanted to speak on this item.

Mrs. DaSilva: The hon. Member has very kindly given way for me to speak first.

The Chairman: I am not giving way.

Mr. Teekah: Will the hon. Minister of Education tell us what is the approximate number of teachers being trained or put out every year by the college of education for secondary school teachers? Will the hon. Minister consider the establishment of two more colleges of education for secondary school teachers in the counties of Essequibo and Demerara, and will the hon. Minister tell us if Government has any time-table towards making secondary education fully free for all students leaving primary schools? This is against the background of more secondary school teachers now being trained, because if we are to put out more teachers and if the need is still there not being satisfied for secondary education to be spread over a wider area, then obviously the Government should have an official time-table in so far as acquiring this goal in secondary education.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, I wish to use this head, Ministry of Education, to ask a question of the hon. Minister and to make a suggestion which my party believes will help to solve a big problem in our country. Yesterday, the hon. Member Mr. Teekah in his contribution to the President's Address spoke about the abolition of the Common Entrance Examination and we support him in this and the need for putting some type of examination relevant to our country in this day and age.

But we feel that the question of the problem faced by the Common Entrance Examination is the question of the allocation of free places. We feel that the question of having an examination comes about because it is required that a standard be set. We must have some means of grading a child, thus, it is necessary to have common entrance now or whatever we choose to have and call it later on. On the result of this many free places are awarded to the children of Guyana. But we feel that the children who get these free places – I think the hon. Member Mr. Teekah also made this point – are very often the children of parents who could well afford to pay for these children to go to school. This, we feel, is brought about too not only on the child's intelligence or because of the child's intelligence but because of the poor conditions, the food which a child eats, an undernourished child is unable to cope with the studies and thus bring a higher place to get into the bracket where the child would get a free place. We feel that the free places should be allocated not only on the system of marks if you use that to grade the standard of the child's intelligence. We feel that free places before they are given when the child has reached the required standard marks that there should be a means test on the income of the parents. This we feel will solve a big problem and will help those children whose parents cannot afford to give them a secondary education and they will not be deprived of it while children because they have had the high marks go there and their parents could well afford to pay for this type of education. Could the hon. Minister say if any thought is being given to this question?

The Minister of Education (Miss Baird): Mr. Chairman, in reply to the hon. Member Mr. Teekah on the question of the number of students who leave the Secondary Teachers' College yearly, I would say, the average number is 80. In response to his suggestion that we should spread the training over three counties, I want to suggest to the hon. Member that it is

uneconomical to distribute training like this. This is a young College; as you will probably realize it is barely three years old and it is now to be established as a stable institution. I want to assure him that no candidate is discriminated against because of the area in which he lives. Application forms are sent out. I am sorry I will not be able to give the hon. Member the kind of figures we have, but at the present time the College has students from all over Guyana. I think we have a fairly representative sample.

The hon. Member wanted to know whether Government had a deadline for free secondary education. I think we have to be very realistic and although free secondary education is a goal to which we aspire and for which we are working consistently, I am afraid we cannot give a deadline for this. As far as I know, efforts are being made and if you look at the building programme for education you will agree with me that schools are being increased every year. This is the kind of approach we have to adopt until we reach the goal of free secondary education.

If we have a common definition of what is meant by free secondary education I think we can say that all children who go to school in Guyana are exposed to education at the secondary level. As far as I am concerned, at the moment all children are receiving secondary education up to 15 years of age. I want you to consider the children in the secondary department in the all-age schools. Those children are receiving secondary education of a kind. I must confess, however, that the Ministry of Education is not satisfied that the quality of experience that the children receive in those schools is the kind of experience we would like them to have. At the moment, the Ministry of Education is at the end of re-organising the whole approach to education so that in time we will be able to give the kind of exposure we want to that group of children. This will mean re-organisation in a big way, a different kind of approach to building. So far as we are concerned, we are working on a pilot project which will take us some time about one year, an experimental project and in a year's time we will be able to apply this, we hope, to the whole country.

There was a lot of talk about the Common Entrance Examination, and what it does and what it does not do. Here again, I think we must be very realistic, we must as long as we do not have a system of complete free secondary education, we must have an instrument to select people who can benefit from a certain kind of education. The Common entrance Examination selects students for a variety of secondary schools in Guyana. It does not select children for only two schools, that has been done away with. Human beings have varying abilities and you have to expose them to the kind of education that they can cope with, and expose them to all qualities and levels of education so that they go to the different kinds of jobs for which they are equipped. I want to believe although the hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva might not have intended this, but it gave me the impression that she was asking us to discriminate between people who have come from a certain kind of home and those from another kind of home.

3.50 p.m.

This is not the intention and I can assure you that it does not happen. Mr. Chairman, if you go to some of the best secondary schools in this country you find children from all socio-economic levels. I am willing to clarify this matter at the debate on the Estimates because I will then be in a position to give you the kind of distribution that we have.

So far as we are concerned, we are looking at this business of the examination and you will notice here that we have a test development unit that constructed examinations for the first time this year. This is one step towards giving children from all levels in Guyana, a chance, because the examination now will reflect various kinds of environment in which children live. Perhaps this is a technical aspect of it but I think you can take comfort in the fact that the examination is not constructed from a position at home. The people who construct these examinations go into all parts of this country to pre-test the items which they use and this has a considerable advantage. It validates the examination and makes it reliable for all people living here. Again, I have to point out that in doing this kind of pre-testing we are making sure that the examination will serve all levels of people in Guyana.

Mrs. DaSilva: maybe I could be allowed to make a few points to the hon. Minister because I think she misunderstood what I was getting at. I appreciate the point that she has made that the Budget Debate will be coming up shortly and she will have the opportunity to give further consideration and further answers to our questions. Maybe if I am allowed to make a clarification she will be prepared to answer the questions then. I was not criticising or going into the pros or cons, or demerits or merits of the Common Entrance Examination. I said that if it has to be abolished we will have to have some type of examination, it is the only means we know of grading people and getting standards. I did not advocate the abolition of the Common Entrance Examination in particular. I did not discuss that point but I did say we need some type of examination and probably one relevant to our country in this day and age.

The other point she made about discrimination, I think she misunderstood me completely. I never meant there was discrimination in the awarding of the free places. I suggested that many of the free places awarded went to children whose parents could well afford to pay for secondary education and many of the children whose parents could not afford this were not able to benefit from the free places. I asked the hon. Minister to consider the introduction of a means test for allocating these free places.

Regarding the types of homes, I did not for one moment intend to say that they had not gone into the matter to see how the children live, and to base the questions on what we are accustomed to in Guyana. I do maintain that a child from a home where there is a steady income, where the father is working, where they have money and four good meals a day, where the child has proper lighting facilities, where it sleeps in a room properly aired, not overcrowded, where the child has recreation hours in peace and in quiet and is not living in a poor slum area, underprivileged, with a fighting mother and a drunken father, that child suffers from a great disadvantage over a child who comes from a home where conditions are more peaceful and quiet and where there is a regular routine observed and where the child has proper food. I did not mean it that there was any discrimination but the fact remains that it is so and many children, whilst I agree with the Minister there are children who do benefit from the free places, who do not fit in the category of well-off parents, this is a question whether that child is even brighter

than the other one, because it had so many difficulties to surmount to be able to qualify for that free place. So, if the Ministry of Education will consider basing the allocation of free places on a means test, I feel it would be fairer to our children.

Mr. Ram Karran: It is not for the hon. Minister to tell us that we do not have free secondary education. Now we can do it. It is not too late in the day. The Minister must tell us why there is no secondary education. The Prime Minister said in 1961 that we must have free and compulsory secondary education. He said so. You do not have it because these estimates reveal \$200,000 for public printing, \$200,000 for rental of premises. That is the sort of thing the Government squanders money on.

Everyone knows that the P.P.P. had instituted a system and if that system had been continued, by now, we would have had free and compulsory secondary education, but these people who talk, these hon. Members who talk about liking the people and helping the people, if they had continued that system, perhaps the fifteen-year old boy would have been in secondary school. If the Government had pursued the point of allowing the primary schools to keep the children until age 16, at least up to the standard of the College of Preceptors Examination, perhaps it would have been possible to keep them off the roads, keep them out of crime, but do not with one hand destroy all that has been set up and then tell us we do not have secondary education. We must have it. Your Prime Minister says we must have it.

The Chairman: Page 37

Mr. Chandisingh: Item 99

Mr. Teekah: Will the Minister of Education tell us whether the Council of Legal Education has set up the two professional schools in Jamaica and Trinidad yet? When will the first batch of students be accepted at these two professional schools, and will the hon. Minister say whether students who possess their law degrees from universities other than the University of the West Indies will also be recruited at these two professional schools, because as I understand

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3.50 – 4 p.m.

it, the two professional schools which the Council of Legal Education will be responsible for in Jamaica and Trinidad will be catering for students who have already done university work, who possess the LLB Degree. But must these students have the degree from the University of the West Indies only? Let us suppose they possess the degree from London University, Oxford University or Cambridge University, an American University or a Canadian University, will they be accepted at these two schools?

Mr. Chandisingh: Since this is an advance payment, I am merely interested in finding out what is the anticipated total expenditure on this Council of Legal Education and approximately what will be Guyana's share of this expenditure anticipated.

4 p.m.

Miss Baird: Mr. Chairman, in reply to the hon. Member Mr. Teekah any law student who has obtained the LLB Degree will be admitted to the professional school from any part of the world from the Commonwealth Countries. I think he wanted to know whether they had set up the professional schools. They are now in the process of setting up the professional schools. The estimate of the cost that Guyana will have to bear will be around \$87,000 for the first year. That will be roughly about 13 per cent of the total cost.

Mr. Teekah: Mr. Chairman, there is one small question which has slipped the Minister. I also asked whether the Minister is in a position to tell us what year will the first batch of students be recruited at these schools?

Miss Baird: Obviously they will be recruited after they have obtained the LLB and that would be next year, at the U.W.I.

Assembly resumed

Mr. Speaker: This sitting is suspended for thirty minutes.

Sitting suspended at 4.02 p.m.

4.30 p.m.

On resumption –

Assembly in Committee of Supply

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. Chandisingh.

Mr. Chandisingh: Mr. Chairman, since this is a new item, I think that it needs some explanation from the hon. Minister as to the purpose which will be served and the benefits which are expected to be derived from the establishment of this Regional Nursing Body. I merely ask the hon. Minister to give an indication.

The Minister of Health (Mr. David Singh): Mr. Chairman, this Regional Nursing Body was set up a short while ago and it is the Caribbean Regional Nursing Body. The aims and objectives of the region will take a long time to go through but I can let my hon. Friend see the last Report of this which is available in public print. I can also say to him that there is going to be a meeting of this Body in Guyana commencing 4th December this year. It is a body representing Caribbean nurses and Guyana is a member of the Regional Nursing Body and this is the contribution.

Mr. Chandisingh: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate what the hon. Minister said, that he is prepared to show me the entire documentation on this. But what I expected was at least some idea or the purpose of this regional body. In other words, is it an association of nurses to co-ordinate their interest? Is it to help train nurses in administrative practice?

Mr. David Singh: I think I can answer that very shortly and say that it is a body aimed at regionalizing the nursing profession in the Caribbean. I do not know if that will help to

answer the question. Training is one of the things. One of the other aims is the question of transferability of nurses in scarce fields in nursing, meaning, certain expertise that is not in full supply in every member of the region. This is all I can say. I can let the hon. Member have the literature on it so that he can read about it.

The Chairman: Page 39. There is one correction to item 105. In the fourth line the word “January” should be substituted for the word “October”. That is in the notes.

Mr. Chandisingh: Items 106 and 107

Mrs. DaSilva: Item 108

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. Chandisingh

Mr. Chandisingh: Mr. Chairman, I should like to observe that there is indicated in the notes that the supplementary provision of \$9,000 is now required because the voted provision is considered inadequate because of the increase in the number of trainees. I should like to draw to the Government’s attention that particularly with respect to rural midwives it would seem that there is a particularly grave shortage in this field since many areas still do not have even minimal midwifery services. In the past, of course, we have made these points and we have been told that increased training has taken place.

I note that there is provision for increased training now, but I should like to stress that particularly apart from the other categories such as Public Health Inspectors and Health Visitors, the Government should pay very great attention to rural midwives. For example, I do not want to go into details as to where there are no midwives but take Cane Grove as an instance, and many other areas. I also wonder whether the hon. Minister can say whether trainees who are recruited are recruited on the basis of coming from the areas where they will be expected to return. Also, if the hon. Minister can give us an undertaking as to whether this present training programme for which we are providing more money now will take care of the need. If not, we

should like to urge very strongly that more trainees be recruited to meet the grave situation that confronts us in this respect.

Mrs. DaSilva: Item 108. I wonder if the hon. Minister can tell us what are the Government's plans in respect to establishing dispensaries in the country. We find in the course of our campaigning activities that people in the country particularly those situated roughly half way between Georgetown and New Amsterdam, and between Fort Wellington and Mahaicony, people complain that the G.M.O. does not run the district. In the past they could have depended on him by putting up their white flag and they knew that help was at hand. If there was dispensaries situation in these areas it would certainly do a lot to relieve and help the people. Five or six miles away when one is sick is a lot of mileage. The people are poor, they cannot afford a car of their own or a taxi might not be readily available. Could the hon. Minister provide us with any information as to Government's plans on this question?

Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I could be permitted. I was looking to see under what other head I could raise this matter. But as it comes under health I wonder if you would allow me to ask the Minister to put it under this head. Could the hon. Minister tell us what provisions are being made in the training of technicians who will be able to do the Paps test? As everyone knows there is a big movement in Guyana now for the establishment of a women cancer detection centre, a very necessary centre for our country. While great progress is being made for the acquiring of the equipment particularly the mammography machine for the early detection of breast cancer the question of the carrying out, the processing of the smear test known as the Paps test is going to present quite a great problem. As I understand it, we have only one man trained now at the P.H.G. who is qualified to do this, and I think there is one other in training. If as it is hoped this earlier cancer detection centre will be successful, it will be necessary to have properly trained and qualified technicians to process this particular smear test. Could the hon. Minister say what the Government's plans with regard to this are?

Mr. Chandisingh: Mr. Chairman, I had indicated that I would speak on items 106 and 107 but I took my seat after speaking on 106. I should like to ask a question on item 107. Could

the Minister give us an idea of the functions of the X-Ray technicians and where are these technicians being trained?

While on the head, I should like to draw to the attention of the hon. Minister that at the New Amsterdam Hospital there seems to be very frequent shortage of X-Ray Film. I know of a case where a person has been required to have X-Ray pictures taken and could not have it done for at least a month. He was told to come back, every time he was told that there were no X-Ray Film. He was told finally that it was to be sent for from Georgetown. There seems to be some deficiency in this respect. Either there is a shortage of X-Ray film or perhaps the film is not being distributed properly. [*Mr. D. Singh: "When was this?"*] The Minister asked when was this. This was quite recently, within the last couple weeks; I only heard about it recently.

4.40 p.m.

On previous occasions we have also heard that X-ray film has been in short supply, and in some cases in the past they have only been doing what they regard as emergencies but not other cases which are serious and which need X-ray pictures. Either the film is short, for which I think the Government should make more provisions, or if the film is available but not properly distributed, I wish the Government will take urgent steps to correct this situation.

Mrs. DaSilva: May I crave your indulgence. I just want to clarify one point before the Minister speaks. When I quoted the example of the area on the West Coast Berbice in relation to the shortage of dispensaries, I quoted that as the one most recent in mind, but the same problem exists in Essequibo, East Bank, West Coast, and so on, where the cottage hospitals are far away from the people and there are not many dispensaries near to them. Some areas may be better than others, but by and large, people have to go too far to seek medical attention when they need it, and with accidents, maternity cases, and so on, distance is quite an important factor, so I just want to get that point clear and to ask the hon. Minister what are the plans for erecting dispensaries.

Mr. D.A. Singh: To deal with the hon. Member Mr. Chandisingh's point on item 106, it is true that the medical services are still deficient in all forms of medical personnel including midwives and this is true not only of Guyana but of the Caribbean, of Latin America, and of most of the developing countries. We are training at every level, nurses, nursing auxiliaries, nursing aide, midwives, every year. It is not an exercise where we are training in one year and stopping. It is an on-going exercise that goes on every year.

On the question of the selection of nurses, we select nurses from the locality in which the training takes place, and training takes place in Georgetown and in New Amsterdam. Trainees for the New Amsterdam training course are selected from New Amsterdam, trainees for the Georgetown training course are selected from Demerara and Essequibo. This has been happening for some time now.

To deal with Mrs. DaSilva's point on item 108, I thought she knew that for some time now the practice of calling the doctor by putting up a white flag had been discontinued with a good reason, but it was discontinued only when we were satisfied that there was enough health centres within easy reach for people to go and see the doctor. I do not have the figures here, they are on my desk, to show the number of health centres, the spacing of health centres, and I promise that during the Budget Debate these figures will be given. I can assure here that when I do the comparison with a number of other countries, she will be satisfied that man for man Guyana has more health centres and health stations than many countries and not only of the developing world.

The question of more dispensaries does not really arise. The health centres are equipped with dispensers. The health stations are perhaps not fully equipped, and then there are some areas where it is necessary to have a dispensary. The complaint that the people make, which I have found to be true, is that some of the G.M.O.'s do not visit the health centres and this leads to frustration. I am and I have been very recently correcting this by taking with me the G.M.C. of the district into the area and telling the people: "this doctor is supposed to be visiting this health centre" and it has been working to a certain extent, so the frustration is not in the

availability of dispensaries or the location of health centres, it is the practice that G.M. O.'s do not visit when patients expect them to visit.

On question of training of radiographers for the X-ray Department, Government has been offering, as you know, conditional scholarships a long time now for this job. There are people who are qualified, who have been applying for these jobs, and they will be employed. We recognize that there is a shortage in this field and Government's programme for training technicians for lab work is, during 1973, going to be increased because of the fact that with the implementation of the national health plan we are hoping to make a number of hospitals, general hospitals with laboratory facilities, so that we would not all have to be coming to Georgetown.

On the question of the X-ray film, my hon. Friend is correct in relation to the recent shortage. This was due to a delay either between the ordering or some mix-up at that end. I know of this personally and when it came to my knowledge, we had to get it down as quickly as possible by air. I cannot answer the question that this has been going on for some time, I do not know that this is so but I know that recently there was a crisis in the arrival of X-ray film from the country of origin and we had to take very quick action to get it in. I understand that it has arrived. From time to time, we find because it has to be brought from abroad, there are certain delays and I agree with him that X-ray film and the other things necessary for doing X-rays are vitally important. I will try as much as I can to ensure that these supplies are kept regular and are distributed where they should go.

Mrs. DaSilva: May I ask a supplementary question. It is a small question and it may not seem very important to us who live in Georgetown. The hon. Minister said that he did not know whether I was aware that the flag system had been abolished, and he went on to say it was abolished for a very good reason. I should be most grateful if he would tell us the reason why, because the people who live in the areas do not know the reason why the doctor cannot visit the district. It is easy for us to get medical attention in Georgetown but for the person who is out in a far-away part of the East Coast – and West Coast Berbice is where this particular instance came to me – it is a long way for him to have to go. If he lives at No. 28, it is quite a distance between

that village and Mahaicony Hospital, or Fort Wellington at the other end. These people do not have cars and outriders to drive them there fast and furiously. They have to get out and wait for the nearest drop car, or beg a friend to put them on a bicycle, or give them a lift in a dray cart or a donkey cart, and to a sick person, it is of great concern to him. That is why I am asking, so it would be doing a service to the nation if the Minister will say why the system was discontinued.

4.50 p.m.

The Chairman: Page 40

Mr. Chandisingh: Items 109 and 110

The Chairman: Please proceed

Mr. Chandisingh: Item 109, Clothing and Bedding. I wish to make the observation that this amount is being spent annually – I do not mean the same amount but a fairly large amount, so it seems. I should like to know why is it that money is being provided for clothing and bedding and we still find that in several hospitals the linen generally, pillow cases, sheets, are so much in short supply and why they are in such a dirty condition in many cases. I know that there are certain small hospitals, and when you go in certain wards you get a very good impression about the standards. But generally speaking, particularly the larger hospitals and in the Georgetown Hospital also you find that sheets, pillows and pillow cases are not available. At least patients are still being told in many cases that they must provide their own. Or, if they are not told this, you find they have to lie in a bed which is very dirty or which some other patient has vacated and there has been no change in the linen.

As I said earlier on, I want to make my position very clear, I am not saying that in every case this is so, but particularly in the larger hospitals, for example, the Georgetown Hospital, and particularly in certain wards you find this happening.

I cannot understand why, with money being provided, that this is so. Is it that not enough funds are being provided so that there would be regular changes of sheets and pillow cases for hospital patients?

Mr. Chairman, it may seem as if this is just a matter of tidiness or cleanliness in a general way. But I want to point out that particularly in hospitals and especially when we know that there are many cases, certain wards, where you still have two patients in a bed that the question of cleanliness of beds and sheets is of great importance to the health of those patients. Dirty linen, as we know, can cause infection, particularly in surgical cases. This presents a great danger to the public who enter our public hospitals. Therefore, I want the hon. Minister, the Government generally to take this matter very seriously since it is not only my observation but the public generally know that they themselves in many cases if they want their relatives or friends to be in a clean bed have to provide their own linen, etc. Otherwise, they just lie there.

This is a very serious matter and with two in a bed this is not good enough. We urge the Government immediately to rectify this position in the interest of the health of the public. The public should expect that when they go into the Public Hospitals they are entitled to the best possible conditions and not the sort of shabby conditions that in many cases they find themselves exposed to. I am restricting myself to clothing and bedding. I do not want at this stage to go into the other conditions that I may perhaps raise another time.

Item 110, Uniforms. This item, you will recall sir, that earlier this year, not too long ago we had supplementary estimates and the sum of \$40,000 was provided as you see here for uniforms with respect to staff of hospitals and dispensaries. On that occasion, I asked the question of the hon. Minister of Health whether this was a provision which would ease or solve the problem of uniforms for staff, the constant complaints and dissatisfaction which arise from time to time. In other words, separating the item of uniforms from a larger vote which I believe was provided for the whole set up. I was told that this was the case. Now we see the sum of \$80,000 being voted in further supplementary provision. The explanation given is that “voted

provision is inadequate on account of increased cost of uniform materials, increase in number of staff entitled to uniforms, etc.”

With all due respect to the reference here, I should like to feel that this is not the entire reason for this big increase which we see here, \$80,000. We remember that not too long ago, staff in various institutions had to lodge very strong protest – in New Amsterdam and in other areas. Staff, including even nurses, had to voice their protest in various ways such as walking to work without shoes or in slippers and some of the staff were even threatening or actually going to work without shirts or in their own cloths as a way of protest. Never before, I think, have we had such demonstrations. The situation had got to the extent where it was the worst we have seen so far. Although we continually draw this to the attention of the Government we still see these short-comings with respect to adequate provision of uniforms to the staff at the various institutions.

I do not know if an explanation would be given such as the one which was given earlier for another sector. I doubt that that will apply since the staff had complained that they have been going, in some cases, for two years without the issue of items concerned. I do not think that they would have to go without such items for two years if Government had taken proper steps to place orders and to get material on time.

I should like to make one other point about this. The provision of uniforms, shoes and so on, to the medical staff and auxiliary staff goes beyond merely a question of their personal satisfaction. Because when medical staff, such as nurses and others are frustrated in the course of their working conditions it can do a great harm to the attention that they give to patients. One knows that in ordinary life today people are very much frustrated for various reasons such as the high cost of living and other reasons, plus personal reasons.

Nursing personnel particularly have to very dedicated people and have to give their very best to the patients whom they serve. Otherwise, we do have a situation in which we find that in some cases patients are not properly attended to, and I should think that apart from other reasons, dissatisfaction in the course of their duties would have a lot to do with the peace of mind, so to speak, of the medical personnel, which they need to have in order to devote more time and better attention to the patients under their care. Thus, with this in mind, we urge the Government once again to keep this matter under attention always and not to allow this situation to recur again, in the interest of the medical staff and the patients whom they serve.

Mr. D.A. Singh: I do not know where a reply is required except perhaps on one issue. I should like to say to my hon. Friend that his contribution on the question of bedding will not only be kept in mind but will be kept in mind constantly, to see if we can improve the situation. On the question of uniforms, I am told that my hon. Friend was a Minister of Health. There are a number of things which caused this problem. The position this year was due to the late ordering of the uniforms and we hope this will not recur.

There is another situation that has to do with the system. This has been a system that has been existing for a long time and which I am hoping to change, and because of the problems involved, it is difficult to budget accurately. That may be one of the reasons why there is this high second supplementary provision. I am hoping to be able to ask for it to be examined, to be able to work out a system where you decide like in the case of shoes, people who get shoes get so many pairs per year. In the case of uniforms, it is on this old system of condemning the uniforms before an issue is made and because of this, there is a lot of uncertainty as to how much money is required. I am happy to say, however, that the uniform question has been settled. We are hoping this does not recur next year and we are ordering early.

May I take this opportunity to mention the question of shoes. These were ordered early enough to get them here on time but the contractors is Guyana who placed the order got these shoes between October and November, and the explanation was, the dock strike. Before that happened, I had taken the decision to let the people who did not have the shoes, have the money

for two pairs, and as far as the Mental Hospital is concerned, New Amsterdam Hospital, Skeldon Hospital, these employees have got their money in spite of the fact that the shoes did arrive before they got it. We are in the position now, that when the Estimates are passed for next year, we have shoes in stock for next year's allocation.

Mr. Chandisingh: The hon. Minister mentioned something about a contractor in Guyana. May I ask him if he is willing to let us know who the contractor in Guyana is?

Mr. D.A. Singh: It is done by tender and the people who won the tender on the last occasion was Wm. Fogarty Limited.

The Chairman: Page 41

Mr. Lall: Item 113

Mrs. DaSilva: Item 112

Mr. Jagan: Item 115

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva

Mrs. DaSilva: Yesterday evening when my hon. Friend across the way, the hon. Member Miss Ackman, was speaking she was telling us about the terrific progress being made in the housing drive in Guyana to house ourselves, she told us about the thousand houses a year that were being built. She did not say in what price range, what income bracket, what rent they had to pay. At the same time, I asked about the Carifesta houses. We were told they were all sold, and we had a little chat across the way, with Mr. Haynes, and he pointed out to us that these houses were \$50 a month over a twenty-year period. Well, as good as that is, that is not the type of money that the ordinary small man has at this disposal to pay to own a house. Could the hon. Minister tell us what Government's plans are for housing in the low income bracket, the people

who work for the minimum day's wage between \$4 and \$5 per day, the unskilled worker? He still has to pay insurance, rates and taxes, and for its upkeep. I am complaining about that. I am saying the ordinary small man cannot afford that. The basic rent should be \$20 a month.

What is the Government doing to ease the situation of the people who live in the slum areas like Albouystown, Charlestown, where they need clearing out of the dark hovels they live in. As the hon. Minister of Information and Culture said to me last year, during one of the debates when I was talking about the over-crowded conditions of the Public Hospital, of the two and three people in a bed, her comment to me was: "Oh, many of them do not want to leave the hospital, as bad as it is with two and three people in a bed, to go home because the conditions of overcrowding at home are worse than those which exist at the P.H.G." I wonder if the hon. Minister of Housing and Reconstruction would be able to throw some light on this, low-cost housing for the ordinary working man with the minimum wage who can afford to pay the rent. Fifty dollars is a lot of money for a small man. I wonder what the Government is doing for the small man who can only pay low rent, the maximum of \$20 a month.

5.10 p.m.

The Minister of Housing and Reconstruction (Mr. Naraine): Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member raised the question of Festival City and maybe I should use that as a start. In Festival City, there are two types of houses built. The rental-purchase house is sold with land at a monthly repayment of between \$50 and \$80. The monthly repayment depends on the initial deposit, the period of repayment and also remaining working period the individual. This obviously does not satisfy the hon. Member's interest.

However, in that same complex there are over 100 aided self-help houses and the repayment on these houses is just about \$32 per month. But this also does not give the whole picture, because the Government operates a number of housing estates where rental houses are available ranging from \$8.40 per month to \$21 per month. Under the aided self-help programme, a number of tenants in Government houses were selected and tenants will continue

to be selected for future aided self-help housing. In this way, those less fortunate brothers and sisters who have had to occupy these rental houses, as their circumstances improve, do enter the programme of ownership by aided self-help housing. This results in a shifting from tenanted houses whenever improved financial conditions allow, and thus other people from the lower income bracket can then be housed into these rental apartments. This is what has been done recently and this is what we intended to continue to do mainly in this programme for low income housing.

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. Lall

Mr. Lall: Sir, it is a long time since I have drawn the attention of the Minister of Labour to this matter. It is in connection with the Government appointing persons at the scale. It is often told to me that the Government appointee goes there for just one hour or two hours and then he goes away. Thus no one is there to look after the interest of the workers. I want to point out an anomaly that was brought to my attention with respect to the scale at Versailles. When the needle points at 5 tons the printing mechanism points 3 tons. I drew this to the attention of the Minister. The same thing is happening at Enmore. If the person whom the Government appointed goes there for one hour or two hours and goes home afterwards what will happen to the interest of the workers. What are you to do at Enmore? We threatened management with a strike and we got three workers representatives from G.A.W.U. at the scale until now. We are again calling on the Minister to democratize the system of selecting people to be at the scale thus having election by the workers themselves to elect. They elected the one man let them elect the other person, and Government should have supervision over these people.

I know the Minister will say Government has some interest. The Government has some interest, yes, but the Minister must understand that from sugar produced, revenue enters into the coffers of the Government. Therefore sugar workers' interest must at all times be protected by people chosen by them. I do not want to bring this matter up again to the deaf ears of the Minister. He seems not to listen to reasoning.

We also suggested that there be one representative from the cane farmers. There are eleven estates, you have eleven representatives, we are saying that the eleven representatives should be elected by the cane farmers, they should not be handpicked. We hope the Minister adheres to our call because the interest of the workers is in jeopardy. I do not think we will talk any longer but, in future we will have to take some action to remedy this situation if the Minister is not prepared to remedy it.

Dr. Jagan: Sir, may I say something on this? I wish to speak on this head from a different point of view and, that is, it is legitimate cost to be borne by the taxpayers. No doubt the Minister, in attempting to resolve industrial disputes, sought a way out by paying the checkers at these scales at the taxpayers' expense. It seems to me that this should be an expense to be borne by the employers. If they have defective scales and time and time again this has been proved – I think the Ministry of Labour is satisfied that these scales are not functioning properly, if that is so, and the workers were being robbed and as a result of this, it was affecting production, industrial relations, there were strikes and so forth, then it is the duty of the estates to pay the workers who will be there to look at the interest of the workers as a whole.

5.20 p.m.

The Minister in his wisdom has decided that this must be borne by the taxpayers. One can think of a lot of more valuable services which can be given by this money, \$55,000 for example the public hospital, which I visit every day in Georgetown. I am not sick; I go to see people who are dying from the lack of proper care. And to compound this problem, the Government appoints people who have no interest. On what ground is the Government appointing somebody there? We read in the papers about workers' participation. The Minister himself made a speech the other day. My colleague has just pointed out the fact of how some of these Government appointees operate.

If we are to have workers' participation, then surely, the workers should have the right to appoint either two or three and the cane farmers who are directly involved should have the

right to select the third person. I suppose this is another case of patronage where the Government is saying: we are footing the bill, therefore we must appoint the people. This cannot lead to what the Minister sought to achieve in the very beginning, that is, good industrial relations to end disputes. Why is it in only once case, there is one election, and in another case there is no election? It seems to me that the Minister should try to get the sugar planters to pay and in keeping with their own pronouncements about workers' participation, they should have all the checkers directly elected by the workers so the workers will have confidence in them and will have control over them. If they do not work satisfactorily, if they work in a lackadaisical manner, then the workers will have an opportunity to throw them out and there we would get more satisfaction, even if the Government had to spend the money.

Mr. Jagan: Item 115. Can the Minister say what is the amount of this duty allowance that will be given to the G.M.O? I presume the G.M.O. is a Government Medical Officer who has been appointed and whose salary is fixed as a G.M.O. All we have here is: "To provide for the creation of an item 'Duty Allowance' to G.M.O." The Minister should tell us how much more will be given to the doctor who will be appointed in excess of his salary and what other jobs he will be required to do, because if he is appointed to do a specific job, then I suppose his salary would be fixed and there is no duty allowance, but the duty allowance may be in respect of something else or some other duty that he has to perform. How will this person be appointed and what would be the amount that the Government has in mind that would be given to him as duty allowance in excess of his basic salary as a G.M.O.?

The Minister of Labour and Social Security (Mr. Carrington): Mr. Chairman, if you will permit me to reply to the hon. Leader of the Opposition in respect of the appointment and payment of scale supervisors, I have replied to this particular matter on about four previous occasions but I will spend some more time on this occasion to reply to this matter again. It is a matter that gives credit to this Government in that over the years, even when the P.P.P. had control of the Government – and a large percentage of its supporters work in the sugar industry – it did not look as far as this Government is looking in the interest of the workers.

I will repeat the reason for these scale supervisors. The workers complained that when the cane is weighed at the scales, they are cheated because the scales on many occasions do not show accurately the weight. The cane cutters are not paid by the day, they are paid by the weight, so many tone of cane they cut, they are paid according to the weight of the canes. This particular weighing of canes over the years caused numerous strikes in the sugar industry. Besides, the workers losing money because of inaccuracy of the scales, they lost money due to strikes. The Government set out to correct this situation and after several attempts by the unions in the sugar industry to correct the situation, by paying from out of the workers' pockets, paying persons to look at the scales, they did not succeed. It was attempted once by the M.P.C.A. and on another occasion by G.A.W.U. The President of G.A.W.U. appealed to me to see what could have been done and I decided that we should have regular scale supervisors appointed.

When I approached the employers, they refused. They said there was a recognized union in the industry and this should be their business to look after the workers' interest. The employers refused to make this payment. The Government, after recommendations made to the Cabinet, decided that it was in the workers' interest to have these supervisors appointed and as an experiment the Government approved the funds to pay the scale supervisors. This being so, the Government appointed scale supervisors and the employers and the trade unions and the workers were satisfied because, surprisingly, after we had appointed scale supervisors, the wages of the very workers who cut the canes increased by about 10 per cent. The workers were satisfied and management was satisfied, because there were no more strikes.

Then I said to the management: "You are satisfied that this experiment worked, everybody is happy, now you should pay." And I must tell the hon. Member that the sugar producers are paying but the Government had to initiate the scheme. Then we decided that we should have elected representatives. Now, sir, I want you to see the situation here where there is a recognized union, and the Ministry of Labour could have easily said, all we need to do is ask the recognized union to appoint scale supervisors.

But in an effort to give proper representation to the workers, accepting the principle of workers' participation, we decided to have the workers elected regardless of what union they belonged. I am sure if the P.P.P. were in Government they would not have done that. The President of the Union and Mr. Maccie Hamid can say that it is the fairest elections in any union operations they have ever seen, conducted by the Ministry of Labour. The workers are satisfied but they want everything, they want all. I will tell you, sir, they would not get all. Because we must have a watch on the industry. [Dr. Jagan: For what purpose?"]

Now, the labour offers spend approximately 60 per cent of their time in the sugar industry. Let us remove them and see what will happen. It is a fact. The question is that we must have a watch, the Government has an interest in industry. You have the scale supervisors, you have cane cutters and the peasant cane farmers, and you have Government's interest to protect.

The President of the G.A.W.U. knows that every 2 weeks there is a regular examination of the scales where you must have a registered certified scale commissary to examine the scale. Surely if we do not take this approach the recognized union would have had a strong case. So I do not see where we need to quarrel about this. What we have to ask ourselves is this: Are the workers happy? We are getting production.

Further on the hon. Member Mr. Harry Lall's point about the accuracy of the scale. The scale is automatic and it puts out a ticket on which the weight is recorded. We have worked out a system whereby if the scale is defective the scale supervisors along with the workers' representatives would stand on the scale 24 hours a day and record for themselves until the scale is repaired. This system is working to the satisfaction of the workers. During the year I have regular meetings with these scale supervisors and they report, both the elected supervisors as well as appointed supervisors and bring me up to date on the working of the scales.

As regards the Government appointed supervisors not doing their work properly, I get the same reports about the elected supervisors not doing their work. But we have a log book system

where whenever the Government Supervisor comes off the job it is signed by the elected supervisors and when the elected supervisor comes off the job it is signed by the peasant cane farmers supervisor. So they do check on each other and they are free to go to the estate on the scale at any time during their shift or out of their shift. There is no need to quarrel about this matter. The President of the Union knows that it is working to the satisfaction of the workers I must tell the Leader of the Opposition that the S.P.A. is paying and not the taxpayers. Because what we do is this: we pay and we supervise the operations and then we recoup from the S.P.A. but we have to initiate the scheme in the interest of the workers. The president complained, he brought the slips of the cane cutters to show how they were losing money and the Union was paying, and this Government set out to correct the situation by setting up a system. The Government makes a contribution; not in the form of cash, because the labour officers supervise. They pay regular visits to the estates. If you go to the estate you would hear most of the workers saying that never in the history of the sugar industry they have got so good treatment as under this Government. They have got increases by the appointment of tribunals and there is still more to come because next year they will be getting \$5 a day.

On the other question asked by the hon. Member Mr. Jagan about duty allowance. Some time ago, the Ministry of Labour discovered that the medical assistance given by the part time Government Medical Officer working at the Palms was inadequate because he had to go there and go to other places. We thought it fit to have permanent G.M.O., therefore we advertised and we were able to get Dr. Fermo from the Philippines. When he came to Guyana he worked at the Palms but we discovered that he had to do other work such as visiting the Archer's Poor Home, the Dharam Sala and any such Home that required his services. There are times when he goes to the homes of inmates who have been discharged. For that reason we felt that he should receive a duty allowance. We agreed that he should be paid a duty allowance. The amount that he would be receiving I am in no position to say because I do not have the figures. But we agree that he should be paid a duty allowance because he is doing a good job.

Mr. Lall: On this question of the Government supervisor, I am not pointing a finger at the Government supervisor. I am saying that the workers are complaining. I have told the

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5.30 – 5.40 p.m.

Minister this time and time again. When the Government supervisor is on shift the weight varies from when the elected representative is on shift. The workers are getting more tonnage when the elected representatives are at the scale than when the Government representatives are at the scale. As for asking the M.P.C.A. to appoint somebody, he knows and the whole country knows that the M.P.C.A. is an impotent union.

5.40 p.m.

He knows that for one week at Rose Hall Estate the M.P.C.A. ordered the factory workers to go back to work, and not until the G.A.W.U. intervened did the workers turn out on Sunday to work.

If he had a bit of conscience, immediately he would have brought legislation here to have elections to see which union the people want as their bargaining agent. We want the hon. Minister to examine the question again. Let him go and examine the book when the Government appointees are working and he will see the weight is quite different from when the elected representatives are working. I am challenging the hon. Minister to go and see the weight during this period. If there are three persons working, they should work eight hours per shift, not go home and come back when they have to sign the book. They are paid to be there on the scale eight hours but in the case of the Government appointees, they go there, spend an hour, and go home. I want the hon. Minister to check on it. When he checks on it, he will say: "Okay, Harry, let us have all elected."

The Minister of Labour and Social Security (Mr. Carrington): The President of the G.A.W.U., the hon. Member Mr. Harry Lall, refers to me and the Ministry as not having a conscience. As regards giving recognition to the G.A.W.U., even during the reign of the P.P.P., they never got as much recognition either from the employer or their own Ministry. Ask the hon. Member Mr. Derek Jagan what caused him to be able to make representations on behalf of the workers at Rose Hall after that accident there. It is because the Ministry appointed the hon. Member Mr. Harry Lall as a member of the Commission in the face of criticism from the S.P.A.

and the M.P.C.A., and it was his minority report that caused the workers to receive \$62,000. And then, we do not have a conscience!

As regards the question of the scale supervisors, what they really want and the workers who are complaining against the Government Supervisors want is twenty-two supervisors elected by the G.A.W.U. I said, “No. You are not going to get that. Because you have the peasant cane farmers, G.A.W.U. and the Government will have to be there.” He is not saying what happens with the very G.A.W.U. supervisors. Many times when they want them at the scales, they are in the fields. Agitating strikes. I called them into my office, from Leonora, from Berbice, and I said, “Comrade, let me tell you one time. You are Government employees and you cannot call strike during your working hours. You have to call it in the night.” So, I talk to the boys and I keep them quiet, but don’t tell me you are leaving the scales and going and calling strikes. You complain on one side, you must complain on the other, but I am satisfied that things are going well.

Dr. Jagan: I am glad to say that after, he was able to tell us that the Government is not now footing this bill, that the sugar planters are footing it. He went on to clap himself on the back by referring to the President of the Union being a member of a Commission, but any Government which is worth its salt must have workers’ representatives along with employers and so-called neutral people, maybe a chairman. This Minister tells us about this one person. We should have had more than one from the union which has the confidence of the workers. If he had said that, we would have congratulated him. What about the previous commissions, when the Government refused to have people like Weekes, like Professor Davis, Head of the Faculty of Economics, like the chap who examined the bauxite industry and his book was removed --

The Chairman: What has that got to do with it? The Minister referred to the commission by merely pointing out that even G.A.W.U. which is not a recognized union was permitted to have a representative on that commission. I am not going to have that excursion.

Dr. Jagan: Government should have a democratic election. It is not selecting – so as to allow the union to have twenty-two members. It is not the union appointing them. There is an election where any worker votes, where the M.P.C.A. has a right to nominate, the G.A.W.U. has a right to nominate. What the hon. Minister does not like is that the G.A.W.U. representatives win the elections. Let him say that. [Interruption] Hear the Minister talking about rigging. This is one election which they said they conducted, and even though we know they rig elections, they cannot win. The case falls, especially now the Government is not paying to have nominees, in keeping with the other announced principles, workers' participation, and I am surprised to hear the Minister say that a worker who is a workers' representative must not have anything to do with strikes and must not help other workers and so on. [Interruption] Not during his working hours. How do you know whether in the period when he is not working he is not giving help to fellow workers?

Mr. Carrington: I told them they can do this, but they must not leave their job to go and call strikes.

Mr. Jagan: The hon. Minister just referred to the fact about the Commission which was appointed after the clarifier tragedy at Rose Hall. It was the duty of any Government in a tragedy such as that to have appointed a commission. The fact that a commission appointed did not cause the estate to pay those people any money. The dependants had to file actions against the employer. The unanimous decision of the Commission was that the employer had committed breaches of the Factories Regulations, and what has the Government done? Has the Government charged the employers for committing those breaches? And, in fact, I understand that the cleaning of the clarifier is being conducted in the same way without the employer complying with the provision of the Factories Regulations. On the question of the settlement of the claim and how much the dependents eventually got from the employers, they had to force them to pay in court. They did not get it just like that, the employer did not just give them a cheque and settle the matter. The Government appointed a commission to investigate the cause of the tragedy.

One would have expected after the Government has spent so much money to carry out investigations that some action would have been taken against the employers for their default which caused the death of the workers.

The Chairman: Page 42. Page 43. Page 44. Page 45.

Mr. Durant: Item 123. Mr. Chairman, under this item I notice that ten posts of Senior Co-operative Officer are being created in one instance and nineteen post of Co-operative Officer.

The Chairman: I want to make a few corrections here. The following should be substituted for paragraphs (d), (e), and (f) of Section A of the notes:

- (d) two posts of Class I Clerk on the A25 salary scale;
- (e) eleven posts of Class II Clerk on the A32 salary scale;
- (f) twelve posts of Stenotypist and Typist/Clerk on the A32 salary scale;

Substitution of the following for paragraphs (i), (j) and (k) of Section B of the notes:

- (i) three posts of Class I Clerk on the A25 salary scale;
- (j) four posts of Class II Clerk on the A32 salary scale;
- (k) one post of Stenotypist and Typist/Clerk on the A32 salary scale;

The substitution of “165,502” for “\$190,786” in paragraph (y) of Section B of the notes.

You may proceed hon. Member Mr. Durant.

Mr. Durant: Subsection (o) states that there will be ten posts of Senior Co-operative Officer and under (p) there will be nineteen posts of Co-operative Officer, and (v) twelve posts of Co-operative Auditor. This in fact will be strengthening the Co-operative Department. Now, Mr. Chairman, I was speaking to a few Co-op Chairmen and Secretaries. It seems to me that there is some amount of dissatisfaction and mishandling in the administration of these societies that is why you find people would say that the co-operative sector is not operating properly.

I listened to the Minister of Co-operatives and Community Development on the radio, I think it was on the night of 14th November when he gave a brief talk on the success of the co-operatives and the amount of work they have done, particularly the Builders Co-operative. I am basing my argument now on the Builders Co-op because there are a few Co-operative Societies to meet the Prime Minister tomorrow. I do not know why it is they are meeting the Prime Minister instead of the Minister concerned. These small Co-ops are complaining that they are not getting enough work. But what strikes me is that two of them said to me that the only way the small co-operative can exist is they would have to owe the Bank. One told me that they owe the Bank a lot of money in overdraft. After Festival City was completed they said they were told that there will be an extension and that they will be working continuously. But eventually, that is not so.

They are now saying that if they do not owe the Co-operative Bank they will not get work. What comes to my mind with respect to these small Co-ops is that I do not believe they have enough guidance and education from the Government. No one can deny that Co-operatives will be good and the Co-ops can serve the Government but one finds that all of these Co-operatives are in a shamble because, the guidance is not there. If these additional posts are officers added to the fleet and will give them the guidance where managing of the co-operatives is concerned then I have no reason to doubt that these co-operatives will be successful.

These are the set of people who would form a Co-operative Builders Society and some of them might not be proper Builders. Notwithstanding the fact that the Co-operative is formed they get some work, the bank starts you out as usual with the overdraft as long as the co-operative officer says to the Bank that this Co-operative Society's borrowing power will be so much. The Bank advances you the money, and the money is supposed to be repaid. What happens is that most of these Co-operatives cannot run their business because some of them are ordinary people who never had the experience of handling books. The co-operatives are not properly run, when the job is finished they can hardly give an account of how the job was completed, what are the profits, or whether they have has losses. As a result in most cases they go back to the Bank. Where they are going to get the money to repay the overdraft is another

matter. One of them told me that their overdraft is \$4,000 and another is \$7,000 but yet he does not know when he going to get work.

But if the co-operatives that worked in Festival City were guided by the Government, which I know is done in all developing nations for co-operatives to be successful. Their economy on to this day are based on co-operatives, but they must be run and supervised by the Government because many untrained people would be at the head of these Co-ops which would serve them no useful purpose. Then you will find yourself with the small man still saying that he can never become a real man because he had not the proper guidance. Therefore, I will ask the Minister of Co-operatives if he can tell us whether these officers are to make the fleet larger and that guidance will be given to the Co-operatives so that they will stop this grouse of a small co-operative cannot exist and the large co-operatives are getting all the money.

6 p.m.

The Minister of Co-operatives and Community Development (Mr. Haynes): Mr. Chairman, I should like to thank the hon. Member of his contribution with respect to the statement that he made when he said that co-ops can work. I have heard so often from the other side that co-operatives are a farce, that this Government is trying to use a system that will not help the working-class people. I would like to point out for the benefit of the hon. Member that with the exception of the twelve posts of co-operative auditors, the other posts are merely transfers coming with the establishment of the Ministry of Co-operatives and Community Development, because co-operatives and community development, as you know, sir, had been under the Ministry of Economic Development.

With respect to the questions posed about small builders co-operative societies not functioning properly, I am aware that there are certain problems existing within some of these co-operative societies. We have within the Ministry of Co-operatives and Community Development a section called Education and Training, which deals with training from the bookkeeping stage, so that we can teach all the co-operators to keep good books but what we

have found is that a number of these small co-operative societies would not keep books, and some of them have their reasons why they do not want to keep books. This is why we are appointing twelve auditors to ensure that books are properly kept.

The Chief Co-operatives Officer would only give sanction for the borrowing power of a co-operative society when he is satisfied that that society is a viable society and, therefore, I am unaware of this particular co-operative society or group of co-operative societies that the hon. Member mentions that is seeing the hon. Prime Minister tomorrow, therefore, I can offer no comment or suggestion on their problem except to give the assurance that the Ministry is willing and capable of assisting all co-operative societies to become viable. We are moving to a stage where we are going to be doing more work in co-operative education so that people can understand that co-operatives are really business undertakings. So few people understand that co-operatives are businesses and therefore they should stick to the rules.

Dr. Jagan: I wish to make one observation arising out of what the hon. Minister said. I say this because he misinformed the House about the P.P.P.'s position. He said he was glad to hear what my colleague said that this side of the House, our party, has stated that co-operatives are a farce and they cannot work. I wish to correct this slander because the P.P.P. has never said that. The P.P.P. has said over and over, it is in favour of co-operatives, and the P.P.P. long before the hon. Minister went into politics has been talking about the role the co-operative can play. What we did say and we repeat is that the co-operative movement and co-operatives will not be the means by which socialism will come to Guyana. We said that it is socialism which will permit the co-operatives to grow and develop. That is a fundamental difference and must not be twisted as the hon. Minister is now doing.

The Prime Minister only yesterday said it is not the intention of the Government to nationalize and take over the commanding heights of the economy. What we are going to find in the end is a lot of book co-operatives, a lot of frauds, and a lot of officers appointed, one checking upon another. I remember under the British they had social assistance and the number of people they had administering the social assistance was almost half of the vote. I am just

making the point if we do not watch out and do what the P.P.P. has been saying, that is, have socialism and break up the commanding heights which are in the hands of the sharks, then the co-operative will not succeed and we will be building up a big bureaucracy which will only be costing the taxpayers a lot of money as it is costing generally today without any real development.

The Chairman: Page 46. Page 47. Page 48. Page 49. Page 50. Page 51. Page 52. Page 53. Page 54. Page 55. Page 56. Page 57. Page 58.

Section "B" page 1.

Dr. Jagan: Items 3 and 4. On a previous occasion when this head was discussed, item 3, Acquisition of Overseas Officers and Residences, we raised the question of the cost of this Chancery in Washington. I wonder if the Minister could tell us whether this will be the final expenditure or whether much more will have to be spent perhaps to furnish and do other things in lavish style at the taxpayers' expense.

On item 4, Industrial Development, I notice in the margin that this money is being asked for to provide for the acquisition of Guyana Gajraj Ltd. I wonder if the Minister will tell us how much was paid for this finally, and whether the partnership arrangement will now come to an end, or this is merely to pay for the share of the Government, and, if so, what was the value of the property and how much is the share, if that is the share or whether it is the whole payment for acquiring the whole thing.

6.10 p.m.

If that is the share or whether this is the whole payment for acquiring the property. It seems to me when the Government is proposing these things, before you take the heads as you do, the Minister should give the House some information then we would not have to ask questions. The public should know what the Government is doing then arising out of what they say we will then be in a position to ask questions or not to ask questions.

The Chairman: You have to change that longstanding practice which this House has been adopting.

Dr. Jagan: I am just making a suggestion because we are completely in the dark. We do not know what questions to ask even.

Mr. Jack: Mr. Chairman, the amount provided under item 3 is for the downpayment on the property, but the rest of the payment will be made out of the money that would be provided for rental if the place has not been bought.

Mr. Ram Karran: I should like the hon. Minister to tell us what would be the balance of the money. What is the total amount? The hon. Minister said the rest of the money will be paid out of what would have been provided for rental, what is the total sum?

Mr. Jack: I understand that this was already debated last September and is part of the record of the House. But I should like to make another point. Hon. Members keep asking what is the final figure. Now, what is really meant about what is the final figure? Does it mean that if the house is renovated a year from now, if it is painted they are going to come and question us? It is \$199,000 (US).

The Chairman: What the hon. Leader of the Opposition is asking is what is the total cost of the acquisition of the building?

Mr. Jack: It is \$199,000 (US). That figure I understand was given in September last in this House. Item 4, we had a majority shareholding in Guyana Gajraj. This money is to provide for the acquisition of the rest of the shares so that the company will be a totally Government-owned company and the notes set out under (a), (b) and (c) the relevant circumstances.

Dr. Jagan: I ask what is the amount they are paying for Guyana Gajraj Limited.

The Chairman: What the Minister said was that \$204,054 is the balance being provided for the acquisition of Guyana Gajraj Limited.

Dr. Jagan: You have (a), (b) and (c) on the legend, and therefore --

The Chairman: You want to know what specific amount is being paid. The hon. Leader of the Opposition would like to know what specific sum embraces (a), what specific sum embraces (b) and so on.

Mr. Jack: Let me explain. This amount is the total cost broken up under (a), (b) and (c). if you are going to acquire something you can either pay just for assets or you can make a payment taking into account what is owed to various people and make an adjustment like that. If the hon. Leader of the Opposition would like a detailed account he would have to give a substantive question. We have no objection.

Mr. Ram Karran: Am I correct, sir, to say that the cost of acquiring the chancery is in the vicinity of half a million dollars?

The Chairman: You were told that the amount is \$199,000 (US). Page 2.

Mrs. DaSilva: Item 10.

The Chairman: There is a correction on this page. Under item 5 the amount of \$58,654 should be replaced by \$58,652.02 a difference of 98 cents. This appears in the notes.

Mr. Ram Karran: In the estimates we do not mind the odd cent. We want to account for the dollars.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mrs. DaSilva, on what item do you wish to speak?

Mrs. DaSilva: Item 10, sir.

Mr. Ram Karran: Items 8 and 10.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran.

Mr. Ram Karran: When looking back to Look Out about which we had some debate in this House and it is not entered in these estimates. I notice Government is acquiring estates on Hoff-Van-Awrich, Somerset and Berks on the Essequibo Coast, I should like to ask the hon. Minister not what happened to Look Out but what is the acreage of these two estates? What is the population? What the Government means by land settlement? What type of land settlement?

The Chairman: You certainly do not mean population? You mean acreage.

Mr. Ram Karran: And the number of people living there, because as far as I know only crabs live in this area. Would the hon. Minister tell us from whom the Government is buying? Whether this estate is going to be left with crab bush as Look Out has been left with crab bush. When the Minister has replied I may be able to add something to my enquiry.

The Chairman: Are you not dealing with item 10?

Mr. Ram Karran: Again, I ask the disgusting question. What is the total amount for the rehabilitation of Timehri? Time and again, since the construction of this U.S. showpiece we have been told that we are spending money on Timehri, some of it to complete it, some of it to rehabilitate it, some of it to repair this new building. I should like to know when will this exercise be completed?

Mrs. DaSilva: Item 10, on this question of rehabilitation of Timehri, I wish to speak on the disgraceful situation that exists at Timehri which is supposed to be an international airport,

and I wish to refer specifically to the cafeteria and the duty-free shop. People come in all hours of the night from all over the world, they want to get even if it is a hot cup of coffee and the cafeteria is closed. For an international airport this standard is just not good enough. If the person who is granted the concession for running the cafeteria cannot open at night, that person should not be granted the concession. It is an international airport, and international standards should be adhered to.

6.20 p.m.

Sir, go to any other international airport throughout the world and you will always be able to find some place where you can get a least a cup of coffee and a sandwich. The duty-free shop is never opened at night. We can do with the money from it and maybe this House would not be asked so often to provide money for the rehabilitation of Timehri. Passengers are coming in, sometimes there is a wait, they cannot get into the cafeteria to have anything to eat or drink, they cannot get into the duty-free shop, maybe to spend some hard-earned money in Guyana for our benefit. Those standards are just not good enough for an international airport. Maybe, the hon. Minister will say what they propose to do about it. As I said, if the person operating and being granted the concessions cannot open at night, he should not be granted them.

As they are in the process of rehabilitating Timehri, the question of the car park arises. The car park has one entrance and there is a kiosk at that entrance at which to collect the entrance fee. There is no exit. In the process of rehabilitating, will they please consider putting an exit at the other end, with a kiosk, so the person can show that ticket that he has paid to come in, and go out the other end, not where he has to turn around and come out back the only entrance that exists? When people are coming and going, it is very frustrating to be caught in that car park trying to get out at the one entrance as cars are trying to come in and trying to pay entrance fees at the same time. Would the Minister say what is proposed to be done about the cafeteria, the duty-free shop, and the car park?

Mr. Kasim: Pln. Hoff-Van-Aurich was bought from the Official Receiver for \$30,000,

and also, Somerset and Berks to the value of \$95,000. I am not in a position to say at the moment from whom Somerset and Berks was bought but the amount required here for that estate is \$95,000, making it \$125,000. The acreage is 520 acres at Pln. Hoff-Van-Aurich.

Mr. Ram Karran: Nobody with some experience in the value of land can put his right hand on his breast and tell us that the Government is not being fleeced in the payment of this amount for Somerset and Berks. Is the Government going to continue to buy crab bush at the expense of the taxpayers to satisfy its friends? The hon. Minister cannot come here and tell us he does not know whom they are buying from. What kind of Minister is he?

The Chairman: Item 10.

The Minister of Works and Communicatins (Mr. Hoyte): Mr. Chairman, in answer to the question raised by the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran as to when rehabilitation of Timehri will end, my answer is simple. Rehabilitation of Timehri will never end so long as we have the airport there. This obviously is an item of expenditure which keeps recurring for a number of reasons. It would be a good thing if hon. Members take the time to understand the scope of the various subheads which appear in the estimates year after year and examine what is done with the funds voted under the particular subhead. For example, it is well known from reports in the news media that P.A.A. proposes to have daily flights into Guyana, to overnight and to turn around here. If that in fact takes place, it will become necessary to extend our parking facilities at the airport and, again, one will find that substantial sums will have to be voted under this particular subhead to improve those facilities. So long as we are thinking of improving the facilities – because one must not only think in terms of building under this subhead – this will be an on-going expenditure.

In answer to the hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva, I would dispute her assertion that at all international airports at any hour of the day or night one can get something to buy from the concessionaires. I myself have travelled throughout the Caribbean, have stopped at airports at Seawell and at Piarco, and have sat down there long hours during the night without being able to

purchase anything because the concessionaires had closed down. This happens when the schedules get out of order. Very often a plane is due in at a particular item. It is delayed, it does not come in until three or four hours after, and in those circumstances, one would not find concessionaires keeping their shops open in the hope that a plane might come in two, three, or four hours after the time when it was expected to come in. I agree we need to have a proper service, we need to ensure that the shop is opened when the regular services come in, and that commuters are given the opportunity to have refreshments at a time when they are needed. If, in fact, the allegations made by the hon. Member are true, I certainly will cause investigations to be made. I have no doubt that the concessionaires operate under contracts and they are required to do certain things, and it is the duty, I concede, of the Ministry and the Government to ensure that they live up to the terms of their contracts. As to the other matters which she raised, I have noted them and will take similar action.

Mr. Ram Karran: The Minister, perhaps unconsciously, is misleading the House when he said that rehabilitation will continue for ever, so long as the service runs. What I was trying to get, perhaps it was not clear, how long is this phase of rehabilitation going to run? Have the Americans given the Government a blank cheque to write under PL 55 for ever and ever? Surely not. If the Americans want to run Pan American and to park and to stay here as a new arrangement, surely, the Government has to arrange another loan because this Government cannot do anything unless it secures American loans, but that will be another exercise. I am talking about the existing arrangement and if this is the final payment on the present rehabilitation programme. Perhaps we are very lucky if we do not have to pay it back.

Mr. Hoyte: It is unfortunate that the hon. Member did not find the words to ask the question which he wanted to ask in the first instance. I think it is a little unfair of him to attribute to me any powers of divination. In answer to the question which he has now raised, I would say that the legend would make this matter abundantly clear, that for certain specific rehabilitation work there was a provision made under the loan agreement referred to in the notes and these are accounts relating to that particular loan agreement which, as I have said, was voted for particular work. But does not falsify the statement I made, that under this subhead rehabilitation of

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6.20 p.m. – 6.30 p.m.

Timehri is an on-going thing. If the tower fell down tomorrow, we would have to find funds to rehabilitate it and that would come under this subhead. If there are minor defects in the building, we have to find money to repair it and I pointed out that if there is work to be done on the tarmac and on the facilities which go with the tarmac, we will have to find money to do it under this subhead.

6.30 p.m.

The Chairman: Page 3

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Items 12, 14 and 16.

Dr. Jagan: I should like to speak on item 14.

Mrs. DaSilva: Item 15

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Balchand Persaud.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Sir, under item 12 the Government is seeking an additional sum of \$400,000 to provide for preparatory works in connection with the West Demerara roads project. From what I understand, the Government was carrying out a project from Meten-Meer-Zorg to Parika, and from what I gather too the road are completed and it is being used by the public. Could the hon. Minister be kind enough to say where these preparatory works is taking place? Is it a new road from Parika going to the East Bank of Essequibo? Or is it the Canals Nos. 1 and 2 roads? Or is it that the Government intends to spend the money to do necessary preparatory works on the road to Hubu?

Item 14, Hydroelectric power surveys. The Government had indicated since 1968 that it will carry out surveys to have a hydroelectric project at Tiboku Falls. It is only this year that the Government voted money to do the surveys for the project and now an additional sum of

\$435,000 is being sought. I wish to ask the hon. Minister if he would be able to say how soon will the surveys be completed and how soon would the Government be able, having finished the survey, to start working on this project?

Item 16, Resurfacing of South Dakota Racing Circuit. The sum of \$5,000 is being sought. Since motor racing is fast becoming a well liked sport, to do the resurfacing of the circuit is not a bad expenditure, except if one looks at the centre of the circuit there are very large trees and very thick undergrowth. As a result, if people are by the spectators stand they are unable to see the whole race. I wonder whether the Government would give consideration to the cutting down of the bushes and the large trees at the centre so that spectators would see the whole race.

Mrs. DaSilva: Just a small question I wish to ask the hon. Minister. The closing of the Tiperu quarry has been in operation now for over a year. Incidentally, I understand it is not working now. Many of the Government quarries have broken down and are not working and one wonders if it is a feasible thing for the Government to handle the quarry business and should not leave it to private enterprise. Anyway, the legend states that the sum of \$753,477 is acquired to meet the additional expenses on the purchase of equipment for the operation of the Glasgow/Tiperu Quarry. We have already spent \$35,000 on it and it has been in operation for more than a year. Could the hon. Minister say if this is the final payment or how much more equipment has to be acquired? Have they got all the equipment now?

Dr. Jagan: Sir, I notice under item 14, the sum of \$435,000 for Hydroelectric power surveys and the legend states that it is to meet the cost of additional hydroelectric surveys in the Upper Mazaruni.

As I recall, and perhaps you will recall too, prior to the last General Elections in 1968 the Government announced that it was going to embark on a big hydroelectric project costing more than \$200 million and one will have assumed therefore that all the preliminary work, the surveys, were finished at that time. Because how could the Government have then stated that it intended

to build this hydroelectric plant. This was what was told to the electorate. It is the same way we hear now “Big things to come”, like those big balloons about the \$200 million hydroelectric project at Tiboku Falls in the Mazaruni. Now we see additional hydroelectric surveys in the Upper Mazaruni. Why surveys now when then we were talking of building of hydroelectric station to give us electricity? It means that something is wrong somewhere. I hope it is not my logic. Maybe the Minister will tell us what this is all about. I am not against surveys; let this be understood. But I thought sir, that we had passed that stage long ago. Or is this money for something else, that is, the project itself?

Mr. Hoyte: Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member Mr. Balchand Persaud asked a question in connection with the West Demerara roads and the expenditure for the preparatory works. The road programme for West Demerara consists of the reconstruction of the roads on the West Coast from Parika right down to Vreed-en-Hoop, the reconstruction of roads on the West Bank right down to Toevlugt Patentia and also in the Canals Polders. The first phase of this Reconstruction from Parika to Uitvlugt/Meten-Meer-Zorg, which is about 9 miles, was done by local financing by the Roads Division of the Ministry of Works and Communication. The second phase which will start from Uitulugt, take in the Coast, the Bank and the Canals Polders has started, and that is being financed, as hon. Members will know, with World Bank funds. This provision is to do the preliminary work, that is, clearing the right of way and establishing the alignments. The surveyors of the Ministry are setting down the palls to mark the extent of the road reserves. There is a lot of work to be done because where the road is re-aligned it become necessary to remove fences and to remove houses and sometimes to remove trees which might be in the way of the proposed road.

6.40 p.m.

So this money is in that connection and is for the purposes which I have indicated. Now the actual work of mobilisation will start next month because by that time we expect that the preliminary work of laying out the right of way, as it is called, will have been completed.

With respect to the question raised on hydro-power surveys, I can link the question by the hon. Member with the question raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. This amount is in respect of surveys which are being carried out at Kamaria in the Cuyuni and in the Upper Mazaruni. This matter was raised on a previous occasion and I did explain to this honourable House what we were doing.

This Upper Mazaruni project and the Kamaria project are being carried out jointly with the Yugoslava. It is a specific project; it is not a total survey of our hydro-electric potential but it is an area which has been identified as providing more than possibilities for our immediate needs. For overall needs, surely one would have to do a survey of our total hydro potential which will cost millions of dollars, as hon. Members would know. This total survey will be undertaken by the U.N.D.P. Already, there has been agreement for the funding of this total survey which is going to start next year, but this particular project in the Upper Mazaruni is one which has been very far advanced. By March next year, we expect to have a complete report at which time the Government will be called upon to make a positive decision as to whether it will go to the next stage of actually building hydro-electric facilities.

The hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva raised a question on the Glasgow Teperu quarry. It is not true that the quarry is not working, as the hon. Member has said. Unless that quarry had been in existence, the whole Government road building and sea defence programme would have been in jeopardy. The decision to bring this quarry into operation arose out of the fact that the private operators were in no position to supply the total projected needs of the Government for the various projects which it has to execute and there was the very real possibility of stone having to be imported in to this country. It was to prevent such a situation that this quarry came into existence.

The quarry operations are very severe on machinery. One has only to go to see the type of beating the machinery get from the big boulders to realize that the cost of keeping it going is high, and one would have to keep spending money to keep it going and to replace machinery as it goes bad. It will be noted that the sums requested are for equipment which is necessary to

keep the quarry going. The equipment consists of large trucks of the type which is necessary to do that kind of rough work, and other types of equipment necessary to keep the machinery functioning.

I have noted the point made by the hon. Member Mr. Balchand Persaud on the resurfacing of the South Dakota racing circuit and if there is anything the Ministry can do, because we are based at Timehri, we certainly will do it in the interest of the sport. Thank you.

Dr. Jagan: The Government and the party which was leading the Government were flying a kite in 1968 when they said they were going to undertake a very big hydro project. Now we are told that we do not have any money to do it. I suppose all the balloon, which we are hearing now, \$60 million for this and \$80 million for that, after a while we will hear too there is no money for it. This is why we were calling all the time for a comprehensive programme.

I see at another point there is some reference to the Electricity Corporation and I was going to ask --

The Chairman: When we come to Electricity Corporation, we will deal with that.

Dr. Jagan: This ties in with the whole question of hydro development because Preece, Cardew and Ryder had long ago suggested that the Government should have embarked on a small hydro-electric project at Malali and this would have tided one over with the domestic requirements, not for big industrial purposes, and this was not done. This suggestion was made before all these big schemes. It was first started by DEMBA. Since the hon. Minister has asked I will tell him, late 1950's.

After the recommendation of Preece, Cardew and Ryder, and after the P.P.P. Government nationalized the Electric Company, the Cuban Government had agreed to finance this scheme. This is in the record. Let them look at it, and if that had been done, the Electricity Corporation would not be in a bankrupt position where it cannot even pay its own income tax. They did not

do this scheme according to the recommendations of the P.C.R. because they fell in love with this bigger scheme. Now they are telling us they are still undertaking surveys. Now they have gone to the Cuyuni, having abandoned that one which was to have provided all the requirements not only for domestic consumption but for industrial purposes. Now we are told they are examining a project in the Cuyuni which will meet our immediate requirements, I presume they mean domestic requirements, and therefore one comes back to the Government going around in circles and getting nowhere.

Mr. Hoyte: Just to correct a misapprehension on the part of the hon. Leader of the Opposition. This overall comprehensive plan for identifying our hydro-electric potential in this country has not been shelved. The work which is going on in the Upper Mazaruni is work which we are capable of undertaking with our own finances, it is work which ties in with the whole projection for electricity expansion in this country, and is not limited to the domestic projection because next year, and no later than next year, the Government will have to take a firm decision as to whether our future will be in thermal or in hydro power. That is why this work is urgent and that is why it has reached a very advanced stage. Early next year, the projection date is March, we will be having a complete report on what we have there at the Upper Mazaruni.

Dr. Jagan: It takes ten years for the Government to make a decision whether to proceed with thermal or whether hydro is cheaper. P.C.R. recommended this since 1960, that after buying initially a few steam plants, they should go to hydro. If the Government found in this development programme, through all its meanderings all about, that it could not find the money for the big one, then it should have gone in even for the small one which would be economic. This was the point made since 1960. By now, the projections of P.C.R. for the electric company were that in the first ten years they will make a net profit of \$20 million including the financing of the hydro station at Malali, \$20 million in the second ten years, \$40 million. Now, the Minister says in the coming year they are going to decide whether to continue with thermal or proceed with hydro.

Mr. Hoyte: The hon. Leader of the Opposition fails to appreciate the very simple point that the requirements of 1960 will change radically in 1970, 1971 and 1972 and will change more radically having regard to what is projected for the future. In 1960, surely the only thing that the Government would have been thinking about was for domestic use. [*Mr. Ram Karran:* “No”] It is the only thing you could have done. What did you control industrial wise? Now, we have got the bauxite industry and the development of hydro power. Therefore, it must be tied in – and this is just one example – with the future development of that industry and must be tied in with the whole Government concept of what the industrial development of this country is going to do.

Mr. Ram Karran: The hon. Minister has not read the P.C.R. Report. Surely, the hon. Minister is guided by American advisers that is why he can get up here and tell us that.

The Chairman: Page 4

Mr. Chandisingh: Items 18 and 19.

The Chairman: Yes, hon. Member.

Mr. Chandisingh: Item 18. I simply want to know if the hon. Minister would identify for us this Seaboard Allied Milling Corporation. Is it any relation to any national milling corporation?

Mr. David Singh: I think they are related to the Flour Milling Company which is a subsidiary of the Seaboard Allied Milling Company.

Mr. Chandisingh: Mr. Chairman, on item 19, I should like to have the following information if the hon. Minister can supply it. First, I note that this additional sum is to be put into a housing fund for the construction of houses. Would the hon. Minister say whether the houses to be built will be of the self-help type? I note that the item is self-help housing, but since

the legend merely refers to money to be put into the Housing Fund, I should like to have some confirmation of this.

Secondly, we could have some information as to where these houses are to be located. I presume that the hon. Minister has already got plans for the use of this money and therefore would be in a position to let us have this information.

Thirdly, I should like to find out whether this additional sum of \$550,000 will be spent for entirely new housing units which are to be built or whether any part of this money is designed for the completion of projects already in the course of construction.

Lastly, I should like to get an idea of how many houses this sum will involve. Of course, Mr. Chairman, we would like to ask the hon. Minister more substantive questions on housing but I defer that to another occasion and just restrict myself to these specific points.

Dr. Jagan: Sir, I wonder if I can raise a supplementary point dealing with housing. Yesterday, I heard the Members from the Government side speaking about housing, and this afternoon the Minister gave us some figures on the average cost on houses people have to pay in order to purchase houses or even the self-help houses they have to pay between \$50 to \$80, I presume that is, per month. One of the factors which contributes to the high cost of housing is the question of land. I had taken an opportunity to visit the Ruimveldt area and beyond, and you may have done so yourself and probably must have seen that these new houses which were built during Carifesta, (1) the lots are very small, (2) the streets between the lots are very narrow and (3) the houses are looking like gerrybuilt houses as they used to be called in the U.K. during the War. That means they are temporary, they are put up rather quickly. They all look alike, there are no variations to them. With a little bit of imagination they could have been built in such a way for Guyanese people who are accustomed to their – *[Interruption]*

The point I wish to make is this. We should not be creating slums of the future. We should not be building things which are eyesores of the future. There must be some architectural

beauty to big housing areas which are being built. The Minister must know that the cost of one of these houses, the 2 –room houses, with a little bit of land – I have seen them I do not know who built them – is \$7,000 – odd [Interruption by Mr. Aaron.]

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Aaron.

Dr. Jagan: The Minister said that houses were available between \$8 and \$20 a month. No doubt the Minister is referring to the houses which were built in the time of the P.P.P. and those are scarce as hen’s teeth. I do not know what he means by “they are available”. But let the Minister tell us whether this Government is building houses which working-class people can rent as \$5 and \$8 a week; they were built during the P.P.P. time.

7 p.m.

I am wondering whether this high price, which clearly workers will not be able to pay to build a house, \$50 - \$80 a month is due to the fact of the high cost of land and the high profits which are made in many cases. It is true this is supposed to be self-help. If the Government is involved in housing, it has to look at all the aspects of this question, self-help, private building, houses built by the former C.D.C., to see that they come within the reach of the working classes. I would not say that the Government is really solving the problem of the workers.

One of the points I took up with the previous Minister was the question of making house lots available to people very cheaply so that people can take their time and build their houses. We know that land is very expensive. Three cents per square foot is till expensive. Which “world” is the hon. Member talking about when he says, cheapest land in the world. We have been reading articles in the Guyana Graphic about China where they have solved housing problems, unemployment and so on. Why don’t you tell us about China? Why don’t you emulate China? We have said that one of the cheapest ways of solving the housing problem is to make plenty of land available to the population at large, who want to build houses for

themselves, and this means getting lands from the sugar estates. *[Interruption]* Because you have the P.P.P. pushing you all the time.

I told the previous Minister, but nothing is done, that the Government should get the estates to either transfer the land for nothing or effect an exchange for lease lands at the back. We will agree to the Ministry of Finance to do this, but this would not do it. This is what should be done so that estate land could be given to sugar estate workers, villages, people in the city. We have lot of unemployed, we have a lot of timber in the bush, we should have no housing problem in Guyana. A man wants to build. He cannot get land easily. I am not talking about what the Government is doing. Why should we build future slums? And they call them housing schemes! Guyana has plenty of land and we should think of the future. We should give a man a decent place.

I want the Ministry to say specifically what it proposes to do on this question of getting sufficient land from the estates to provide house lots. Even sugar workers cannot get house lots today. This is a fact and many people would want house lots. They are preparing a small amount and it is out of the reach of the small man. We are saying they should tackle the first question of getting sufficient land. In this way they will accelerate. We all know what is the price of land in the city.

Mr. Naraine: Mr. Chairman, the money in the Schedule here is to be used principally for self-help housing. This sum is to be used for housing in the North Ruimveldt area, New Amsterdam, Linden, Bartica and, if everything goes well, Essequibo. Some of the houses have been completed already. Some of the houses, we hope, will be completed already. Some of the houses, we hope, will be completed before the end of the year, and other houses may be started by the end of the year as in the case of Essequibo. The hon. Leader of the Opposition raised some rather interesting points but I think that he may, in his travels to some of these areas, be mistaking the houses which were built during his regime with what are now being built. I know they were very few but still he might have mistaken them.

I think he has also either deliberately misinterpreted or misheard what I said because what I said, in fact, was that the rental purchase houses were going at between \$50 and \$80 per month but the self-help housing, where land and house were being provided, was set at approximately \$32 a month, while in those cases, where houses alone are provided on land already owned, they can be as low as \$18 per month.

I wish to assure him that we have no intention whatever of seeing these areas deteriorating into slums. What we plan doing is not to build houses, leave them and not look back at these areas. We have already taken steps to look at these house lots with a view to having them landscaped, and the people are being given advice in this direction. We are hoping to keep the self helpers mobilized, with the rental-purchase occupants, into larger groups of self helpers to keep the areas tidy and always in a presentable condition.

It is true that these lots may appear to be small but these lots are being sold at 53 cents per square foot, and I remember so vividly that during the time of the past Government when Prashad Nagar was authorized, there were narrower streets with no particular facilities provided and the owners of that development selling lots for \$15,000 and \$16,000 for each. This is what we had inherited from the past Government and had to change. We are now able to sell lots with more and better facilities for \$1,700 per lot. If the hon. Leader of the Opposition was reading his papers and *Gazette* he would have seen that a number of lots have been advertised and are available for purchase to land less persons who wished to build their own houses.

7.10 p.m.

In relation to the expansion of the housing programme, I should like to assure this House and the Opposition that steps are being taken right now to have adequate areas of land reserved for housing purposes so that the low cost of housing and low cost of land will continue in the future.

23.11.72

National Assembly

7.10 p.m. – 7.12 p.m.

The Chairman: This completes consideration of all the items. Let the Assembly resume.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Hope: I beg to report that the Committee of Supply has come to a Resolution, and I now move that this Assembly do agree with the Committee in its Resolution.

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Leader of the House.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, “That this Assembly do now adjourn until tomorrow 24th November, 1972 at 2 p.m.” [Mr. Ramsaroop]

Adjourned accordingly at 7.12 p.m.
