

Official Report

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION (2006-2010) OF THE NINTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA HELD IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BRICKDAM, GEORGETOWN

118TH Sitting

Thursday, 25TH February, 2010

The Assembly convened at 2.15 p.m.

Prayers

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members it has been brought to my attention that there is usually, during the course of debates, exchanges by Members of the Parliament which I do not normally hear. Sometimes these exchanges are loud enough to disrupt the process and I have to call to order. I understand the quality of those exchanges is deteriorating sharply. I would urge Members to upkeep the level of discourse that we have been experiencing in the past- upkeep the level of discourse, not only in your private exchanges, but in your debates. Very experienced Members of the National Assembly skirt the edges of what is permissible or sometimes overstep those boundaries. Sometimes there is no objection. Sometimes it passes. Sometimes I have to remind Members. But as I always point out, this is the highest forum of debates.

Debate is a skill and an art. Debate is something that should be relished, enjoyed and marvelled at by skilled debaters. Very regularly now, we have school children who come into our public gallery to listen to what you say. School children listen to the debates here not only in this forum, but they listen to it on the radio and television. If this is the message we want to deliver to our

school children, then so be it. You have to take responsibility for that, but I would have thought that we would want to send out an elevated message to the community. And I ask you to please maintain and keep the standards of our discourse as high as possible. Thank you.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan: May I please, Your Honour. I was given a package by your Clerk yesterday and I unhappily, was not present when certain remarks were made here in connection with the splashed headline in the Kaieteur News. I wish at this point to explain that. I have had the opportunity of having it with you and there were certain additions. I will delete the additions for purposes of satisfaction of this House.

“Dear Sir, on the 11th January, 2010, there was what occurred in this Parliament, a most robust session when questions on the supplementary allocation of \$4 billion were being put to Hon. Minister Irfaan Ali. I immediately became suspicious of some of the answers he gave and his non-answers when at one point he ceased answering questions from Mr. Winston Murray and myself. It is against this background that I requested a Member of your honest staff a copy of the Hansard for that session. I was informed that I will get same in a couple of days time. I got same only on the 18th February, 2010. This lateness which has now been explained to me, also gave me some cause for suspicion which as it turned out, was wholly unwarranted.

I, like other Members of the National Assembly was served three volumes of the estimates on Budget day and the project profile volume relating to the said \$4 billion. It is clearly stated that the \$4 billion under question was indeed spent in the year 2009. The Hansard which I obtained from the Clerk, however, reflected that the Minister did not spend it in 2009. It is against this background that I understood the Hon. Member as I recall him to say: “We already” as against what he actually said as per Hansard: “We are ready.”

My suspicion and later my charge to you, Mr. Speaker, was made in good faith and not with any malicious intent. The investigation by your Honour on this matter after I made the charge two days ago was most reassuringly conducted expeditiously. I want to say that the premature carrying forth to the press before the investigation was complete was

also in error. I humbly apologise. The full report of the interview that I had carried with the reporter would have shown the discrepancy that was alluded to and could have been accounted for by other factors. But these, in mitigating the circumstances, were not carried.

I have listened several times to the tape that you gave me, Sir. I have compared that with the Hansard and they have both correspond. Hansard has not been tampered with. Rather, as it has turned out, the Minister was not representing the truth in the Assembly, a matter which surely will be resolved in a couple of minute's time. I want to sincerely apologise for the concern and stress that I have caused yourself and staff. I have always had tremendous respect for the integrity of your staff and so will it be in future. As a matter of fact, this incident has heightened my respect for them. My charge was indeed serious and has not been proven. I apologise for that because indeed as reported more than what was said by me, the integrity of Parliament's record keeping was under attack. I take the blame for that and will show the same henceforth."

Thank you very much Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Hinds: Mr. Chairman if you wish, I may want to make a response to the apology from Hon. Member, Mr. Ramjattan.

Mr. Speaker: I do not wish, but if you have to say something...

Mr. Hinds: Okay. Mr. Chairman, I think we should all take note of this incident that has occurred. We on the Government side accept the apology from Mr. Ramjattan and we would also like to call on Kaieteur News and the other media maybe, to resist the attempts to make this Parliament and the Members of the Parliament look bad in the eyes of the Guyanese. It is very easy in any society to fan the flames of incidents, but they lead to bitterness and acrimony among members in the society and even Members of this Parliament. I think it is much more rewarding for all of us, including the media and in particular Kaieteur News, to work towards creating greater harmony in the society so that we can get on with this job of growing and developing our country and our people. I thank you.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, I need your guidance. The Member, in apologising, said that the Minister had been untruthful. Is that the correct procedure? Is that in keeping with what we are trying to achieve in this House? Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: That is a very serious charge, Hon. Member. I know that I had vetted your statement, but I did not see that portion.

Mr. Ramjattan: Well I indicated here that the estimates are indicating that the money was spent.

Mr. Speaker: What we are really dealing with now is an allegation that Minister Ali said certain words. It turned out that those words were not said and that your assertion that the Hansard was tampered with in order to reflect what you believed he had said was not true. And therefore, you apologised quite correctly to the House, the Hon. Member and the Parliament staff for which you must be congratulated. But to proceed to talk about a matter which has not yet engaged our attention and to base that by saying the Minister is untruthful, I think is a serious and unfair charge which ought to be withdrawn.

Mr. Ramjattan: Well Sir, I had given this to you. The edited parts, I clearly did not mention. In any event, I will withdraw that part too and have that edited.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much, Hon. Member.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

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

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

AND WHEREAS the Constitution also provides that when the Estimates of Expenditure have been approved by the Assembly an Appropriation Bill shall be

introduced in the Assembly providing for the issue from the Consolidated Fund of the sums necessary to meet that expenditure;

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

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

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

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

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply

In Committee of Supply

Mr. Chairman: We are now in Committee of Supply, Hon. Members, and we will start with Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development.

Agency: 13 Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development

Current Expenditure

Programme: 131 — Main Office - \$52,807,000

Programme 131 – Main Office - \$52,807,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 132 – Ministry Administration - \$33,606,000

Mr. Elliot: Mr. Chairman, programme 6116 – Contracted Employees - I observed that under staffing details, they have an increase of three contracted workers. Could the Hon. Minister indicate to this House what is category of workers and the salary attached?

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, there is an increase in staff. We have the appointment of two Accounts Clerks and one Office Assistant. The Accounts Clerk's salary is \$46,000 and the Office Assistant it is \$38,000.

Programme 132 – Ministry Administration - \$33,606,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 133 – Regional Development - \$151,223,000

Mr. Elliot: Programme 6284 – Other - has an increase of \$6 billion there. Could the Hon. Minister explain the increase?

Mr. Lall: This is to make payments to the contractor who is currently managing the Lusignan landfill site.

Mr. Elliot: Programme 6302 – Training (including Scholarships) – an increase of \$2 million. Who will this scholarship benefit? Are the Regions included in this training?

Mr. Lall: This is basically training that we will undertake this year for R.E.O.s, Councillors, and various other categories of staff within the N.D.C.s, the municipalities and the R.D.C.s.

Programme 133 – Regional Development - \$151,223,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 132 – Ministry Administration - \$1,400,000

Mr. Elliot: Reference 52 – Construction of Market, Tarmac and Holding Area - could the Hon. Minister tell this Parliament where this market will be built? That is one, and two: Where would this tarmac will be built and where will this holding area be built?

Mr. Lall: We have done several surveys and we have found that there are quite a number of markets that are in need of urgent repairs. We find that some of them are terribly dilapidated and so this year, we will be constructing two new markets – one at Mahaica and one at Soesdyke. We will also be constructing holding areas in Rosignal and Mahaica. Just to say, last year we constructed quite a number of tarmacs to accommodate some of the persons that we have actually asked to remove from various parapets. Many of them have cooperated. Especially in those areas where the vendors have cooperated, we have built tarmacs and this year, we are going to continue with that process in consultation with the N.D.C.s and Municipalities.

Mr. Elliot: I just want to follow up on the tarmac. Is there a proposal for a tarmac at Golden Grove on the East Coast of Demerara?

Mr. Lall: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Two weeks ago I had a community meeting in Golden Grove with the residents and we have kind of narrowed down the information as to where exactly we are going to situate this tarmac. So there will be a tarmac at Golden Grove.

Mr. Elliot: A follow up question, Sir. Could the Minister indicate to this Parliament if there is any move to do away with those shops at the Golden Grove Middle Walk? That is an established market area. The information that we are getting out there is that there is the intention of those stalls to be removed.

Mr. Lall: I want to make this statement. I am aware of the fact that there are some persons who I can only describe as wicked who have been going around the community and telling people that the Government intends to destroy and remove their stalls. There is absolutely no such intention on our part. I do not see the connection between that established market and the construction of the tarmac.

Mr. M. Williams: Mr. Chairman, project code 1902100. I refer to reference 54. Could the Hon. Minister kindly tell the National Assembly by what time the roll-on/roll-off facilities at Parika and Supenaam will be completed? And could he advise the National Assembly also who the contractors are with respect to these two projects?

Mr. Lall: The Supenaam Stelling has already been constructed. It is completed. I do not know whether short or long...

Mr. Winston Murray: I am a little lost. I thought you were taking line item 132, but apparently you are allowing questions on all.

Mr. Chairman: No Sir. I am at line item 132, Capital Expenditure.

Mr. Murray: Yes Sir, but some of the questions...

Mr. Chairman: Are the Members roaming?

Members: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: All it means is that we will approve line item 132 and when line item 133 comes, there would be no question. That is all it would mean.

Mr. Murray: No, but I might have waited until line item 133 comes and then find that you are putting it without an opportunity for me to ask.

Mr. Chairman: No.

Mr. Murray: Should I ask now or wait till you propose line item 133.

Mr. Chairman: Mr. Murray, you know this Parliament bends backwards to give full opportunities to Members. You need to have absolutely no fear whatsoever. Please be assured.

Mr. Murray: I thank you, Sir. I just wanted to know whether I can ask on line item 132 or wait until...

Mr. Chairman: I will prefer Hon. Members that you confine your questions to the programme. We are going programme for programme. It is not so easy for me to follow it in the detail what you are doing because you are obviously prepared. So let us just stick to the programme.

Mr. Fernandes: Mr. Chairman, programme 1900600. At Kumaka in Region 1, the Aruka River...

Mr. Chairman: Please pay attention to the Hon. Member. [**Interruption**]

Mr. Fernandes: ...has taken over a large portion of the waterfront area where the people usually sell their produce and so on. We want to continue doing business. Also at the Port Kaituma area, business people were asked to move away from the waterfront so that they could accommodate

the transport vessel and things like that. They now have nowhere where adequate land is available to sell their produce and do business. Can the Minister say whether a tarmac will be built at Kumaka and Port Kaituma and if that is the case, how much money is earmarked for the two locations?

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman I thought you would have intervened on my behalf.

Mr. Chairman: The Hon. Member asked...

Mr. Lall: I have absolutely no idea what the Gentleman is talking about under the Ministry's Capital Budget.

Mr. Chairman: Can we wait until we reach your Region? Is it Region 7?

Mr. Fernandes: Tarmacs in the country and markets which include Region 1. So I want to know if they will build a tarmac in Region 1 or if we will be having marketing structure in Region 1.

Mr. Chairman: Wait until we get to Region 1, Hon. Member. When Region 1 comes, the Minister will have the Region 1 people next to him and they will be able to advise him on the specific issue. Hon. Minister, the Legend says at line item 133, if you look at page 413, Regional Development- line item 1900600: Infrastructural Development- it says at the back here under the Legend: Construction of Holding Area, Market, Tarmac, Road Rehabilitation of other Infrastructure and Payment of Retention. So the Hon. Member is right. I apologise Mr. Fernandes.

Mr. Fernandes: Thank you, Chairman. I see it is marked also St. Ignatius whereas that is Georgetown.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. Yes Minister, can you answer that or do you...?

Mr. Lall: Yes. There is no provision this year for a tarmac at Region 1 in the Kumaka area. We have some other ideas on how to deal with the problem that exists with the erosion of the river, but I think at some point in time we will deal with that later on.

Programme 132 – Ministry Administration - \$1,400,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 133 – Regional Development - \$1,573,220,000

Mr. Murray: Thank you Mr. Chairman. I want to refer to line item 1900600 which has already engaged some discussion for which Project Profile 52 is relevant. Would the Minister not agree that he would have saved those questions being asked if only he had taken the time in describing the project to have identified the two markets, the tarmacs and the holding areas? Would that not have been a greater transparency and then the questions would have been avoided? Would he agree that that is the case?

Mr. Lall: I would not agree with that. I was asked a specific question: Where are the markets? And I have a long list of things that I can read out, but we have to be businesslike. We have three hours to deal with a whole host of things. If I am asked a specific question, I will deal with that. If you want me to give you everything, ask for everything.

Mr. Murray: Would the Minister agree that the description of the project is an epitome of vagueness? Would he not agree that the description of the project is intended to elucidate for the benefit of Members what specifically is going to be done? To simply say construction of markets, tarmacs and holding areas, does not enlighten anyone because we have absolutely no idea as to where they are being done? Since he would not answer in project profile 52 which is the usual arrogance we see, I will move on to project profile 53 and I guess I will meet the same degree of arrogance. Project Profile 53, line item 1900700: would the Minister kindly identify which municipalities are going to benefit from these capital subventions? What are the criteria that he has used or intends to use to determine the subvention to the identified municipalities?

2.45 p.m.

Mr. Lall: First of all I must say that I take umbrage with the statement made by the Hon. Member about arrogance. I did read out the list of markets and holding areas and named the communities in which they are going to be done. It is in the records. Although I was not asked that question, I did provide that information. All six municipalities will benefit from this subvention. We have taken, over the years, consideration of the sizes of these municipalities, the level of their income and on that basis, generally speaking, we have been allocating various sums to the various municipalities. As you know, there is at the Parliamentary Select Committee and Local Government, draft legislation for us to consider a specific and legislative formula for us to

determine the allocation to the various Local Government bodies. But that will be determined when we have completed those discussions and then come here to the National Assembly. The allocations will be made as follows to municipalities: Georgetown \$20 million, Anna Regina \$9 million, Linden \$10 million, New Amsterdam \$10 million, Rose Hall \$8 million and Corriverton \$8 million.

Dr. Austin: Mr. Chairman, I would like the Hon. Minister to inform us whether the \$8 million earmarked for Rose Hall town would include financing to solve the problem we have of regular flooding, as we have no pump and drainage there.

Mr. Lall: This is a subvention to the municipality and I think they have a very great say in determining how exactly this money is going to be spent.

Mr. Murray: Line item 3600100. Could the Minister inform the National Assembly when he says at line item 5 under Description of Project - Construction of New Sanitary Landfill at Hague Bosch - whether he means that that landfill will be completed in the year 2010, and if it is not going to be completed in the year 2010, could he say what percentage is going to be completed in 2010 and what is the expected date for completion?

Mr. Lall: The first phase of the project will be substantially completed this year and it will roll on for another few years. However, it will be made operational this year and there are sums allocated for that. There are sums also allocated for the closure of the Le Repentir Landfill Site.

Mr. Murray: Then I understand that the completion of phase 1 of that project will allow the project to become operational before the end of 2010. Am I right Minister?

Mr. Lall: I just said that.

Mr. Murray: Therefore the closure of the Mandela Landfill will occur in a definitive way in the year 2010? That is my question.

Mr. Lall: I made those statements just now. I did say that it will become operational this year and that we will close the Le Repentir Landfill Site. I do not know why you are calling it Mandela.

Mr. Murray: While the Minister says that is what he said, is the Minister aware that what he has caused to be written here says: “rehabilitation/expansion of Mandela Avenue” and then says “closure”, which leaves me confused. He must agree. He is expanding it and closing it at the same time!

Mr. Lall: I can only say factually what the allocation is for. The sum of money is for the bringing to a point of operation Hague Bosch...

Mr. Chairman: Whether or not you wrote what is in the estimates, you have to take responsibility for it. I notice that you are trying to shift responsibility. You have to take responsibility for it. If the Legend is not clear...

Mr. Lall: If it is not very clear, I hope my explanation would clarify whatever doubts there are.

Mr. Chairman: Well I hope your explanation does the clarification.

Mr. B. Williams: Referring to line item 1900700. I ask of the Hon. Minister, what is the subvention that he has allocated to the sixty-five Neighbourhood Democratic Councils?

Mr. Lall: A total sum of \$195 million is allocated to the sixty-five N.D.C.s to make it roughly about \$3 million per council.

Mr. M. Williams: I apologise for jumping the gun earlier, but I wish to revisit line item 1902100. The Hon. Minister did say that the Supenaam Stelling is completed. Could he please advise the National Assembly as to when the one in Parika will be completed?

Mr. Lall: I suspect if that is the question the Member wanted to ask, our plan is to have that roll-on/roll-off facility completed by the end of this year.

Mr. M. Williams: On the same matter, could the Hon. Minister say what form would the institutional strengthening take? What it will cost us? And who will be the agency seeing into this implementation?

Mr. Lall: This is a soft part of the loan and it entails mainly training. The idea is to convert a lot of these – Parika, Supenaam, Charity and Bartica, into townships. We will have to do a lot of

training to move them from an N.D.C. area to sort of municipalities. The cost of that project will be \$26 million.

Mr. Murray: The same line item 1902100. Would the Minister not agree that there is an inconsistency between what he answered earlier in respect of the Supenaam roll-on/roll-off facility when he said it was completed, whereas in the description of the project it talks about construction of that facility?

Mr. Lall: Here again I want to clarify this point. These two facilities have always been lumped together and so wherever they have moneys allocated to them, you always find Parika and Supenaam, but they are two different things and I agree with you. It needs to be a bit more specific. The sums allocated for the design and so forth is actually referring to Parika, although it will be written there as “Parika and Supenaam”.

Mr. Murray: Through you Sir, a question for the Hon. Minister. The construction of the stellings at Parika and Supenaam are projects undertaken by the Ministry of Works or is it the Ministry of Regional Development? And if it is the Ministry of Works, as I understand it, could the Minister explain why it is that these were not dealt with as integrated projects so that the entire facility was built by one executing agency, namely the Ministry of Works which has responsibility for works of this nature?

Mr. Lall: When this project came into being there was this division of labour. That is the civil works will be supervised by the Ministry of Works and that the designing, supervising and consultancies will fall under the Ministry of Local Government. Perhaps what you are saying would have been a better arrangement, but this is how it is.

Programme 133 – Regional Development - \$151,223,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 71 Region 1: Barima/Waini

Current Expenditure

Programme: 711 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$81,561,000

Mr. Fernandes: Line item 6281- Security Services. There are a number of persons in the Region who work with the security firms and they are still to receive their payment. I would like the Minister to say whether this money is adequate to pay the outstanding amount, also for this year as well.

Mr. Lall: I do not know if my auditory faculties are not functioning well, but I beg that the Hon. Member repeat the question.

Mr. Chairman: The Hon. Member speaks very quickly. Could you repeat the question Mr. Fernandes?

Mr. Fernandes: There are a number of persons in Region 1 who have outstanding payments due to them, to receive money, who work as security guards – most of them are old people – from last year and the year before. I have a number of letters written asking me and I am quite sure that they have brought it to your attention. I would like to know whether this amount is adequate to pay the security service for this year and the back pay as well.

Mr. Lall: The payment to the individual security personnel is not the job of my Ministry. We have a contract with the security firm. I must say this, however, that my Ministry and the Government of Guyana has had complaints from security personnel of non-payments, short payments and delayed payments and I think that this is a matter that is currently being examined by the Ministry of Labour. So those outstanding payments to security personnel must be done by the contractor. We are not behind in payments to the contractors to whom we are obligated. The contractors, I understand, are not very efficient in making their payments to the various employees and I hope that that matter can be resolved quickly. I do sympathise with those folks who have not been paid and I have been personally trying to encourage these contractors to make payments to these people.

Mr. Trotman: In view of the answer given by the Hon. Minister, may we enquire from him then, seeing that this problem is throughout the Regions, whether he is satisfied with the level of security services being delivered to Government installations in Region 1 and elsewhere? Then I have another question.

Mr. Lall: We have a contract with the suppliers of this service and I think we are satisfied, generally speaking, with the level or standard of service that they were going to provide. We are satisfied.

Mr. Trotman: Would the Minister agree that a payment to a security guard is an important matter that perhaps his Ministry and he, as Minister, ought to pay more particular attention to rather than leave it to the Minister of Labour?

Mr. Lall: I have been asked to give an opinion. I do not have to.

Mr. Chairman: Well you should say so Hon. Member and do not just sit. If you are asked to give an opinion and you do not have an opinion, please get up and say so.

Mr. Murray: I would like to ask the Hon. Minister, notwithstanding the fact that he does not have any legal obligation to the workers employed by the security firm, as a working class Government, does he not see himself as having a responsibility to investigate complaints and if they lead to proof of wrongdoing, to reconsider whether that security firm ought to be the one to be given the contract?

Mr. Lall: I already said that those complaints were made to various Government agencies and those complaints were forwarded to the Ministry of Labour. I know that the Minister of Labour has been personally involved in this matter and I have already made that statement. The Member is asking something that I have already answered. I said also that we are concerned over that matter, but the Member also quite rightly said that I cannot intervene and go to tell the security firm what are the hourly payments that they should make to their employees. It is not part of the arrangement. This contractor is selected based on public bidding and we have, literally, thousands of contractors in one given year working for the Government. It has never been the practice for the Government of Guyana to determine or to dictate what should be the salaries of employees of these contractors. We are very concerned if, in fact, they are underpaid or not paid on time, but that is a different matter.

Mr. Murray: Could the Hon. Minister inform this National Assembly whether, as the employing agency for the contractor, it is his business if the contractor violates the laws of the country with respect to minimum payments and that he as the employer of the contractor, would

he not agree that he has a duty to reconsider his engagement with the contractor certainly when the contract comes up for renewal based on investigation?

Mr. Chairman: The Minister said that the Ministry of Labour looks into these things. It is for the Minister to say, but I do not know whether he does the procurement. Minister does your Ministry do the procurement for these contractors and so on?

Mr. Lall: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I already said that I am concerned and the complaints that have been put to us...

Mr. Chairman: If you find that the contractors are breaking the laws, would you take steps against them?

Mr. Lall: If the Minister of Labour...

Mr. Chairman: If the Ministry of Labour tells you that they are breaking the laws, would you consider steps to be taken against them in relation to the Constitution?

Mr. Lall: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much.

Mrs. David-Blair: Could the Minister say if these, in line item 6281, these security firms that are being investigated by the Ministry of Labour, through his Ministry, are the firms being contracted this year 2010?

Mr. Lall: I cannot recall exactly which security firm these people who are making the complaints are from, but as we go on, there are different security firms for different Regions. If you were to ask me about Region 1, as we are under Region 1 I can probably...

Mr. Norton: Line item 6312 - Subvention to Local Authorities - could the Hon. Minister tell this House what objective criteria he used for allocation of those resources?

Mr. Lall: This is a subvention to the local authorities to pay staff, especially the overseer, where they are not collecting rates and taxes. It is not part of the regular subvention to the Councils.

Mr. Norton: Could the Hon. Minister tell me where I can find the subvention to the Councils?

Mr. Lall: I just answered that question. It is under the Capital Programme of the Ministry.

Mr. Fernandes: Line item 6291 - National and Other Events - there are a number of national events for which the Region has to participate both at the local and national level. Recently there was the costume competition. Region 1 had a costume, but they did not have the necessary support. It was indicated to me that they did not have adequate funds to ensure that they “looked good” at the Mashramani- the 40th Anniversary. I would like for the Minister to say whether this amount is adequate for Mashramani and other events.

Mr. Lall: I have never had any such complaints from any person. I must say that. Perhaps those complaints were made to the Member of Parliament (M.P.), but they have never been made to me. This line item and I think that all Members of the Assembly must know this – is a basic sum given to the various Regions and in this case Region 1, for national events. There are several other Government agencies and Ministries that contribute to the activities of the various Regions, especially the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture. So this is not the entire sum that is available in any given calendar year for national events.

Mr. Scott: Can I ask the Minister to supply the name of the contracting firm in Region 1 and to say for what period of time he has been so engaged? [**Member:** Which head or subhead?] Line item 6281

Mr. Lall: It is Homesafe Security. It is for practically the entire year. I think it is up to mid-November of this year.

Mr. Scott: I have noticed that the money allocated, Mr. Minister, for 2010 under the same subhead is the same as it was for the year before. Does that indicate a satisfaction with the performance of the company?

Mr. Lall: This sum is adequate to provide the security that is required in the Region.

Mr. Fernandes: Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees - you have four extra employees contracted this year. Could the Minister say what is category of employees?

Mr. Lall: Two Accounts Clerks, one Scale Adjuster and one Cleaner.

Programme 711 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$81,561,000 – agreed to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 712 – Public Works - \$167,359,000

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members we have over a hundred of these items and we have up to 5 O'clock to finish them so when you are asking your questions please take that into consideration. If you do not, we will stop at 5 O'clock and whatever remains unanswered will remain unanswered. If you want everybody to have a bite of the cherry and if you want the Region 10 people to have something to say, you will want to consider leaving some time for them.

Mrs. David-Blair you were getting up. Do not let me intimidate you. The time is yours. You do what you want, but I am just saying that the Region 10 people might be left out of the questioning altogether.

Mr. Fernandes: Line item 6231 - Fuel and Lubricants. Could the Minister say whether at this time we will have power in the day so that those persons who want to manufacture things and go on the internet can do so?

Mr. Lall: No, we are not going to give power during the day, at least this year. It will remain as it is, but I think that we are catering for an additional two hours in the Mabaruma area.

Mr. Fernandes: The same line item 6231. In the presentation of the Budget debate, it was raised that GuyOil, the official distributor of fuel and lubricants in the Region, has closed down and most of the agencies including Government agencies are purchasing illegal fuel from across the border. Could the Minister say whether this amount will be able to purchase fuel from legal sources?

Mr. Lall: Of course, that is very obvious. We are going to purchase from legal sources.

Mr. Chairman: Where are you finding those legal sources in Region 1 Hon. Member?

Mr. Lall: There are two authorised dealers in Mabaruma.

Mr. Chairman: In Region 1?

Mr. Lall: GuyOil is closed for economic reasons. They cannot compete in the area, but there are other authorised dealers by Guyana Energy Agency (G.E.A.) and the Government purchases from those dealers plus in the Mabaruma area, we continue to purchase bio-diesel from the Wauna Oil Company.

Mr. Norton: Could the Hon. Minister tell us why in the context of GuyOil being a state company, it cannot compete in the Region based on what he just said?

3.15 p.m.

The Chairman: I think that is an unfair question. He has nothing to do with GuyOil. If you can answer, then answer. If not let us move on.

Mr. Lall: I just want to say that is the business of GuyOil. I cannot speak for them.

Mr. Fernandes: Line item 6264 - Vehicle Spares and Service. There is a hymac at Morawhanna, a bull dozer at Wauna Bridge and a roller at Hosororo in the Government compound which was there for a number of years. Would this money in any way assist in servicing these vehicles and equipment?

Mr. Lall: This sum would not be taking care of those pieces of equipment.

Mr. Fernandes: Line item 6242 - Maintenance of Buildings - \$15 million. Could the Minister say which buildings would be maintained?

Mr. Lall: This item is to deal with maintenance of buildings in Kumaka and Moruca and also to deal with the fuel and the store bonds there. The R.E.O. living quarters in Port Kaituma and the caretaker's quarters in Mabaruma. The A.R.E.O.'s quarter in Akwero, the regional stores in the Mabaruma compound and the living quarters for the S.P.O. in Mabaruma.

Mr. Fernandes: Line item 6251 - Maintenance of Roads. In Matakai, Matthews Ridge, Heaven Hill and Hell Hill, the roads are very bad. Would these funds in any way be allocated to fixing roads in Matakai and mostly the Heaven and Hell Hill areas?

Mr. Lall: No, Mr. Chairman. This sum is going to deal with the maintenance of gravel roads in Independence Road in Mabaruma, Moruca, Kamwatta, Kan Hill and in the Kumaka area. In fact, in the Kumaka area, it will be a bitumen road.

Mr. Fernandes: Line item 6254 - Maintenance of Sea and River Defenses – of course we do not have sea defense. Could the Minister say which area would be maintained with this amount of money?

Mr. Lall: This sum is to deal with some minor revetment in the Moruca area.

Programme 712 – Public Works - \$167,359,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 713 – Education Delivery - \$549,032,000

Mr. Fernandes: Line item 6242 - Maintenance of Buildings - \$34 million. Could the Minister say which buildings, whether schools or teachers' quarters would be maintained?

Mr. Lall: There are quite a lot of buildings to be maintained.

The Chairman: Do you want a whole list Hon. Member? Could you give us some examples and then supply the list to the Hon. Member?

Mr. Lall: The Santa Rosa Nursery School, the Wauna Nursery School, the teachers quarters in St. Vinians, the St. Sipiant Primary School, Black Water Primary School, the Wallaba Primary School, the Arakita Primary School, the Youth, Sports and Culture Officer's quarters in the Mabaruma compound. Staff quarters in Akwero and...

Mr. Fernandes: Line item 6241 - Rental of Buildings - could the Minister say why the Department of Education in Region 1 has to rent buildings and where?

Mr. Lall: We really cannot find accommodation for new people going into the Region especially new teachers and V.S.O.s. While we are trying to find our own accommodation for these people, we have to rent facilities in the meantime.

Mr. B. Williams: Line item 6115 - a large amount of 272 Semi-Skilled Employees. Could I enquire from the Hon. Minister whether this figure includes any graduates from the B.I.T.'s Apprenticeship Programme?

Mr. Lall: I do not have that specific information about the people under this heading where they graduated from, but these are mainly teachers in the various schools.

Programme 713 – Education Delivery - \$549,032,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 714 – Health Services - \$237,292,000

Mr. Fernandes: Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees - has moved from two to twenty-seven. Could the Hon. Minister say what the categories are of the other twenty-five contracted employees?

Mr. Lall: This increase in staffing is to operate the new hospital in Mabaruma. We have Porters, Operators, Cooks, Ward Maids, Statistical Clerks, Radio Operator, Typist Clerk, Patient Care Assistant and basically employees for the new hospital.

Mr. Norton: Could the Hon. Minister tell us in which category we can find the doctors and how many of them are stationed in the Region?

Mr. Lall: The senior people would be under line item 6112 as indicated here.

Mr. Norton: It is a big Region geographically.

Mr. Lall: We are dealing with Region 1. We have three doctors.

Programme 714 – Health Services - \$237,292,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 711 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$12,500,000

Mr. Fernandes: Line item 2601400 - Power Supply \$10 million - for the extension of power supply. Could the Hon. Minister say whether this money is to service the Matakai area? Matakai

has a generator for the last four or five years and they were not able to get the keys to start it, so the people are out of power. Could the minister say if this is for Matakai or any other part of the Region?

Mr. Lall: This sum is allocated to do some extension work to bring in some more residents into the grid in Mabaruma and Moruca.

Mr. Fernandes: Line item 1901100 - Agriculture Development - Desilting of Drainage Canals. A number of students from the Morawhanna area attend the North West Secondary School and it is difficult for a vehicle to go down to the Barima end to pick up the students. So they have to walk about four and one half miles and be transported for about one mile. Could the Minister say how much of this \$7.5 million will be earmarked for the Barima end canal?

Mr. Lall: \$2.5 million

Mr. Fernandes: Line item 1400400- Roads- \$35 million. The road in Port Kaituma area is in a very bad state of disrepair. They need asphalt. Could the Minister say how much of this money will be used for Port Kaituma?

Mr. Lall: We are going to rehabilitate the road in the Port Kaituma area at the cost of \$18 million.

Programme 711 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$12,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 712 – Public Works - \$56,600,000

Programme 712 – Public Works - \$56,600,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 713 – Education Delivery - \$58,900,000

Programme 713 – Education Delivery - \$58,900,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 714 – Health Services - \$35,965,000

Programme 714 – Health Services - \$35,965,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 72 Region 2: Pomeroon/Supenaam

Current Expenditure

Programme: 721 – Public Works – \$56,600,000

Mr. Scott: Line item 6281- Security Services. In view of the fact that no allocation was made for the past two years, I would like to know what occasion, whether there has been a security hiatus or what, would now require us to spend \$346,000 to hire a security firm? What influenced that?

Mr. Lall: This is payment for on-and-off security for when you go into the bank and that kind of thing. It is not for installation at Government buildings. We see the need this year to have that kind of security to protect our valuables.

Mr. Scott: So I presume that the need never existed before. Do you feel it is justified in spending that kind of money at this point of time?

Mr. Lall: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Programme 721 – Public Works - \$56,600,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 722 – Agriculture - \$182,624,000

Mr. Scott: Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees. I see that they have moved from zero to fourteen which occasioned us now to have to spend \$13 million. How do you justify the employing of contract employees at this point in time?

Mr. Lall: These are persons we have recently recruited to manage and secure the various sluices - mainly Sluice Attendants.

Mr. Scott: Line item 6253 - Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works - could the Hon. Minister say what areas with respect to sea defence have been projected in advance to prevent us having breaches as occasioned at Cullen that attention was paid to justify that \$83 million.

Mr. Lall: This money is for drainage. We do not have an allocation for river and sea defences.

Mrs. Riehl: Mr. Chairman, going back to Contracted Employees, I see the staffing details said in 2009 that there were none and yet you had a revised figure of \$6,271,000. Could the Minister explain that?

Mr. Lall: That is for the fourteen persons. There are ten Sluice Attendants, three Rangers and one Regional Engineer.

Programme 722 – Agriculture - \$182,624,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 723 – Public Works - \$91,375,000

Programme 723 – Public Works - \$91,375,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 724 – Education Delivery - \$893,945,000

Programme 724 – Education Delivery - \$893,945,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 725 – Health Services - \$344,593,000

Programme 725 – Health Services - \$344,593,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 721– Regional Administration & Finance – \$6,700,000

Programme 721 – Regional Administration & Finance - \$6,700,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 722 – Agriculture - \$110,000,000

Programme 722 – Agriculture - \$110,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 723 – Public Works - \$89,600,000

Mr. Scott: Line item 1400500 - Roads. Could the Minister say what has occasioned the neglect to fix the inner roads at Queenstown and Henrietta while apportioning money nevertheless to look after those areas?

Mr. Lall: I really cannot answer that question. I can answer what the money allocated is for. I cannot answer the state of roads at the moment.

Mr. Scott: Your Legend is to do the Upgrading of Community Roads, Sir, and in the community there are inner roads in Queenstown and Henrietta. I would expect that part of this money would be reserved to repair those inner roads. Do you have any intention or any plans within the year 2010 to fix any of those roads?

Mr. Lall: Under this heading- Capital works to deal with Roads- will be in Charity, Suddie, Capoey, New Road, Columbia West, Maria's Lodge, Johanna Cecelia and Reunion. Those areas that the Member mentioned would not be covered by this expenditure.

Programme 723 – Public Works - \$89,600,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 724 – Education Delivery - \$44,000,000

Programme 724 – Education Delivery - \$44,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 725 – Health Services - \$36,500,000

Programme 725 – Health Services - \$36,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 73 Region 3: Essequibo Islands/West Demerara

Current Expenditure

Programme: 731 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$121,308,000

Mr. M. Williams: Line item 6111- Administrative - I refer to the staffing details. There is a reduction of one. Could the Hon. Minister say whether it would be reasonable to conclude that there is no provision here for a Substantive Regional Executive Officer?

Mr. Lall: R.E.O.s are paid from the Local Government Ministry and not under this heading.

Mr. M. Williams: Thank you very much, Sir. If you would entertain the question: Is there likelihood that the Region will be blessed with a Substantive R.E.O. this year?

Mr. Lall: We are working on that, but someone is performing the duties of the R.E.O. and I am advised quite ably so.

Mr. M. Williams: I would have a question about that when you confirm him. Line item 6231- Fuel and Lubricants - Is the Hon. Minister aware that regional vehicle, one in particular, is being used extensively for transporting non-employees and used for non-governmental business frequently? And could the Hon. Minister say whether that is responsible for the increase in the allocation and how does he propose to deal with the misuse of the vehicle.

Mr. Lall: I would like if the Member could provide me with that information.

Mr. M. Williams: I shall so do outside of here. Could the Hon. Minister provide an explanation with respect to Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees - and advise the National Assembly of the areas in which the additional contracted employees are functioning?

Mr. Lall: I think they are all based in Vreed-en-Hoop. The Principal Assistant Secretary, the Information Officer, the Equipment Operator, The Adjuster of Scales and Weights, Typist/Clerk, and one Clerk II.

Mr. B. Williams: Line item 6115 - Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled – forty-four employees for 2010. Might I respectfully enquire from the Hon. Minister how many are B.I.T. graduates?

Mr. Lall: I do not know if there are such graduates among such people.

Programme 731 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$121,308,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 732 – Agriculture – \$215,603,000

Mr. M. Williams: In the interest of time could I respectfully ask the Hon. Minister to supply at some time in the future a schedule of items provided for at Line items 6253 - Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works, and 6255 - Maintenance of Other Infrastructure. Would the Hon. Minister say by what time he is likely to have that information available?

Mr. Lall: I can provide it as soon as I can get it photocopied.

Mr. M. Williams: Thank you, Sir. I take it we would get it before the end of the day. With respect to contracted employees, could the Hon. Minister advise us as to the additional number of contracted employees and their areas of operations?

Mr. Lall: There are five Sluice Attendants and three Rangers.

The Chairman: Are you asking a question Mr. Nagamootoo?

Mr. Nagamootoo: No, Sir. I beg your pardon. Thank you for recognising me.

Programme 732 – Agriculture – \$215,603,000

Programme: 733 – Public Works – \$83,057,000

Mr. M. Williams: Line item 6112 - Senior Technical - there is an average of \$900,000 per year whereas for the single contracted employee, there is a provision of \$2.7 million. Could the Hon. Minister explain that to the National Assembly? It is three times.

Mr. Lall: The person with the largest sum is the Senior Engineer.

3.45 p.m.

Mr. M. Williams: In the same way as we dealt with the previous programme, can I respectfully ask the Hon. Minister to supply later on a schedule provided for by line item 6251 and 6252.

Mr. Lall: I will do that.

Mrs. Riehl: I wish to ask the Hon. Minister under the same line item 6116 - Contracted Employees - there is one employee the Hon. Minister said who is the Senior Engineer, is that employee getting an increase of \$700,000 for the year?

Mr. Lall: The increase is to take care of last year when there was the 6% and gratuity. This is a contracted employee.

Programme 733 – Public Works – \$83,057,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 734 - Education Delivery – \$1,218,529,000

Mr. M. Williams: Line item 6113 - Other Technical and Craft Skilled - could the Hon. Minister say how many technical vocational teachers are included in this 220, if any?

Mr. Lall: I really cannot get this aggravation right at this moment here with the different levels of teachers.

Mr. M. Williams: In that case, could the Hon. Minister say from line item 6111 and 6117, where in there can we find provisions for School Welfare Officers and how many do we have currently assigned to Region 3.

Mr. Lall: We have four Welfare Officers and they are under 6113.

Mr M. Williams: Maintenance of Other Infrastructure - 6255 - there is a proposed sum of \$25.9 million. Could the Hon. Minister say if included in that sum is provision for maintenance of the Information Technology (I.T.) labs at those schools which have I.T. labs, and the replacement of non-functional computers?

Mr. Lall: No, this is mainly for infrastructural maintenance.

Mr. M. Williams: I looked at line item 6243 - Janitorial and Cleaning Supplies - I compared that to line item 6293 - Refreshment and Meals - \$1.7 million. In the light of the two provisions, could the Hon. Minister say whether he is comfortable that a million dollars for the entire population of schools could be comfortably less than snacks provided for under the other subhead?

Mr. Lall: I am advised that in Region 3 we have very active Parent Teacher Associations (P.T.A.s). They also supplement what the Government contributes towards the upkeep of these schools in terms of janitorial supplies and so forth.

Mr. M. Williams: This brings me to the other question in terms of the exact line item 6243 also 6255 to ask the question of whether the absence of provision for the schools' I.T. lab maintenance and an insufficient provision for janitorial and cleaning supplies, imply that the Government is in fact suggesting to the population that it is okay for schools to continue sending their children to raise funds for purposes which ought to be provided for by the Government itself. This is the case of the Leonora Primary School which raised funds two days ago and Zeeburg Secondary School which had a barbecue during last week to replace computers for the I.T. lab.

Mr. Lall: I am compelled to respond to these outlandish statements. There is nothing here to suggest that I have said so far, or is indicated in the estimates that we are supporting children going and raising funds, nothing of this sort. P.T.A.s are there. They are legitimate bodies. We have to move towards community based education. The more we can bring parents and communities on board, it is better for the country. There is nothing wrong with P.T.A.s playing a role. We are putting billions of dollars in schools and we want the communities to take possession of these infrastructures and move not only from just the P.T.A. level, but further than that. We see that as participation by the people. There is nothing here to suggest that we are supporting children to go beg for money. We are not in support of that.

As parliamentarians we also must know how Budgets are crafted. The I.T. labs and the furnishing of the I.T. labs and all these different things, first of all, will fall under capital expenditure. Most of these labs are dealt with directly by the Central Ministry of Education.

Mr. M. Williams: My final question on this programme. Line item 6115 - could the Hon. Minister explain the reduction in the twenty-eight members of staff and advise us what categories of employees would have left?

Mr. Chairman: What?

Mr M. Williams: Line item – 6115- there is a reduction of semi-skilled operatives and unskilled operatives. Could the Hon. Minister say what category of persons would have come off the payroll and for what reasons?

Mr. Lall: Two persons were dismissed, two persons resigned and the remainder there would be persons who have retired.

Programme 734 - Education Delivery - \$1,218,529,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 735 – Health Services - \$469,200,000

Mr. M. Williams: Line item 6242 - Maintenance of Buildings - \$21 million. Could the Hon. Minister say whether provided in this line item are resources for fixing the faulty plumbing at the new Leonora Hospital which has been operating for about a year now? There are tremendous amounts of leaks there. In addition, could the Hon. Minister say whether there is provision here for ensuring that water is supplied to that hospital so that the Guyana Fire Service can be relieved of the additional burden of transporting water there?

Mr. Lall: I am told that there is in fact a problem with the pump, but that matter is being looked at with the urgency it deserves where the water is concerned.

Mr. M. Williams: It has been six months and it is still not fixed. That is quite urgent Minister. Could the Hon. Minister say, on the same line item, whether there is provision here for the remedial works to be done at the West Demerara Regional Hospital to allow for water to be supplied to the maternity ward?

Mr. Lall: Yes, that has been catered for this year.

Mr M. Williams: Could the Hon. Minister say how much of the \$21 million has been identified for rehabilitation of the maternity ward on the West Demerara Regional Hospital. Also, how soon he anticipates that those remedial works will be completed to the comfort of the citizens of Region 3?

Mr. Lall: I am advised by the Acting R.E.O. that some moneys have been allocated for the maintenance of that particular facility, but I cannot say the exact amount at the moment.

Mr. M. Williams: Even though I am not very happy with the answer, I shall move on to line item 6255 - Maintenance of Other Infrastructure - and to ask the Hon. Minister whether included in this \$11.2 million there could be found provision for acquisition of the single part for the ultrasound machine at the Leonora Cottage Hospital which has been inoperable for over six months now.

Mr. Lall: This sum is not catering for that particular problem, but I will investigate the matter.

Mr. M. Williams: On the same line item, could the Hon. Minister advise the National Assembly whether included in this sum of \$11.2 million, there could be found provision for repairs to the x-ray machine at the same Leonora Cottage Hospital which is a relatively new state-of-the-art hospital?

Mr. Lall: This sum is not catering for that.

Mr. M. Williams: Could the Hon. Minister advise where we can find such a sum being provided for?

Mr. Lall: It is not catered for under this programme - Health Services - through the Region.

Mr. M. Williams: Line item 6112 - Senior Technical - could the Hon. Minister advise whether provided for in the sum of \$23.3 million we can find provision for the H.I.V. testers at the West Demerara Regional Hospital. If so, could the Hon. Minister say how many such persons are employed?

Mr. Lall: There are twelve such persons and they are under line item 6113.

Mr. M. Williams: Could the Hon. Minister advise the National Assembly whether these twelve persons are at the West Demerara Regional Hospital or how many are there and how many are sent out in other parts of the Region? You do not have to give me specifics as to where they are.

Mr. Lall: There is just one at the West Demerara Regional Hospital. The rest are spread out in different health facilities in the Region.

Mr. M. Williams: I wish to point out to the Hon. Minister that line item 6115, where there are 151 employees, there is a provision of \$72.8 million. Whereas at line item 6116 - Contracted

Employees - only seventy employees are provided for, but there is a similar amount of \$72.7 million provided. Could the Hon. Minister share with us the justification for the disparity?

Mr. Lall: There are two different categories of workers. With the contracted employees, you will find gratuities and leave passage allowances and all these things. That is the reason why.

Mr. M. Williams: My final question on this, Sir. Would it not be more effective and reasonable from an employer's perspective for those persons who are currently under line item 6116 to be placed in one of the other headings, which would comfortably accommodate them and their associated benefits at some savings to the Administration?

Mr. Lall: There cannot be any savings because they are all employed. Whether they are on contract or not, their salary will be the same. It is not a question of us determining where they go. It is a question of choice. People, especially skilled people, have a choice of whether they want to wait until they are old to get their pension or whether they want their gratuity now.

Mr. M. Williams: I almost feel as though there is a feeling on the Government benches that I should apologise for asking these questions from what I am hearing coming from across there. It is disappointing.

Mr. Chairman: They might very well feel so Hon. Member, but you have the protection of the Chairman.

Mr. M. Williams: I am very grateful, Sir.

Programme 735 – Health Services - \$469,200,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 731 - Regional Administration and Finance – \$7,200,000

Mr. M. Williams: Line item 2503200 - Profile 279 - Purchase of Furniture and Equipment - I would like to ask the Hon. Minister where the items to be purchased are intended for and for what purpose?

Mr. Lall: This is to purchase various things for schools, desks, benches, chairs, tables, filing cabinets, racks, screens, extinguishers, cupboards and such other things.

Mr. M. Williams: I beg your pardon, but I am looking at the provision that says purchase of air-conditioned units, suites, refrigerators, dining sets, beds and gas stoves. That is at profile 279.

Mr. Lall: That is a different heading. That is 2503200 and not 2503300. This is for the purchase of air conditioning (A.C.) units for the Headquarters of the Region.

Mr. M. Williams: I beg your pardon, for what in the Region?

Mr. Lall: The R.D.C. Head Office.

Mr. M. Williams: I am moved to ask the Hon. Minister what purpose would beds and dining sets serve at the Regional Democratic Council Office since there is a board room and a private office for the Regional Chairman?

Mr. Lall: I just made mention of the AC units for the Head Quarters. The beds, dining sets, suites and gas stoves are for the Officers' Quarters.

Mr. M. Williams: I have no further questions on project 731.

Programme 731 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$7,200,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 732 – Agriculture – \$47,500,000

Mr. M. Williams: I refer to project code 1300800 - Agricultural Development - reference to profile 280. Last evening we had some situations with profiles that contained a few errors. I move to ask the Hon. Minister if in this case similar errors occurred omitting irrigation works to Tuschen and Zeelugt Backdam, Farm Village and Den Amstel. Whether the provision is here somewhere, but not detailed in the profile?

Mr. Lall: Provision is not made for that mentioned, but I can give it to you quickly. It is from Hog Island, Bonasika, De William, Toevlugt, Morasi and Fort Island.

Programme 732 – Agriculture – \$47,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 733 – Public Works – \$88,500,000

Mr. M. Williams: Line item 1400600 - Roads- Upgrading of Community Roads - Profile 283 with respect to Leguan. Since the residents of Leguan are allowed in representing that they prefer roads instead of an airstrip, would the Hon. Minister consider moving the provision from the construction of an airstrip to addressing the question of roads and river defence for example at Leguan? Both areas are in dire need of attention, especially the river defence.

Mr. Lall: We do not intend to scrap the construction of an airstrip in Leguan. We are going to go further than this and continue to explore the possibility of another one in Wakenaam. The Hon. Member asked under the line item dealing with roads, but just in case he wants to know what the allocation is for, it is for Leguan, Wakenaam, Zeeburg, Bagotville and Stewartville- \$9 million each for all of the areas I mentioned.

Mr. M. Williams: Is the Minister upset that I am not asking him certain questions? Project code 1901300 - Land Development - Profile 284 - can the Minister advise whether there is provision here for repairs to roads? For example, in the new housing schemes where such roads have deteriorated rapidly over time and for example, specifically in the Tuschen new housing scheme area where roadways are overtaken by thorn bushes which encroach almost in the centre of the roads.

Mr. Lall: This allocation is for the rehabilitation of roads in Goed Fortuin, Vergenoegen and Sarah Lodge.

Programme 733 – Public Works – \$88,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Programme: 734 - Education Delivery – \$49,000,000

Mr. M. Williams: I refer to agency code 1203000 – Buildings: Education - Reference 285 - I wish to ask the Hon. Minister whether the Vergenoegen Primary School which has a population of in excess of 950 students and classrooms which are not separated, where children sit three and

four per bench, whether in this allocation here of \$41 million for the extension of school buildings, we can find a provision specific to the Vergenoegen Primary School?

Mr. Lall: This allocation is for the extension of a secondary school in Leguan, the extension of a primary school in Vreed-en-Hoop, the extension of a primary school in Canal #2, the extension of the primary schools in Two Brothers and the construction of sanitary blocks in Aliko, Belle Plaine, Endeavour and Princess Carolina.

Mr. M. Williams: Line item 2503300 - Furniture and Equipment: Education - at reference 286 - is there any provision here which may have been omitted from the actual profile details that deals with outfitting the Den Amstel Practical Instruction Centre (P.I.C.) with requisite furniture and tools as well as equipment? Is there any consideration from the Minister's perspective for the Vergenoegen P.I.C., once rehabilitated, to assist with the production of furniture which is in short supply in the Region for the various schools?

Mr. Lall: The answer is yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. M. Williams: Yes to which one, Sir? I am not sure.

Mr. Lall: Both of them.

Mr. M. Williams: Is the Hon Minister saying that he is in agreement that the Den Amstel P.I.C. will be utilised in the process of construction of furniture to alleviate the current shortage within the Region?

Mr. Lall: Well that is the reason why they are going to be involved in the construction of furniture- to deal with the shortage.

Mr. M. Williams: Well I thank the Minister sincerely for taking onboard the suggestion made for the last number of years. With respect to, the book is upside down, please forgive me, the printing, 1203100 Buildings – Health - I wish to ask the Hon. Minister whether the De Kinderen Health Centre which is listed here at profile 287 for rehabilitation, could the Hon. Minister say whether in fact the De Kinderen Health Centre now comes under the purview of the Regional Administration for Region 3? If that is so, could the Minister advise when that transition took place?

Mr. Lall: Do I have your permission to answer the question? We are at a different heading? We are now dealing with Health. You have not asked us to go there as yet.

The Chairman: Let us stick to the programme, Hon. Member.

Mr. M. Williams: The book is printed upside down. I did not recognise we were at another head.

Mr. Lall: Well if you permit me I can answer the question.

The Chairman: Okay. That will save the question being asked again.

Mr. Lall: This building is now under the Regional Administration and we have allocated \$7 million for its rehabilitation. That is at De Kinderen.

The Chairman: Are you turned up the right side now, Hon. Member?

Mr. M. Williams: It is not me on the wrong side, it is the book. I will wait for when you come to the next item.

4.15 p.m.

Programme 734 - Education Delivery – \$49,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 735 – Health Services – \$39,500,000

Mr. M. Williams: At line item 1203100 – Buildings: Health - Profile 287 - item two - Extension of West Demerara Regional Hospital - Extension of a Clinic building - could the Hon. Minister say, if contained in this provision, is any funding for the rehabilitation of the Maternity Ward at the West Demerara Regional Hospital or whether there is a plan to remove the maternity ward from the upper floor? It is very in-convenient for pregnant women to fetch water to the upper floor...- to relocate that ward to, perhaps, a ground floor for greater convenience.

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, this heading does not speak to that kind of job that the Member is referring to. I just want to state that that sum is for the extension of the clinic building of the West Demerara Regional Hospital, the construction of a waiting area at La Grange, the

construction of a mortuary at Wakenaam and the rehabilitation of the health centre at De Kinderen.

Mr. Williams: My final question Sir. Project Code 2503100 – Equipment – Health The profile speaks to the purchase of a number of items including an ultrasound machine. Would the Hon. Minister not agree that it may be beneficial to Region Three Community for an existing ultrasound machine which has been out of use because it is broken down and in need of a single part... before even contemplating acquiring a new one? If we cannot maintain what we have, it makes little sense, in my estimation, to procure additional equipment.

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, I can only deal with what we are dealing with which is the Capital Expenditures. The Capital Expenditure deals with new items; if we are talking about repairs then we will probably have to go to the Current Expenditure. But, this Capital sum is to purchase, among other things, an ultrasound machine, examination beds, autoclaves, sterilizers, various medical equipment. As I said, the maintenance of equipment will come under the recurring budget.

Mr. Williams: Thank you Sir, I am done.

Programme 735 – Health Services – \$39,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 74 Region 4: Demerara/Mahaica

Current Expenditure

Programme: 741 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$107,011,000

Mr. Elliot: Under Account Code 6111 – Administrative Staff – I notice an increase of three (3) and this is taking into account the public service employees. Could the Minister indicate to this Assembly the category of the three employees?

Mr. Lall: They are Principal Assistant Secretary (P.A.S.) Finance, Assistant Secretary (A.S.) Finance and Assistant Secretary (A.S.) General.

Mr. Elliot: Under Account Code 6281 – Security Services. Could the Minister tell this National Assembly which security service is engaged at the Regional Democratic Council (R.D.C.)?

Mr. Lall: R.K. Security.

Mr. Elliot: My supplementary question. Could the Minister say if this service takes care of all the installations under this line item?

Mr. Lall: I would hope so.

Ms. Punalall: Mr. Chairman, Account Code 6291 – National and Other Events – \$5,532,000 is budgeted here for National and Other Events. Mr. Chairman, \$4,371,000 has already been spent on Mashramani activities this year; that leaves \$1,161,000 to be spent on six more events. Can the Hon. Member explain to us, why there is so little money allocated to be spent on the other events including our Independence celebration which is a very important National Event for our Country.

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, I am not aware that that sum of money has been spent on Mashramani.

Ms. Punalall: Mr. Chairman, I have here a list that says National and Other Events – Mashramani celebration - \$4,372,000. This is what came from the Regional Democratic Council meeting yesterday of Region Four.

Mr. Chairman: I think the Minister said that he is not aware that the monies have been spent. I gather that the Minister does not wish to say anything further.

Mr. Elliot: Could the Minister say how much money was spent for Mashramani 2010 by Region Four?

Mr. Lall: Mr. Speaker, just a few days ago we had these celebrations and I am sure that when the final payments have been made for the various activities, that account will be provided.

Programme 741 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$107,011,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 742 – Agriculture – \$179,489,000

Mr. Elliot: Mr. Chairman, Account Code 6116 – Contracted Employees. In 2009 there were 11 and in 2010 there are 16. Could the Minister explain the reason for the increase of five and what the categories of workers are?

Mr. Lall: There are five new sluice attendants, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Elliot: Account Code 6281 – Security Service, could the Hon. Minister tell this House which security service is rendering its service.

Mr. Lall: R.K Security.

Programme 742 – Agriculture – \$179,489,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 743 – Public Works - \$131,861,000

Mr. Elliot: Mr. Chairman, Account Code 6252 – Maintenance of Bridges. Could the Hon. Minister tell this National Assembly if rehabilitation of a 60-foot long bridge across the Golden Grove Canal is included in this exercise?

Mr. Lall: No, Mr. Chairman. This will be dealing with two bridges at Cane Grove and one at Triumph.

Ms. Punalall: Mr. Chairman, since the Hon. Member has answered the question on bridges, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister if he can name the villages where the roads will be maintained. Because of time constraints, if he could provide a list for us.

Mr. Lall: Enterprise, Long Creek on the Soesdyke/Linden Highway, Kuru Kururu, Cove & John, Strathaven and Paradise.

Mr. Elliot: Mr. Chairman, account code 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants. There is a vast decrease in the Budget for 2010, could the Minister explain the reason since we had expended the sum of \$28 million for 2009.

Mr. Lall: That item, Mr. Chairman, has been transferred to the agricultural sector.

Programme 743 – Public Works - \$131,861,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 744 – Education Delivery - Public Works - \$1,677,874,000

Mr. Elliot: Account Code 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure - \$23 million. Could the Minister indicate to the House what are the buildings that will be maintained?

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, it is a long list but just to give a sample it includes: maintenance of septic tanks, repairs to trestle, construction of fences for schools, repairs to walkways for several schools and land filling of about ten schools. These include: Vryheid's Lust, Clonbrook, Grove, Virginia, Kairuni, Prince William, Golden Grove, La Bonne Intention (L.B.I.), Soesdyke, Ann's Grove, Blossom Scheme, Haslington, Victoria, Strathspey and Pearl.

Mrs. Punalall: Under Account Code 6243 – Janitorial and Cleaning Supplies - \$1,460,000 is allocated in this Budget to clean schools and educational buildings. There are 135 schools in Region Four. When we divide this amount the sum is \$10,814 per year which is less than \$1,000 per month and this is without mentioning the other buildings used for educational purposes. Can the Hon. Minister say if less than \$1,000 is enough to keep one of our schools under proper sanitary conditions for a month?

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, in dealing with the other regions and the upkeep of schools, I explained that this sum reflects a Government contribution towards the upkeep of these schools and Parent Teacher Associations (P.T.A.s) and communities make a solid contribution towards the cleaning of these schools.

Mrs. Punalall: Mr. Chairman, if we go and visit our schools they are not been kept clean. I am requesting that the Hon. Minister can look into this and add an additional sum, so that our schools can be kept clean.

Mr. Elliot: Mr. Chairman, Account Code 6281 – Security Services – budgeted for this year is \$133,549,000. Could the Hon. Minister say which security service has been contracted and secondly, if all our schools in the Region have been getting the security service needed.

Mr. Lall: The Firm is R.K Security and yes, all the schools are being provided with security.

Mr. Elliot: While we are on this same Account Code, could the Hon. Minister tell this National Assembly if the problem encountered, with the change over from one security to the other security firm, about outstanding payments, if that is included in this amount.

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, I am not aware of any problems; we went to Tender, a contracting firm was awarded and that firm was deployed to the various locations.

Programme 744 – Education Delivery - Public Works - \$1,677,874,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 745 – Health Services - \$231,258,000

Programme 745 – Health Services - \$231,258,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 741 – Regional Administration and Finance \$11,500,000

Programme 741 – Regional Administration and Finance \$11,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 742 – Agriculture – \$30,500,000

Programme 742 – Agriculture – \$30,500,000 agreed to and ordered to Stand Part of the Estimates.

Programme: 743 – Public Works - \$51,500,000

Programme 743 – Public Works - \$51,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 744 – Education Delivery - \$41,000,000

Mr. Elliot: Mr. Chairman, Project Code 1203300 – Building – Education. I notice here that we have five schools for rehabilitation and we have \$33 million. Taking into account the sort of rehabilitation work which has to be done and, especially, the extension to the Covent Garden

Secondary School, which is heavily overcrowded? I would like to know which percentage of this amount will go towards the Covent Garden Secondary School.

Mr. Lall: \$7.5 million Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Elliot: Mr. Chairman is the Minister aware of the magnitude of work which has to be carried out at that school.

Mr. Lall: This is an extension to the school, so I do not...

Mr. Elliot: Mr. Chairman, the extension proposed here, carries at least six classrooms. I hope that the Minister has that in his considerations because \$7.5 million is inadequate to carry out that exercise.

Programme 744 – Education Delivery - \$41,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 745 – Health Services - \$25,900,000

Programme 745 – Health Services - \$25,900,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members I think this is an appropriate time to take the suspension. We will try to limit this suspension as much as possible so that members can have the time to ask as many questions before we close off this agency.

Assembly resumed

Assembly suspended accordingly at 4.36 p.m.

Assembly resumed accordingly at 5.24 p.m.

In Committee of Supply

Agency: 75 Region 5: Mahaica/Berbice

Current Expenditure

Programme: 751 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$60,439,000

Ms. Wade: Mr. Chairman, Account Code 6116 – Contracted Employees. What is responsible for the increase of six new contracted employees and the areas in which they are functioning?

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, there are two Clerk 2, three Accounts Clerks and a Typist Clerk.

Ms. Wade: Thank you sir. Account Code 6281 – Security Services. Mr. Chairman, the revised budget for 2009 is \$1.9 million and for 2010 it has moved to \$5.6 million, could the Hon. Minister explain why this large increase.

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, this vote reflects some shifting of monies which were previously allocated under Public Works; it has now been shifted to this programme head – Administration and Finance. Whereas, last year a portion of the security was paid for under Public Works, it will now be paid for under Finance and Administration.

Programme 751 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$60,439,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 752 – Agriculture - \$109,545,000

Ms. Wade: Mr. Chairman, Account Code 6251 – Maintenance of Roads - could the Minister list the roads for maintenance?

Mr. Lall: It is the roads in Esau and Jacob, Champagne and within the Rosignol/Zeevlucht N.D.C.

Programme 752 – Agriculture - \$109,545,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 753 – Public Works - \$113,340,000

Programme 753 – Public Works - \$113,340,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 754 – Education Delivery - \$748,250,000

Ms. Wade: Mr. Chairman, Account Code 6273 – Water Charges. Could the Hon. Minister say whether this \$7.2 million is the payment for water used by schools?

Mr. Lall: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Programme 754 – Education Delivery - \$748,250,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 755 – Health Services - \$217,476,000

Ms. Wade: Mr. Chairman, in my budget debate I made mention of the problem we have in Region 5 concerning the homes for doctors. I notice here there is maintenance of buildings and I am wondering if the doctors' quarters are included in this line item.

Mr. Lall: We will keep upgrading the quarters for doctors and other personnel in the Region. In this year's budget it is catered for.

Ms. Wade: Mr. Chairman, 6116 – Contracted Employees – could the Hon. Minister tell this National Assembly why the 100% increase in contracted employees from 19 to 37 and say what categories these 37 persons fall under.

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, this increase caters for the Mahaicony Hospital.

Programme 755 – Health Services - \$217,476,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 751 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$12,400,000

Programme 751 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$12,400,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 752 – Agriculture - \$80,600,000

Programme 752 – Agriculture - \$8,600,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 753 – Public Works - \$73,500,000

Ms. Wade: Mr. Chairman, I am wondering if under roads... the street next to Cocoa Cabana... I notice that they listed here Belladrum. I know that the contractor used that road and damaged it to an extent and I am wondering if Cocoa cabana Street is included here.

Mr. Lall: I am not aware of that particular name but we do have in Belladrum a street that will be repaired. It is Middle Street.

Ms. Wade: I am wondering why the street that is next to Cocoa Cabana, which was damaged by the contractor that did the sea defence, is not listed here for construction.

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that the observation made by the Member is correct and we will try to deal with that road under the maintenance programme under the Current Expenditure.

Programme 753 – Public Works - \$73,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme 754 – Education Delivery - \$38,000,000

Programme 754 – Education Delivery - \$38,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

5.32 p.m.

Programme: 755 - Health Services - \$16,300,000.

Ms. Wade: Item 2504000 - Furniture and Equipment: Health - the sum of \$6 million is Budgeted. Could the Hon. Minister say for example, where the ultra sound machine would be placed, and which hospital will the dental chair be placed?

Mr. Lall: The ultra sound machine will be placed in Fort Wellington Hospital.

Ms. Wade: The dental chair?

Mr. Lall: That is at Fort Wellington too.

Ms. Wade: Thank you.

Programme 755 - Health Services - \$16,300,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 76 Region 6: East Berbice/Corentyne

Current Expenditure

Programme: 761 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$74,916,000

Programme 761- Regional Administration and Finance - \$74,916,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 762 – Agriculture - \$353,690,000

Dr. Austin: Account Code 6253 - Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works - I would like to know whether irrigation works will be done in Fyrish, Nurney and Limliar?

Mr. Lall: The list I have here does not include the areas mentioned by the Member.

Programme 762 - Agriculture - \$353,690,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 763 - Public Works - \$140,953,000

Dr. Austin: Account Code 6242 - Maintenance of Buildings - I would like to know if any maintenance work will be done on the N.D.C. Office which is located in Nurney?

Mr. Lall: No Mr. Chairman, generally speaking the R.D.C.'s Budget does not contain allowances for the N.D.C.'s buildings.

Programme 763 - Public Works - \$140,953,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 764 – Education Delivery - \$1,576,732,000

Dr. Austin: Account Code 6116 - Contracted Employees - I would like to know if the difference of 32 contracted employees between 2009 and 2010 is due to 32 additional contracted employees?

Mr. Lall: The categories would be librarians, lab assistants, typist clerks, janitors, accounts clerks, farm hands and kitchen assistants.

Dr. Austin: I must thank the Minister for answering the second part of my question but the first part of my question is; I would like to know whether the difference of 32 contracted employees reflects the employment of 32 additional staff as contracted employees for 2010?

Mr. Lall: Yes Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Austin: I would like to ask the Minister, if there is a difference of approximately \$1 million allocated to payment of wages and salaries between the 2009 and 2010 contracted employees. I would like to be enlightened as to how approximately \$1 million would cater for 32 additional staff for one year?

Mr. Lall: These persons were on the payroll last year already they were not employed this year. They were employed after last year's Budget was passed.

Dr. Austin: Is the Hon. Minister saying that the 32 figure which he said was additional employees is no longer additional employees or new employees for 2010?

Mr. Lall: Well if you look at it as against 2009 when the Budget was passed; yes in that sense.

Dr. Austin: Account Code 6255 - Maintenance of Other Infrastructure - I would like to know if this amount caters for the clearing of the bushes at the Fort Canje Hospital Compound?

Mr. Lall: This is beginning with education.

Mr. Murray: With respect to line item 6115 - Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled. I note that in 2010 the number of semi-skilled operatives and unskilled is reduced by 37. Could the Hon. Minister explain that reduction? Is it that these people are being sent home, re-deployed or what?

Mr. Lall: This figure represents the persons who would have moved out of those bands and have upgraded themselves.

Mr. Murray: Well that is a very interesting answer. Because if they have moved into other bands those bands are not reflected in the other short heads of accounts, because if we take Other

Technical, if they moved up, they have gone down from 551 to 518. If you take Senior Technical they have gone down from 653 to 614. They are certainly not going to move from where they were to administrative which is four or five grades up. So could you please explain where they have gone?

Mr. Lall: That is exactly what happened.

Mr. Murray: What they disappeared? Is the Minister really saying that people who are unskilled and semi-skilled operatives have moved into the administrative positions of the region? Is that what he is telling us? Could you please confirm that?

Mr. Lall: I would appreciate it very much if the Member would allow me to answer. The answer is yes, people who were not qualified, went to C.P.C.E., the University of Guyana, they have graduated and gone up to the higher position, highest position.

Programme 764 - Education Delivery - \$1,576,732,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 765 - Health Services - \$778,659,000

Programme 765 - Health Services - \$778,659,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 761 – Regional Administration & Finance - \$13,300,000

Programme 761 - Regional Administration & Finance - \$13,300,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 762 - Agriculture - \$102,179,000

Programme 762 – Agriculture - \$102,179,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 763 – Public Work –\$106,000,000

Dr. Austin: Project Code 1401000 - Roads, Profile No. 316 - Rehabilitation of community roads - I would like to know the names of the roads in the communities which were stated. There were a number of communities including Palmyra and so forth I would like to know the names of those roads.

Mr. Lall: I will start with the village that I come from Good Banana Land the east back street and the back east street that is in Palmyra, it is Percy Smith Street; in Fyriish the third cross street; Bloomfield second cross street; Limliar first cross street; Liverpool first cross street; Letter Kenny second street and Whim tenth street.

Programme 763 - Public Works - \$106,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 764 – Education Delivery - \$46,000,000

Dr. Austin: Project Code 2504100 - Furniture and Equipment: Education - I would like to know which schools will be provided with the furniture listed under Profile No. 319 - Purchase of furniture and equipment for schools?

Mr. Lall: This would include ten secondary schools in Black Bush Polder, Canje, Vrymens Erven and Skeldon Line Path. It is kind of difficult to answer in that sense because different schools will be getting different things and not all schools will be getting furniture. Some schools will be getting cupboards and different things. But you have schools in Siparuta, Johanna, Rosehall, Belvidere, Kildonan, Lochaber, Overweening, Rosehall Estate, Orealla Line Path, Skeldon, Tagore, Winifred Gaskin, Skidmore, Edinburgh, Manchester, Williamsburg, Joppa, and New Amsterdam different schools will be getting different things.

Dr. Austin: I would be happier if the Minister could give the specific schools. Because what has been happening in the past is that we are told that schools are going to get and then when we check the schools they do not get any furniture. The parents have to continuously keep purchasing furniture for their children.

Mr. Lall: For the set of schools in Canje, Black Bush Polder, Vrymens Erven, Skeldon, Berbice High School and the Berbice Educational Institute (BEI) they will be getting Type A desks and benches. The tops of primary including Friends, Overweening, Cumberland, Belvidere, Rosehall

Estate and Orealla they will be getting Type B desks and benches. I do not know the exact quantity. For the group of schools in Siparuta, Johanna, Rosehall and Belvidere they will be getting teachers tables and chairs. Desks and benches Type D, for Johanna, Krapa, Crabwood Creek, Kildonan, New Amsterdam, Lochaber and Overweening. You will have school furniture for nursery schools including Leeds, Sisters, Princetown, Trinity, and Hibiscus Line Path. Chalk Board for: Alness, Tutorial, Skeldon Line Path, Tagore, Lower Corentyne. School cupboards for: Siparuta, Lesbeholden, Winifred Gaskin, Skidmore, Edinburgh, Manchester, Ocline, Port Mourant. Stools for science laboratories in Vest, Winifred Gaskin, Skeldon, Manchester and Lower Corentyne. Outdoor swings for Tain Line Path, Canefield, Kingsston, Line Path of Williamsburg and Joppa; refrigerator for the department of education located in New Amsterdam... I can give the number of legs divided by four.

Agency 76: Region 6-East Berbice/Corentyne, Project Code and Title: 764-Education Delivery \$46,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency 76 – Programme 765 - Region 6 – East Berbice / Corentyne – Health Services - \$31,500,000

Programme 765 - Health Services - \$31,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 77 Region 7: Cuyuni/Mazaruni

Current Expenditure

Programme: 771 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$86,989,000

Mrs. David-Blair: Under line item 6117 - Temporary Employees - in 2009 there was one temporary employee and I see this year there is none; nevertheless there is an allocation of \$100,000. Can the Minister explain?

Mr. Lall: Yes, this was to be a relief driver, he is no more.

Mrs. David-Blair: Under line item 6281 - Security Services - I see in the Budget of 2010 there is a decrease. Could the Minister say if there is less need for security? If all the buildings that are supposed to be secured by these services are getting the security services they need?

Mr. Lall: Because of the competitiveness in the tender procedure we have been able to attract or acquire services at a cheaper rate.

Mrs. Blair: Can the Minister say which security service has now been contracted?

Mr. Lall: Home Safe Security Service.

Programme 771 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$86,989,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 772 – Public Works - \$140,250,000

Mrs. Hastings: Line item 6242 - Maintenance of Buildings - could the Hon. Minister tell this National Assembly what buildings will benefit from this head?

Mr. Lall: There will be general maintenance to the following buildings: the Regional Councillor's (R.C.'s) residence in Bartica, the Youth Choice Building, the Regional Executive Officer's (A.R.E.O.) quarters in Kamarang, the Regional Stores in Bartica, the Regional Executive Officer's (D.R.E.O.) quarters in Bartica, the Administrative Office in Bartica and building 813 the Regional Executive Officer (R.E.O.) in Bartica.

Mrs. Hastings: Thank you.

Programme 772 - Public Work - \$140,250,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 773 – Education Delivery - \$561,991,000

Mrs. David-Blair: Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees - I see that it has risen from 4 in 2009 to 30 in 2010, can the Minister say who are these employees and where are they located?

Mr. Lall: These are employees at the new secondary school at Four Mile. They are librarians, system development officers, clerk II, officer assistant, gardeners, handyman, janitors, maids/cleaners, cooks, etc. this is a new school.

Mrs. Hastings: Line item 6291 - National and Other Events, could the Hon. Minister say what portion of the \$4.8 M is allocated to Sub-Region 2/Upper Mazaruni?

Mr. Lall: This sum is not allocated geographically into subregions and so forth, these are for National Events. The Regional Councils under the leadership of the various Chairmen, they are responsible for the allocation of these sums and the organising of these national events. The Council determine how these moneys are allocated.

Mrs. David-Blair: Can the Minister tell this National Assembly if he is satisfied or convinced that \$4.8 M will be enough to furnish the entire Region 7 based on national events? Especially the Amerindian communities.

Mr. Lall: This is not a cumulative sum; this is just for this programme. Parliamentarians must know that all the regions are divided up into five programmes. So you may find under National Events sums allocated under Education, Health, Agriculture and Public Works. This is not an accumulative sum this is just for this programme. This is not the entire amount that will be allocated by this Government.

Mrs. Hasting: Line item 6281 - *Security Services*, could the Hon. Minister make known to this National Assembly which schools will benefit from the Security Services.

Mr. Lall: This sum will cater for the schools in Bartica and Waramadong.

Programme 773 - Education Delivery - \$561,991,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 774 – Health Services - \$248,745,000

Mrs. David-Blair: Under line item 6113 - Other Technical and Craft Skilled - can the Minister say who are the other technical and craft skilled workers that have been employed for 2010?

Mr. Lall: The additions are: Staff Nurse, Midwife, Audiological Technician, microscopist, Supervisor of food services, Dental Health Therapist and Rehab Assistant.

Mrs. David-Blair: Can the Minister say where these persons are going to be employed, which the Health Centre or Hospital?

Mr. Lall: Kamarang and Bartica Hospitals.

Mrs. David-Blair: Can you be specific with Bartica Hospital, how many persons were employed this year?

Mr. Lall: I cannot give that off hand but I can definitely produce that later on.

Programme 774 - Health Services - \$248,745,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 771 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$12,000,000

Mrs. David-Blair: Project Code 2602000 - Power Extension, can the Minister say how much of this amount includes electrification of the building that is long overdue in Kamarang and the water system?

Mr. Chairman: What building is long overdue? What is long overdue?

Mrs. David-Blair: Power to the building Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Power.

Mrs. David-Blair: It is Project Code 2602000 - Provision for extension of power supply \$5 million.

Mr. Chairman: I presume that the long overdue power supplies are now going to be connected. Is that what the Member means?

Mr. Lall: Yes but they are going to be done in Waramadong and Paruima.

Mrs. David-Blair: I am speaking about the project at Kamarang, the Amerindian Hostel.

Mr. Lall: Please Mr. Chairman we are dealing with the Capital Budget. I believe that under the Current Budget we are going to take care of that little problem that we have. Under the Capital Budget there is no provision here. I mentioned Waramadong and Paruima those will be the two locations that we will be dealing with under the Capital Budget.

Mrs. David-Blair: Under Project Code 2062000 - Power Extension - a sum of \$5 million is there for provision for extension of power supply. When we go to the profile it says: "This project entails rehabilitation and extension of Amerindian hostel at Kamarang"; Project Profile 323, how much of this amount includes the electrification of the building that is long overdue and the water system? Because it says, improve accommodation and facilities?

6.02 p.m.

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman the works to be done under the Amerindian Hostel in Kamarang, the capital works will be done under an item that we past already. Administration: buildings but I was not asked that question at that point in time. This item here is dealing with another issue and we are upgrading the system at Waramadong and Paruima.

Programme 771 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$12,000,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 772 – Public Works - \$32,000,000

Programme 772 – Public Works – \$32,000,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 773 – Education Delivery –\$40,733,000.

Mrs. Hastings: Line item 1204100 Buildings: Education. The question to the Hon. Minister is; could the Hon. Ministers say how the sum of \$26 million is apportioned, that is, what amount would be spent at Waramadong Secondary School.

Mr. Lall: \$16 million Mr. Chairman.

Agency 77 –Region 7: Cuyuni/Mazaruni –Programme 773 –Education Delivery –Capital Expenditure – \$40,733,000 –Agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 774 – Health Services –\$26,100,000

Programme 774 – Health Services – \$26,100,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 78 Region 8: Potaro/Siparuni

Current Expenditure

Programme 781 - Regional Administration and Finance –\$46,008,000

Programme 781 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$46,008,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 782 – Public Works – \$84,384,000

Programme 782 – Public Works – \$84,384,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 783 – Education Delivery – \$283,786,000

Programme 783 – Education Delivery – \$283,786,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 784 – Health Services – \$116,382,000

Programme 784 – Health Services – \$116,382,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 781 - Regional Administration and Finance – \$11,800,000

Programme 781 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$11,800,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 782 – Public Works - \$39,000,000

Programme 782 – Public Works – \$39,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 783 – Education Delivery - \$42,500,000

Programme 783 – Education Delivery – \$42,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 784 – Health Services - \$22,000,000

Programme 784 – Health Services – \$22,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 79 Region 9: Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo

Current Expenditure

Programme: 791 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$79,717,000

Programme 791 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$79,717,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 792 – Agriculture - \$15,832,000

Programme 792 – Agriculture – 15,832,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 793 – Public Works - 88,033,000

Programme 793 – Public Works – 88,033,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 794 – Education Delivery - \$438,045,000

Programme 794 – Education Delivery – 438,045,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 795 – Health Services - \$192,134,000

Programme 795 – Health Services – 192,134,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 791 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$13,100,000

Mr. Chairman: Well I am thankful for the Opposition; obviously the Hon. Members are aware of the time that is rapidly approaching for the closure of this section of the debate.

Mr. Franklin: There is so little bit money allocated Mr. Chairman, there is not much one can really say and question. Item 2505100, purchase of a generator, could the Hon. Minister state what size of generator we are talking about? What kilowatt? Let us deal with some specifics and...

Mr. Lall: This is a \$2.5 million – 25 KVA generator for the Lethem Admin Office and will be as a backup to the present generator. As you know, Lethem and Region 9 have recently come online and we are using the Information Management Accounting System (IFMAS) programme so we can have continuous interaction with Region 9 since the telecommunications have been set up in there. So this as I said is a backup to that process.

Programme 791 – Regional Administration and Finance – 13,100,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 792 – Agriculture - \$9,800,000

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Chairman just a quick question. Under project profile number 353 is slated an amount for slaughter houses. I am trying to enquire where, what the design is of the slaughterhouses in the Rupununi, bearing in mind when we build slaughterhouses with certain designs, requirements with drainage, disposal of waste etc. So exactly what are these slaughterhouses you are putting in region 9?

Mr. Lall: I am not a technical person in this line of thing, but I do know that we will be having a design for the abattoirs, the slaughterhouses as they called them that will satisfy the various requirements - environment, medical and all these different things, that is how I envisaged it.

Programme 792 – Agriculture – \$9,800,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 793 – Public Works - \$134,000,000

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, 1401300 – Roads - upgrading of roads, in particular the one in Lethem, which roads exactly are you upgrading [**Interruption**]

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, I have just asked the Neighbourhood Democratic Council (N.D.C.) for the list of the names of the various areas in Lethem so that I can Gazette them. I am kind of having a difficulty in naming the places. But we will be spending \$8 million in Lethem. The new Housing Scheme in the area call Tabatinga \$5 million and Culvert City another new Housing Scheme in Lethem at \$5 million, several streets in these areas.

Programme 793 – Public Works – \$134,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 794 – Education Delivery - \$28,200,000

Programme 794 – Education Delivery – \$28,200,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 795 – Health Services - \$32,750,000

Programme 795 – Health Services – \$32,750,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 80 Region 10: Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice

Current Expenditure

Programme: 801 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$122,387,000

Ms. Kissoon: Thank you Mr. Chairman, 6116 – Contracted Employees; I notice there is an increase of 14. Could the Hon. Minister give the category of the contracted employees?

Mr. Lall: Accounts Clerk II, Janitors, Checkers, Vehicle Drivers, Office Assistances, and one Assistant Regional Executive Officer.

Ms. Kissoon: 6281 – Security Services - which security service is contracted and which buildings are they responsible for?

Mr. Lall: Home Safe Security Service and they are securing mainly the Admin. Buildings

Programme 801 – Regional Administration and Finance – 122,387,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 802 – Public Works - \$132,011,000

Ms. Kisson: 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings, could the Hon. Minister give a list of the buildings that will be maintained?

Mr. Lall: In Mackenzie, staff quarters for various Officers for the region in the sub treasury. In Wismar, the quarters of the agricultural officer, that building needs some heavy repairs. Also we will be dealing with the main officers in Linden and Kwakwani, the main admin buildings.

Ms. Kisson: Maintenance of roads – 6251, could the Hon. Minister give a listing of the roads.

Mr. Lall: I think this will be in addition to what Minister Benn, will be doing, it is the river side Dry Access road that will be a DBST Finish, upgrading of the Ipani/Ogle road, Farewell Road, Clemsfield Access road, Profit Street, First Street, Second Street and in way up Wismar we will be dealing with... yes in that Scheme the roads in Phase One and Phase Two we will be doing some work there and rehabilitation of Gift street from Fair Road to All Weather DBST finished. Many roads in the industrial area at Mackenzie: Retrive, Blueberry Hill, Richmond Hill and Amelia's Ward.

Ms. Kisson: Many roads have been mentioned, I was wondering if I would hear the Independence Avenue, where the Regma Primary School is located because in previous budget debates I asked... This road is in a deplorable state especially when it rains. What, if any works will be done to that road?

Mr. Lall: Yes, some works will be done on that road but not under my Ministry, I do know as a Minister of the Government that the government will be doing that road but the allocation is not under my Ministry.

Programme 802 – Public Works – \$132,011,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 803 – Education Delivery - \$1,030,694

Ms. Kissoon: Line items 6221 to 6224, could the Hon. Minister say if all the schools received these materials and if they do is this amount adequate? Because I know there is talk that schools are not receiving certain supplies.

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, this is a funny way of dealing with this matter. Anyway the answer is yes.

Ms. Kissoon: Could you repeat Sir, I did not hear you and I was distracted by the president to be.

Mr. Lall: You are asking me to deal with four line items at the same time but if I am to give one covering answer, the answer is: "Yes".

Ms. Kissoon: Thank you, 6255... yes that is adequate Ms. Ally and I know it is not. Maintenance of Other Infrastructure; could you give me a list of the buildings for infrastructural work?

Mr. Lall: The New Silver City Secondary, Christiansburg Wismar Secondary, Linden Foundation Secondary, Mackenzie High School, The Wisburg Secondary and The Wisburg Secondary Annex, different types of works will be carried out in these schools.

Ms. Kissoon: Could I ask the Minister to say what exactly would be done to the Mackenzie High School? Is the work to be carried out on the new building that was handed over last term?

Mr. Lall: The works to be done in the Mackenzie High School includes the fencing of the school compound, construction of insinulators, building of taps with sinks and perimeter lights to the main building.

Ms. Kissoon: Line item 6281 – Security Services - could the Hon. Minister say whether all schools receive services and are they receiving 24 hours service.

Mr. Lall: All schools have been provided with security but not all of them have 24 hours security. The secondary schools especially those with computer labs and very valuable equipment we make sure that they have 24 hours a day security.

Ms. Kissoon: Could the Hon. Minister say whether this amount is adequate for payments. There have been complains that the security guards are not being paid, especially the elderly persons and they are being told whatever they get, that is what they have to take.

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, we seek here this service based upon a very competitive bidding process. This is the sum that we are getting out of that bidding process and it is sufficient in that sense. As I said before we are very much concerned over the fact that, personnel of these security services which we contract have problems with their payments and other conditions of service. All those complaints have been brought to my attention and I have forward same to the Minister of Labour. The Minister of Labour has assured me that he is actively looking into these matters.

Programme 803 – Education Delivery – \$1,030,694 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 804 – Health Services - \$210,979,000

Ms. Kissoon: Thank you Mr. Chairman, line item 6221 – from 2008 to 2010 we have here \$7.5 million budgeted but there is a serious complaint of shortage of drugs and medical supplies within the region. Could the Hon. Minister say if this amount is adequate, I do not think so?

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, this sum is obviously not the sum being spent by the Government of Guyana for the supplies of drugs in Region 10. This is only a part of the allocation made through the Region. The Central Ministry has provision for an even larger allocation for the supply of drugs and other health equipment to that Region.

Ms. Kissoon: 6255, could the Hon. Minister say - Under Maintenance of other Infrastructure - would the sewage system at the New Mackenzie Hospital be catered for. On two occasions the sewage system just collapsed and the place was flooding.

Mr. Lall: I am sure if that situation do exist the Region and the Ministry of Health will deal with it. First of all, I do not know what the situation on the ground is, you are describing a situation that I have to ascertain. I have been told that if there is any such problem the Region and the Central Ministry will deal with the matter. This is an assurance given to me by the Regional Executive Officer (R.E.O.)

Ms. Kisson: Thank you. 6281 – Security Services, are all the health centres and clinics covered under this Security Service?

Mr. Lall: Yes Mr. Chairman.

Programme 804 – Health Services – \$210, 979,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 801 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$1,700,000

Ms. Kisson: 2505400 – Furniture and Equipment - could the Hon. Minister say: I know that they have here schools A, B, C and D, could we have the names of the schools? Could he say which schools will benefit?

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, I think you have us now at 801. This question is under agency 803.

Ms. Kisson: I did not hear the Minister; I am not hearing you properly.

Mr. Chairman: The Minister is saying it is under a different agency. The question that you are asking is under 803 not 801.

Ms. Kisson: I was dealing with 372. Oh, okay.

Programme 801 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$1,700,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 802 - Public Works - \$1,604,000

Programme 802 – Public Works – \$81,604,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 803 – Education Delivery - \$48,080,000

Ms. Kisson: Could the Hon. Minister give the names of the schools that will benefit from furniture, tables and equipment?

Mr. Lall: The schools will be The Kwakwani, Amelia's Student wards Hostel and teachers quarters... sorry not the schools the buildings. The Kwakwani Student Hostel, The Kwakwani and Amelia's Student Hostel, The nursery, primary and secondary schools in all areas.

6.32 p.m.

Nursery and primary schools will all be provided with fans.

Ms. Kissoon: All primary schools?

Mr. Lall: All will be provided with fans. Filing cabinets for: River View and Rockstone; desks and benches type A, B and C for Rockstone, Sand Hills, Mabura, Kumaka, 58 Miles, One Mile and Amelia's Ward Primary School.

Programme 803 – Education Delivery - \$48,080,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 804 – Health Services - \$39,775,000

Ms. Kissoon: Line item 2505600: Furniture and Equipment - Health. Does this sum include sum for an ultra sound machine? The hospital is in need of an ultra sound machine. Is that provided for in this sum here?

Mr. Lall: No Mr. Chairman. It is not provided for in this sum.

Programme 804 - Health Services - \$39,775,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 45 Ministry of Housing and Water

Current Expenditure

Programme: 451 — Housing and Water - \$464,720,000

Mr. Scott: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Agency code 6281: Security Services. We have seen over the years, in 2008 \$3.1 million was spent on security services and \$3.4 million was budgeted for the following year, but they found the need to reduce the amount to \$2.1 million. Can the

Minister explain to me the astronomical rise from \$2.1 million to \$10 million over a period of 12 months?

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman the increase in the allocation under 6281 is to cater for additional security services at extended sights.

Mr. Scott: Could you say where the extended sights are?

Mr. Ali: ome of the sites include the office where the permanent secretary and other CH&PA (The Central Housing and Planning Authority) staff are presently serving, the Minister's residence, and parliamentary secretary residence, these are just to mention a few.

Mr. Scott: Are you saying to me Sir that previously the Permanent Secretary as well as the Parliamentary Secretary was not provided with security?

Mr. Ali: The Parliamentary Secretary and the Permanent Secretary were not previously provided with security.

Mr. Scott: Based on your answer Sir, I must assume that these two vaulted individuals merit \$8 million in increased payment for security.

Mr. Ali: This is an annualised rate for security service. We are presently in the process of going through public tender for the provision of this service and then we will have the final cost.

Mrs. Riehl: I wish to ask the Hon. Minister a question under line item 6116 – Contracted Employees. I see Hon. Minister you have an increase of 5 members under the contracted category. And I see you have a budget of \$18.5 million as opposed to \$6.6 million for 2009. Could you tell this House who are these five contracted employees who will receive \$12 million a year?

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chair, this increase caters for the six percent salary adjustment, and the five new contracted employees. The posts are permanent secretary, personal assistant, confidential secretary, typist clerk and office assistant.

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, thank you. Line item 6321 – Contributions to Local Organisations, in particular the Central Housing and Planning Agency which is a subvention

agency... it is slated to receive a subvention of \$115 million in this year's Budget. All subvention agencies are required to submit annual audits. My question to the Minister is when last has the CH&PA submitted an audit and if he will be disbursing monies to an agency that has not submitted audits.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, the audit has been completed for up to 2007 and all the financial statements up to the end of 2009 are with the Auditor General's office to be audited. And as soon as these are completed, yes they will be submitted.

Programme 451 - Housing and Water - \$464,720,000 agreed to put and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 451 - Housing and Water - \$5,832,020,000

Mr. Murray: Mr. Chairman, I am addressing project code 1900900 – Infrastructural Development and Building - the Legend of which reads: Development of infrastructure in new areas and payment of retention. The relevant project profile is 156. My question to the Hon. Minister is whether he could inform this National Assembly, in relation to the Supplementary Appropriation Act assented to by the President on the 14th January, 2010, where has the money been spent. Since the money cannot be expended until after the passage of the Appropriation Act, where is the sum shown for 2010 in respect of that money of \$4 billion for 2010 passed under this particular heading of Infrastructural Development and Building?

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, with full respect for the Hon. Member, the Project Profile that we are referring to... there is a budgetary allocation for 2010 of \$680 million of which I can give the full details. In relation to the supplementary provision that the Hon. Member is asking about, I think that we had adequately and exhaustively debated this issue at the time when the Parliament approved the supplementary provision. And as such I have nothing to add.

Mr. Murray: Sir I know I have a Project Profile that talks about a sum of \$680 million. I am simply guided by what the law states. A Supplementary Appropriation Act assented to by His Excellency the President on January 14, 2010. I am asking him where, in 2010, under this particular category of expenditure for Ministry of Housing and Water, can I find that sum of

money. It is not in the Project Profile and it is not here. I am asking in respect of the 2010 Appropriation Act. Where can I find this money? And if I cannot find it, can he tell me where it is?

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, in relation to the 2010 Supplementary Act that the Hon. Member is referring to, I think that the Act is the Supplementary Paper that was debated exhaustively. I have nothing to add to that. In relation to the Project Profile that deals with 2010, we have a budgetary allocation of \$680 million of which I am prepared to answer any question.

Mr. Ramjattan: No, no, no. This is not the transparency that we are looking for. I had to apologise... **[Interruption]**

Mr. Chairman: Questions, Hon. Member.

Mr. Ramjattan: The question I wish to ask the Minister is the \$4 billion in the legend, the same line item 1900900 - Infrastructural Development and Building... The Legend has \$430 million already spent in 2009. Mr. Minister is the \$4 billion there, monies which was spent in 2009?

Mr. Chairman: What does the Legend say?

Mr. Ramjattan: The legend says amount spent before 2010. This is the crisis that caused my apology and all of that this morning, and you now do not want to answer the question? Mr. Minister, is it not true that the \$4 billion was spent in 2009 and not 2010?

Mr. Chairman: What does the Profile say Hon. Member?

Mr. Ramjattan: The project profile at page 156 and if you check...

Mr. Chairman: What is the...?

Mr. Ramjattan: Line 13: amount spent before 2010. Was the amount spent before 2010 inclusive of the \$4 billion?

Mr. Neendkumar: He answered that already a few weeks ago.

Mr. Ramjattan: No.

Mr. Chairman: There is a sum there of \$4,430,000,000 spent before 2010. That is on the Project Profile. I am now looking under the Capital Expenditure.

Mr. Ramjattan: We started with \$430 million at the beginning of last year and a \$4 billion was expended.

Mr. Chairman: I am looking at the Capital Expenditure on page 429 and the Legend at 1900900. It has the identical sum \$4,430,000,000 under the year 2009. What does that say?

Mr. Ramjattan: It was stating that \$4 billion additionally was expended in the year 2009.

Mr. Chairman: So what is the question?

Mr. Ramjattan: I am asking the question if that \$4 billion was not the \$4 billion supplementary allocated in January 11? The Minister had said “We are ready to spend it” as against “We already spent it” and that is what caused the Hansard and all of that. It is now stated there...

[Interruption]

Mr. Ramjattan: No, no, no, I am not repeating this thing...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members do not let us get... If there is no other \$4 billion anywhere lurking about... There is only one \$4 billion.

Mr. Ramjattan: Could the Minister just answer then? Is the \$4 billion not what...?

Mr. Chairman: Well Comrade, listen, if there is only one \$4 billion...

Mr. Ramjattan: No, no, no. I want it from his mouth. I want it from his mouth so it can be on the record.

Mr. Chairman: The Minister will speak for himself but I am asking you if you follow forensic logic with which you are familiar?

Mr. Ramjattan: I am very familiar.

Mr. Chairman: There is one \$4 billion. It is listed under 2009. What conclusion can you draw from that?

Mr. Ramjattan: I do not want the inference. I want the Minister to help with transparency.

Mr. Chairman: Well the Minister is saying that he has said enough already. Anyway, you have anything further to add Sir?

Mr. Ali: No, I have nothing to add. **[Interruption]**

Mr. Murray: Sir I am dealing with the same line item 1900900. The Project Profile 156: are there any other roads and water distribution networks other than those listed for Anna Catherina, Plantation Schoonard and Hope Estate? Are there any other areas slated for construction of roads and water distribution networks during 2010 under that Profile?

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, the full list of projects for that Profile includes roll over payments for the construction of drains, structures and roads at Parfait Harmony, Block 8 Mon Repos, No 77 Village, Parfait Harmony middle income, Amelia's Ward Phase 2B block 1, Amelia's Ward Phase 2B block 2, Linden. The new project includes construction of roads, drains, structures and installations of pure water distribution network - Plantation Schoonard, West Bank Demerara, Region 3; construction of roads, drains, structures and installations of pure water distribution network - Anna Catherina; construction of roads, drains, structures and installations of pure water distribution network - Hope Estate Phase 2 East Coast Demerara; construction of roads, drains, structures and installations of pure water distribution network - Hope Estate Phase 2, East Bank Demerara - Region no. 4, and the installation of electricity Onderneeming Phase 2, West Bank Demerara, Plantation Schoonard, Section D Nonpareil and Hope Estate Phase 2.

Mr. Murray: Thank you Mr. Minister. Now, it is clear, is it not Minister, that from the list of places you have identified, where you will construct roads and do water distribution networks, none of those places include the Diamond lands that you came to this National Assembly and took \$4 billion for in 2009?

Would you agree that none of them includes any work being done on the Diamond lands that you came for \$4 billion in such a hurry last year? You could not wait for the year to end and no work is catered there. Am I right or am I wrong?

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, the projects I outlined are those covered under the provisions for 2010.

Mr. Murray: Yes and I am therefore asking you Mr. Minister, a very pointed question. Therefore, it means we are doing no work in respect of the lands that you have paid \$4 billion for; acquired from GuySuCo in 2009. And why were you in such a hurry if you are not going to spend any money to develop those lands in 2010? That is my question to you. You wanted to bail out GuySuCo. Why do we not face it? You did not need to go to all this manoeuvring... **[Mr.**

Ramotar: Inaudible] Donald let the Act go straight. That is all I am telling them.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, the projects I outlined are part of those catered for in the 2010 budgetary allocation.

Mr. Chairman: Any other questions on this item?

Mr. Ramjattan: Mr. Chairman, in view of the Minister's silence...

Mr. Chairman: Well I do not know that the Minister has been silent.

Mr. Ramjattan: Oh the Minister has been very silent. This Minister...

Mr. Chairman: I heard him getting up and speaking. **[Interruption]**

Mr. Ramjattan: Mr. Minister, when on January 11th you said we are ready to disburse monies from the \$4 billion, where were you intending to have those monies disbursed in 2010? The same line item 1900900. When you had said on January 11th that you are ready to disburse, where were you going to disburse that 4 billion?

Mr. Ali: I just want to read the legend for 1900900. The legend says: "Development of Infrastructure in new areas and payment of retention."

And I just outlined all the areas in the Profile.

Mr. Murray: My simple question to the minister is this: why, Mr. Minister, have you not, as you have already confirmed, included any money to develop the lands at Diamond in 2010 when you came to the House in haste in early 2010 to get a supplementary estimate of \$4 billion? Why did you unnecessarily expend this money if you did not intend to follow it up with works in 2010 to develop this land? That is my question.

Mr. Ramjattan: Is the Minister going to answer the last question from Mr. Murray or does he have his right to remain silent?

Mr. Chairman: Do you have any further answer?

Mr. Ali: In addition to all the works we are doing in 1900900, if you go to 2801500 you will see another extensive list of housing development that we are embarking on.

Mr. Scott: Under Coastal Water Supply, line item 2800900, are we there yet Sir? Extension and rehabilitation of coastal water supply systems, profile page 161; it says here that they are procuring and installing water meters. Is the Minister aware that his people have gone into South Ruimveldt and have been rudely entering into people's yards and installing water meters without the knowledge of the people and or consent? And have those meters been tested by the Bureau of Standards in view of the fact that the current meters are not functioning well?

Mr. Chairman: It is a long question.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that every meter that is being installed in accordance with the law, persons are given 24 hours notice and all of the meters are tested and a certificate is issued for each meter.

Mr. Scott: Onto this morning it has not yet happened at South Ruimveldt Gardens but they were being installed there. And there is a history in Georgetown of water meters malfunctioning.

Mr. Ali: I will be very grateful if the Hon. Member can present us with this information. Up until now I have not gotten any report from anyone including the Hon. Member. Thank you.

Mr. Scott: Ask your staff.

Mr. M. Williams: Thank you Mr. Chairman. I will like to go back to line item 1402500 and to ask the Hon. Minister, this is reference 155 in the Profile, whether he would not agree with me that the Ministry of Housing lacks the capacity to supervise the construction of and the maintenance of roads. And would he not also agree that it may be prudent to have the sum of \$337.5 million put under the purview of the Ministry of Works for road constructions?

Mr. Ali: Our capacity to implement and supervise projects in the Ministry of Housing has been greatly enhanced to the extent that the I.D.B. has now entrusted us with the design, implementation and supervision of all the projects funded under their programme which include in excess of \$2 billion in roads. So I think we do have the capacity and we are capable. Thank you.

Mr. M. Williams: Would the Hon. Minister say then that that improved capacity is what is responsible for the deteriorating roads in the new Housing Scheme as compared to roads done by the central Ministry of Works?

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chair, I do not agree.

Mrs. Holder: I would like to refer the Hon. Minister to line item 1900900 and ask him in view of the implications of this money being spent in 2009, would the Minister indicate to this House what he meant when he told the National Assembly “we are ready” on the 11th January?

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, in relation to the question regarding 1900900, I wish to advise that the \$480 million budgeted for in 2010 has not been exhausted or spent in any way. In relation to the other question, we have debated extensively and exhaustively the issue on the supplementary provision and I have nothing to add.

Mr. Chairman: I thought you have said you are ready for housing development.

Mr. Ramjattan: Let me just ask a final question on this. If indeed, Mr. Minister, this \$4 billion was spent in 2009, then on January 11th, 2010 when you said we are ready to spend same, did you already spend same?

Mr. Chairman: He said, “We are ready.” It is a matter of interpretation.

Mr. Ramjattan: Is it not true that the Ministry has already spent same, the \$4 billion?

7.02 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: The Hon. Member said, “We are ready.” He did not say what you said that he said. He said “We are ready.”

Mr. Murray: Project 2801 100 - Georgetown Remedial and Sewage Project, Phase II, Project Profile No. 163: According to this, would the Minister not agree that he is proposing to spend the sum of \$250 million for rehabilitate of the sewer pumping stations in Central Georgetown? If I may make a statement, which is not normally permissible, that is a highly desirable thing to do. [Mr. Nadir: Inaudible]. You better look after labour and stay quiet. My question is could the Minister kindly inform this National Assembly whether this sum of \$250 million earmarked for the rehabilitation is going to completely rehabilitate the entire sewage system? If not, could he say how much more money he will need to finish it and by when, and why not sufficient money to complete it this year, because it is in a very poor state?

Mr. Ali: This allocation would cater for the rehabilitation of twenty-four pumping stations and the installation of twenty-four pumps. This does not cover the entire sewage system. This is within the existing loan. What the Ministry has this year, also, is the Master Plan that will be completed and that would give it a sound understanding of the gap analysis as to what is needed as against where it wants to be.

Mr. Murray: So would this be about fifty per cent? That is why I asked the Minister about how much of what needs to be done will he actually do in 2010? I heard him said about the gap analysis, but what is his contemplation about whether the Ministry would be able to fix this problem completely, if not in 2010, which I understand for purposes of resources it cannot do, is he in a position to give the Assembly any idea, because it is a real problem?

Mr. Ali: I am advised by a technically competent authority that presently this would cater for twenty-five per cent of the work, so that in designing the Master Plan that would enable the Government access to the new loan which would cater for sixty per cent.

Mr. Murray: Yes, but that new loan, is it going to come on stream next year? Is the Government going to be able to get it next year?

Mr. Ali: The Government is presently in discussion about having that loan by next year.

Programme 451 - Housing and Water – \$5,832,020,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 21 Ministry of Agriculture

Current Expenditure

Programme: 211 – Ministry Administration - \$1,178,986,000

Mr. Chairman: Yes, ready? Yes, Hon. Member Mr. Williams, do you want a minute, are you ready?

Mr. M. Williams: Mr. Chairman, thank you. Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees: could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to explain the marked increase in the number of contracted employees and assist the Assembly with information with respect to the offices they hold?

Mr. Persaud: The response is the increase is primarily due to persons who are being employed, given the option of whether they want to go on the regular service or they want to be brought in as a contracted employee. That is why there is that increase.

Mr. M. Williams: It is with respect to the offices.

Mr. Persaud: The offices, sorry, include secretarial staff, cleaners, five engineers, persons who are employed to enhance our capacity especially in drainage and irrigation (D&I) programme - officers, Accounts Clerks, Drivers, Handymen, Clerk-in-Charge, Mechanic, Personnel Clerk - officers representing those categories.

Mr. M. Williams: So I would like to move on to line item 6281 - Security Services, and to ask the Hon. Minister, first of all, which service provider has been retained? Secondly, if he can give the Assembly an idea of the larger locations which are being covered?

Mr. Persaud: The procurement of security services is done through a competitive process and, at this point in time, it has currently been activated, but I can say up to the end of 2009 the service being used was primarily R.K. Security Services. The Ministry is going back out hoping that it can comply with the Procurement Act.

Mr. M. Williams: Could the Hon. Minister give the Assembly some details with respect to line item 6294 - Other? It is unclear as it is placed here.

Mr. Persaud: That line item deals with issues, or it covers expenses such as when there are emergencies, and staffing has to be taken care of and so forth. It is a regular provision that is

made, especially, take for instance, during the El Niño period where the Ministry is required to provide refreshment, and so forth. It comes under that for outside of the routine type of activities that the Ministry may have to undertake.

Mr. M. Williams: My last question on this programme has to do with line item 6321 - Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations. Could the Hon. Minister say which organisations are likely to benefit from this amount and what criteria are used to determine who gets support?

Mr. Persaud: The items are listed on page 389, and they are the Guyana Marketing Corporation - \$62 million, The Guyana School of Agriculture - \$150 million, Guyana Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals - \$400,000, the Hope Coconut Estate - \$3 million, the Mahaica Mahaicony Abary Agricultural Development Authority (M.M.A.-A.D.A.) - \$87 million, National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI) - \$265 million and the National Dairy Development Programme (N.D.D.P.) - \$49.4 million. The full list is provided here.

Programme 211 - Ministry Administration - \$1,178,986,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 212 – Crops and Livestock Support Services - \$1,085,173,000

Mr. M. Williams: With respect to line items 6111 through 6117, could the Hon. Minister advise as to where in this Staffing Details schedule Members can find provision for Extension Officers?

Mr. Persaud: The employees who are covered under line items 6116 and 6117 include extension staffers. In line item 6117, where it is there as temporary employees, there is no temporary employee within this programme as such. But the contracted employees include extension staff. Take for instance the veterinarians and the agronomists who have returned from Cuba, they are under contract and form part of line item 6116.

Mr. M. Williams: With respect to line items 6115-6116, where the Extension Officers are listed, it is public knowledge by now that the Crops and Livestock Extension Services are being moved to NARI. Considering that NARI is a creature of statute, could the Hon. Minister explain to the National Assembly, please, how is it that the funds are going to be moved from the Ministry of Agriculture, Crops and Livestock, to NARI?

Mr. Persaud: The Ministry has done that on previous occasions. I can give an example. There is a category called Extension Agents and it is provided for under this very Programme 212. What happens is that a warrant is prepared, it goes to NARI and then it would be executed. It varies from paying of employees to activities that NARI would conduct on behalf of this programme and likewise, there is that arrangement to facilitate the transfer of money.

Mr. M. Williams: Would it not be better and a bit more transparent if the moneys would have been provided specifically to NARI as opposed to Crops and Livestock Support Services?

Mr. Persaud: The process of the entity absorbing this Department has not been completed. It would be a bit of an untidy and premature arrangement to have sent the money and yet have the institutional changes, because very soon the Ministry intends to bring before the National Assembly a Bill amending the NARI Act, so that it can take care of this expanded mandate. The Ministry wants to do that through revision of the legislation or an amendment of the legislation. Until such time, then the necessary transfers will be effected.

Mr. M. Williams: A follow-up to the same question, could the Hon. Minister say whether in the provisions before the Assembly, with respect to line items 6115-6116, there is provision for the superannuation benefits with respect to the Extension Officers who will be affected?

Mr. Persaud: That is not catered for because at the time of the formulation of the budget the Ministry had not had the opportunity even to quantify that, and certainly when it gets to that stage in terms of the institutional preparation and the rearrangements which are necessary, certainly, the necessary and adequate provisions will be made to take care of those costs.

Mr. Murray: I have a question in respect of line item 6321 - Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisation. Among the organisations listed is the Guyana Marketing Corporation for which a sum of \$62,688,000 is budgeted. It is budgeted under the line item "Subsidies and Contributions". My question to the Ministry is, in respect of that sum, (a) whether he has a deliberate policy of subsidising this Corporation – he can tell us that – that is not an issue, and (b) if he has a direct policy of subsidy to this organisation, could he kindly explain to this National Assembly how it is that he ensures that Members get value for this sum of money that is handed over?

Mr. Persaud: The New Guyana Marketing Corporation, in fact, the Ministry has to even look at the name of the entity, because the New Guyana Marketing Corporation over the last decade has gone through an adjustment to its mandate in terms of functionality. It is no longer involved ..., other than the Guyana Shop which is a semi-display, but an opportunity for consumers to come at one venue to pick up processed agricultural items and sometimes fresh items. It is not an Agency that is involved in the purchase, distribution or sale of commodities. Rather, it is now an entity that is in charged and is given the clear mandate to be a facilitator, a marketing agency, that is brining buyers to sellers, developing market surveys, providing market intelligence and being that entity where persons who want to get into agricultural trade, especially the non-traditional sector, can go there to get the requisite support in terms of packaging facility, in terms of accessing export markets. So it is more of a service-oriented entity - services which are provided free of cost. It is not that this Agency, as some time in the past, would have been engaged in large-scale commercial transaction. Whilst it is referred to here as “Subsidies and Contributions to a Local Organisations”, it is in fact the Government that is financing the services which are made available to farmers and to exporters free of cost.

Mr. Murray: That is a long way of telling me that it is a subsidy and the Government has a policy of subsidising which I have no problem with, except I do not know why the Ministry was so evasive about putting it that way. But be that as it may, my question to the Minister was how does he ensure that one gets value for money, because I take it that he hands this money over to the Corporation. Does he get its accounts? Members have never seen the accounts of the New Marketing Corporation. How does he ensure that we get value? That is the other part of the question.

Mr. Persaud: This Corporation is managed by a Board of Directors, and it is required to provide audited accounts, and they are up-to-date, up to the year 2008. It also prepares annual reports and, that in a way, a summary is captured in the Ministry’s annual report. But certainly, the annual reports of the G.M.C. can be provided to the National Assembly in full, so that Members can see what is it that it is using its resources for. I want to assure the Hon. Member that a lot of emphasis is being placed in ensuring the resources that are provided that these are used to the best value, and that the services that are provided are effective. If one looks in terms of last year alone, and if one can use as the measurement, one will see exports in terms of non-traditional

sector growing as much as thirty per cent. A lot of this is due in fact to the market and trade facilitation services being provided by the New G.M.C.

Mr. Murray: I note and, indeed, welcome the commitment of the Minister to bring the audited accounts of the G.M.C. into the National Assembly. That is very welcome. Could the Minister provide it with a list of countries and the quantities of commodities which have been exported as a direct result of the intervention and services provided by the Guyana Marketing Corporation?

Mr. Persaud: That information is available. In fact, it can be found in summary on the Ministry's website. I can provide that to Mr. Murray tomorrow afternoon when the Assembly meets.

Programme 212 – Crops and Livestock Support Services - \$1,085,173,000 agreed and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 213 – Fisheries - \$86,858,000

Mr. M. Williams: With respect to line item 6116 - Contracted Employees - could the Hon. Minister advise whether in this line item there is provision for a Marine Biologist for the Ministry?

Mr. Persaud: During the course of last year the Ministry was able to engage the services of a biologist... **[Interruption]** – I am coming there – whose final paper was on marine biology. The Ministry is still searching for a fully qualified Marine Biologist. The Ministry is hoping that the staffer certainly will be pursuing training in this regard. I must also admit that it is a scarce skill in Guyana, but the Ministry is hoping that it will be able to attract a Marine Biologist. The Ministry will have to use the skill that it has and hopes that it can get some sort of value and competence to provide this essential service.

Mr. M. Williams: May I follow-up by asking the Hon. Minister, how far and wide has the Ministry advertised for the Marine Biologist?

Mr. Persaud: There was advertisement in the national newspapers, and also the Ministry had indicated to a number of the regional and international organisations that it is in partnership with.

It has passed on this request, but so far it has been unsuccessful, because it seems as if it is not only a shortage in Guyana, but within the Region itself.

Programme 213 – Fisheries – \$86,858,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 214 – Hydrometeorological Services - \$247,760,000

Mr. M. Williams: Line item 6284 – Other - would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to give the Assembly some details with respect to the \$15 million provided for under this line item?

Mr. Persaud: The Ministry has increased the number of weather watch facilities, or if one wants to say weather monitoring stations, across the country, and it uses students, teachers and even farmers, and sometimes other Government employees - some people within the forestry sector. Out of this sum, it pays them a stipend to take care of the telephone costs to send that information on a daily basis, as well as other costs that they may have. The Ministry pays, out of this, internet services, advisories and bulletins that it issues from time to time to farmers. These are covered under line item 6284.

Mr. M. Williams: Line item 6302 - Training (including Scholarships): Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to give the Assembly some information with respect to number of persons he anticipates would benefit from the \$12 million allocated and whether there is any provision there for, maybe, overseas training?

Mr. Persaud: The bulk of this sum is being used to train young Guyanese in Barbados at the Caribbean Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology (C.I.M.H.) and the Government has to provide, annually, close to \$8 million for their upkeep. It is a two-year programme and, in fact, under the new I.K.O. requirements – take for instance for our international airport – for certification of our international airport the Ministry ought to have meteorological staff of a certain calibre and also who have received a certain amount of qualification, and this is where the Government is trying to ramp up. The first four came back last year, and the second batch went in December of last year, because this programme is continuous. So, the \$12 million, the bulk of which is going to support that capacity building and training.

Programme 214 – Hydrometeorological Services – \$247,760,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 211 – Ministry Administration - \$3,335,000

Mr. Murray: Project 1301600: Could the Hon. Minister inform this National Assembly – Sir, I will have at least one or two follow-ups on this one – how is this sum of \$990 million going to be disbursed to the National Drainage and Irrigation Authority? Could he tell the Members the mechanism please, so that we can understand?

Mr. Persaud: The National Drainage and Irrigation Authority (N.D.I.A) is, under the Act, supposed to be a self-accounting agency but the Ministry is still in the process of building capacity. This programme or the financial aspect of the N.D.I.A. is managed from the Central Accounting Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture. The processing of payments would be done in the N.D.I.A., but then it will be sent over to the C.A.U. where payments will be done in accordance with the Ministry's regulations.

Mr. Murray: That is the knob of the problem. Is the Minister not aware that as a body corporate this entity ought to have its own account? This has been something hanging, and the Assembly has been getting this annual ritual of an explanation that it is being set up. Five years have gone! Could the Minister say why it is that he refuses to have this Agency functions in accordance with the law that established it, and is he also aware, that as recent as the last Auditor General's Report, the Auditor General pointed out that organisation is required to maintain its own accounting records? Does he know what was the response? "N.D.I.A. is currently building its capacity." After five years! I put to the Minister, for his consideration, that this is the heavy hand of politics in the National Drainage and Irrigation Authority. Why is he not allowing this Authority to function in accordance with this Act which gave it birth?

Mr. Persaud: First of all I reject, out of hand, the assertion made by the Hon. Member about political interference, or that this is a mechanism being used to impose some sort of political control. I must say that the manuals have been developed, the accounting manuals, and the Ministry has moved a far way in terms of developing the necessary systems so that it can manage the financial elements of the N.D.I.A. As Members would all recognise that the N.D.I.A. would cover and would be responsible for an enormous sum, a large sum, and the Ministry wants to

ensure that it has the necessary safeguards and the necessary systems that are in place, so that once it starts it would not falter in terms of adhering to the regulations and to the laws.

Mr. Murray: Is the Hon. Minister aware that under the Financial Management and Accountability Act, in Section 80, those statutory bodies such as the National Drainage and Irrigation Authority are in law required to submit annual reports within four months after the close of the financial year? This Minister, by his presence in the N.D.I.A., is preventing the transparency that should accompany these large expenditures undertaken by this Authority from occurring. I want to know if he is aware that his failure to have this Authority functions independently relates in a failure of financial statements from that Authority being prepared in accordance with the law and therefore being subject to the scrutiny of the National Assembly, which the law permits.

Mr. Persaud: I disagree with the statement made by the Hon. Member, but just to assure him that the N.D.I.A. - the Authority - is governed by a Board of Directors and it is made up of the regional chairpersons - Regions 2, 3, 4, 6, 10, and also a range of other competent officials from various agencies and farmers groups, and they are in charge in terms of management, and the overview of the N.D.I.A. I also want to assure the Hon. Member that aggressive steps are being taken - because I know the matter was raised at the Public Accounts Committee, I know it has been raised with the Auditor General - to give the N.D.I.A. the capacity so that it can truly become self-accounting and be in full compliance with all of the laws and the procedures that have been outlined for entities such as this.

7.32 p.m.

Mr. Murray: Sir, I want to ask the Hon. Minister, very specifically, whether he intends in this year 2010 to break the cycle of illegality which exists at the current moment in respect to this Authority, and to allow it to function independently as an accounting unit in accordance with the law. Will he undertake to do so in the year 2010?

Mr. Persaud: I am not sure what illegality the Hon. Member is referring to, but I will advise him that the manuals and systems which have been developed are currently engaging the attention of a Cabinet Sub-Committee on finance. That is where the matter is at this point in time.

Mr. Murray: Since the Minister does not know of the illegality to which I am referring, I would like, for the benefit of this National Assembly, to read the particular section of the Act. It says,

“A statutory body...”

of which the National Drainage and Irrigation Authority is one...

“... shall as soon as is practicable and in all events not later than four months after the end of the fiscal year, established for that statutory body, submit an annual report to the concerned Minister.”

I am saying that is the law which is currently being broken because there is an Authority called the National Drainage and Irrigation Authority which is not in compliance with this Act.

Mr. Persaud: I would like to advise the Hon. Member that annual reports are being provided by the National Drainage and Irrigation Authority to the Office of the Minister. Again, if one looks in terms of the annual report of the Ministry of Agriculture one will see some reference to the activities of the N.D.I.A. there.

Mr. Murray: Sir, I am trying to save the Minister by not going into the details of this matter. But can I go on to tell him what is required to satisfy what I just read? It says this,

“The format for the Annual report shall be as determined, in consultation with the Minister... shall include the following: a statement of revenue of expenditure for the statutory body for the fiscal or calendar year; a report prepared by the Auditor General on the annual financial statements of the statutory body.”

So for the Minister to tell me that he receives information and annual reports, that does not comply with the law, and that is what I want to point out to the Minister. He is not in compliance with the law.

Mr. Persaud: With all due respect, I think the Hon. Member certainly is not fully aware of the facts. [Mr. Murray: I am aware of the law. I might not know the facts.] At some point in time I would provide him with a copy of those reports and he would see that all reports that are prepared and supplied by Government and semi-autonomous agencies follow a certain

format. What is stated there, in the law, is a given format which is required by any agency. The N.D.I.A is one of many others, and it would be following that structure.

Mr. Murray: If it would be following that structure, could the Minister tell me whether a report has been prepared by the Auditor General on the annual financial statements of this statutory body, and whether within two months of the receipt of the report, such a report has been presented to the National Assembly? That is what is required. Has that been going on?

Mr. Persaud: The Auditor General's Department is auditing the activities of the N.D.I.A. But as I explained that the financial aspect of the N.D.I.A is managed by the Central Accounting Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture. When the Auditor General Department audits the Ministry of Agriculture, it is also auditing the financial operations of the N.D.I.A as this element is managed by the C.A.U. I said that from the beginning.

Mr. Carberry: I do not want to deal with the illegalities we just had described. I want to deal with some of the functional responsibilities. I am looking at the project 1301600 - Ministry Administration, I wish to ask whether or not there is any provision in here for the dredging of the Mahaica River, and the clearing of the Maduni and Lama sluices.

Mr. Persaud: The Mahaica, Mahaicony and the Abary Rivers fall within the ambit of the Mahaica Mahaicony Abary/Agricultural Development Agency (M.M.A/A.D.A.). Under this particular line item there would not be any provision, although from time to time the N.D.I.A would support the M.M.A/A.D.A in carrying out its work within that geographical area. In terms of resources for that type of activity it would not be found on this particular line item.

Mr. Carberry: Mr. Chairman, given that the Minister has said that, I wish to crave your indulgence to go to project 1300600, Civil Works – M.M.A., with Project Profile 71, which I believe is the appropriate line item and project for that. I see no provision here for what I have asked about. Could the Minister tell the Assembly whether or not there is any intention to dredge the Mahaica River as well as to clear the channels to the Maduni, Lama, Kunia and Kofi Canals, and the channel to the Land of Canaan sluice?

Mr. Persaud: The dredging of the Mahaica, Mahaicony, Abary Rivers, in fact, the Ministry has started those. The Abary was completed last year. Work has started at Mahaicony, and that

would be part of the programme this year to undertake some amount of dredging. I must also point out that in Guyana there is not the suitable piece of equipment. What is there is a fabricated type of dredge, a pontoon with two excavators, which is used to clear the outfalls. It has deployed that from time to time, to those three areas.

Regarding the East Demerara Water Conservancy (E.D.W.C.), that falls within the E.D.W.C programme, and I must say provision is made as part of the maintenance of the E.D.W.C. for the clearing of waterways including those that the Hon. Member would have alluded to.

Mr. Carberry: I asked whether there was any specific provision in the estimates to do that. I notice the Minister mentioned the Mahaicony River; I talked about the Mahaica River. My understanding is that the blockage of the Mahaica River, including the blockage at its mouth, and the siltation of the river, all the way up to Belmont, are the reasons for the great flooding in the Mahaica area.

Mr. Persaud: Perhaps the Hon. Member, if he visits now, would say that because of the El Niño condition, in fact, that has helped in a way in keeping the salt water from going upriver and contaminating the fresh water supply. I must also say that when the Venezuelan Government conducted the hydrographic survey in 2006, it was very cautious in its recommendations as to how much dredging is done because of the flow-back it may have, especially during the high tide/spring tide period, given the upper reaches of those rivers. So there is an element of caution as to the type of dredging which is being done at the Mahaica, Mahaicony and Abary Rivers.

Mr. Carberry: I believe that the Minister would not believe I know that he has not given the Assembly a proper answer, but let me for the moment rest this matter. Let me go to project 1301700 - Drainage and Irrigation, Project Profile 65. Could the Minister say how much of this money is allocated for the building of the Dochfour/Hope high level canal?

Mr. Persaud: Under this project \$800 million of this sum would be used or has been allocated to the Hope/Dochfour, which is named the Northern Relief of the E.D.W.C.

Mr. Carberry: I think the Minister is aware of the studies that have shown, including the recommendations of his own consultant, that instead of building this canal the Ministry should create a relief canal at Flagstaff which could be draining into the Mahaica River and would be

cheaper to construct. I wonder whether the Minister is aware that the building of this canal is going to pose a tremendous danger to the communities in that area if there is any breach, and the engineers have pointed this out, including an assessment done by Guyana Association of Professional Engineers (GAPE). My understanding is that GAPE assessment pointed out that the option of the Flagstaff relief canal was the preferred option.

Mr. Persaud: I must object to this constant misrepresentation of what the consultant said, and even what GAPE said. First of all GAPE queried whether or not investigative work was done to look at the Flagstaff relief. It asked a question. It was not a recommendation. It suggested, perhaps in that question, that that too should have been provided to it. That is the first part.

The consultants too looked at that relief and if we are talking about population density, endangering and affecting more people, were we to use that relief which goes through Shanks to the populated area there are a greater number of people who will have to be removed, dislocated – to use the Hon. Member’s word - might be endangered, as a result of this canal. That is not a technical argument but primarily a social argument. That option was ruled out. Also, if the Ministry were to pursue that option it would be dumping more water from the conservancy into the Mahaica River. The Hon. Member just pointed out that already the Mahaica River has problems to discharge itself. The Ministry would be compounding the situation that it started to solve, because one of the objectives of creating this Northern Relief is to avoid the use of the Lama and the Maduni channels where the people in Mahaica and Mahaicony areas would be flooded. Here it is now, by this recommendation, it is to throw more water into the Mahaica River. But what else will happen? I want to refute any notion or suggestion that the consultants recommended that. The consultants never recommended that. The Ministry asked them to pursue that - to do a study. In fact there were works which were done earlier. There were also works done earlier after the 2005 flood when the consultants came in and they look at using between Ann’s Grove at one point and that same other relief, and suggested why not explore those two areas. Because, one, of the technical feasibility, but more so, out of the Government’s concerns for the persons who would have to be dislocated if it takes Ann’s Grove option. It would have to move close to two hundred or three hundred homes, right away. That is a densely populated area. In addition to the technical specifications on those social grounds those two options were ruled

out. That is when the option of using the Hope/Dochfour route came in, and based on that the technical work started.

Regarding the dam: The dam that is proposed in the design is of a making, and also composition which cannot be found anywhere. It is done so because a lot of work... in fact the Ministry had to bring technicians out of Suriname with equipment to do the necessary soil testing to look at the type of structure and dam integrity design that are needed to avoid failure. The design that the technicians have provided is relatively new, and it has safety foremost in terms of its objective.

Mr. Chairman: I am not going to allow further debate on this relief, Hon. Members.

Mr. Carberry: Mr. Chairman, I have been asking a question and have not gotten an answer. But I have also been accused of misrepresentation and I think I have the right to answer. You allowed the Minister to answer.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, allow me please. We had this debate ventilated fully in the general debate on the budget. We have had this debate on several occasions, in relation to other issues, right here in the National Assembly. I have no idea how long Hon. Members want to prolong this matter in the National Assembly. Everybody here has heard this debate many times already.

Mr. Carberry: Mr. Chairman, I do not know how many people have heard the debate.

Mr. Chairman: I have sat here and heard it on several occasions.

Mr. Carberry: I hope they have heard it. I am answering the Minister's accusation of misrepresentation. I am quoting from the consultant's report.

“The client instructed the consultant to continue the design of the relief channel based upon the deep foreshore option...”

Which is the one the Minister is talking about.

“...and maintaining the width of the relief. Concerns were however expressed on excavating an outfall channel of 2.5 kilometres in length and maintaining it at an invert of 14 gd.”

The other part is that the report also says:

“A much shorter relief channel route is possible between Flagstaff and the Mahaica River, and it is possible that drainage in the Mahaica could be improved in the lower return period events. The Mahaica option would also need maintenance but that requirement may not be any greater than the maintenance required for the Hope/Dochfour option. Capital cost of the Flagstaff/Mahaica relief route will be significantly lower than that of ...”

Mr. Chairman, the option that the Minister is talking about would cost this nation more than \$4 billion, and will not solve the problem it is supposed to solve.

Mr. Chairman: That is the end; nothing further. Sorry Minister. Next question please.

Mr. Murray: My question does not have to do with anything so lofty. My question relates to project 1301800 - Drainage and Irrigation Support Project, for which a sum of \$580 million has been identified. The relevant Project Profile is at number 66. The description of the project is “rehabilitation and maintenance of community drains, culverts and parapets in selected areas in Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10.” My question to the Minister is since these are community drains involving parapets, etc. - in fact the executing agencies for this \$580 million budgeted may not more appropriately be the relevant Regions themselves rather than the Ministry of Agriculture’s undertaking - could he say why that is not a feasible option?

Mr. Persaud: This programme has been in effect for the last three years. It was managed formerly by the Ministry of Finance, and up to the end of February by the Ministry of Housing and Water. It is a project that is intended to assist and augment the local efforts of the National Democratic Councils (N.D.C.s), and even the Town Councils in terms of enhancing their drainage. The reason why it is coming now to the Ministry of Agriculture is that it wants to look at synergy, to ensure, too, that the works which are being done at the local level are in line with technical requirements. This is intended to augment the other efforts.

I must also point out that over two thousand persons are employed as a result of this project across the country. They are given the opportunity to contribute to community enhancement and also the opportunity to enhance their own economic well-being.

Mr. Murray: Would the Hon. Minister agree that if we are to give local government and local democracy true meaning and effect that when there are projects like this affecting communities that the proper place for the execution of these projects are the communities themselves through their Neighbourhood Democratic Councils or their Regional Democratic Councils, or their Village Councils, where those exist?

Mr. Persaud: I wish to say that these are individuals who come from those communities. These are not contractors who carry out this work. They are ordinary men and women from the respective areas. In fact, one of the conditions of employment is that they must live within the particular area. So they are not... I do not want the impression to be given that this is money being awarded for contractors. These are opportunities for people who live there and who want to make a contribution to the development of their communities.

Mr. Murray: I do not have any quarrel with that. I did not say the people must not come from the communities to which they belong. I am asking whether the interest of local democracy being given effect would not be better served by devolving this responsibility for the execution of the projects at the level of the Neighbourhood Democratic Council and the Regional Democratic Council; whether that is not more in keeping with the devolutionary type of local government one is talking about.

Mr. Persaud: I do not see this as any harming or interfering with local democracy. It will enhance the local democratic organs to carry out its job and to fulfil services to the people.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members I want to move on. We have been stuck at Programme 211 for the past 45 minutes. We need to move on now. I will permit you one question on Programme 211 and then I will move on.

Mr. M. Williams: Project 2604800 - Bio-Energy Opportunities, Project Profile 69: Could the Hon. Minister say whether it is true that NARI is currently conducting studies in the area of bio-

energy? If that is so, could the Hon. Minister say why there is a separate provision of \$91.5 million to do the same thing?

Mr. Persaud: About two years ago NARI, because it is the lead agriculture research entity, had done some research activities regarding bio-fuel opportunities in Guyana. That was done at the technical level. This particular project is an I.D.B.-funded project and is to develop the capacity in Guyana for it to develop a bio-fuel sector. This project is intended to move NARI's research or the technical work that NARI has done, give the State a relevant agency - the counterpart agency is Institution of Applied Science and Technology (I.A.S.T.) - some sort of capacity. In fact, if one looks at the draft agro-energy policy one will see there is provision for an Agro-energy Board, and as part of this project is to create that Board with the necessary structure and capacity so it can roll out at some time a bio-energy sector. Yes, NARI has done the technical work, but it has to move that work from the lab to commercial, or develop some structure from which it can be commercially utilised.

Programme 211 – Ministry Administration – \$3,335,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 212 – Crops and Livestock Support Services - \$2,172,700,000

Mr. M. Williams: With respect to project 1209700 - Agriculture Export Diversification Project - it provides on the Project Profile at Ref. 70 for the “Strengthening of NARI and NDDP.” Could the Hon. Minister say why, again, is this particular provision not made directly to the National Agriculture Research Institute?

Mr. Persaud: This is an I.D.B.-funded project. It is the Agriculture Export and Diversification Project. Within the project there is provision for building of capacity. Take for instance, at NARI there will be the construction of the germ plasm facility, also enhancing the technical capacity to carry out its work in crops. In terms of the N.D.D.P, which will soon become the livestock development authority, it is the construction of the veterinary lab. So what this project is doing is to provide the resources and the necessary support for the institutions which we already have. It is giving capital and other forms of support so that these institutions can be in a position to support a thriving agriculture export sector.

Programme 212 – Crops and Livestock Support Services - \$2,172,700,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 213- Fisheries - \$10,000,000

Programme 213 Fisheries - \$10,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Programme: 214 – Hydrometeorological Services – \$63,000,000

Programme 214 – Hydrometeorological Services – \$63,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 48 Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security

Current Expenditure

Programme: 481 – Ministry Administration - \$153,568,000

Mr. B. Williams: Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister indicate what categories of workers are under this line item?

Ms. Manickchand: There are a Permanent Secretary, Administrative Assistant of the Trafficking in Persons Unit, a Cleaner, Office Assistant, Administrative Assistant of the National Commission on the Rights of the Child (N.C.R.C), Administrative Assistant of the Difficult Circumstances Unit, Clerk II General, Accounts Clerk II, Driver/Mechanic, six Vehicle Drivers, Coordinator of the (N.C.R.C), Technical Officer of TIP, Personnel Assistants to two Ministers, Protocol Officers to two Ministers, Public Relations Officer. These would be the categories.

Mr. B. Williams: Are these categories, Hon. Minister, through you, Mr. Chairman, replicated in the traditional Public Service?

Ms. Manickchand: As was explained earlier, persons are given the option of being employed as a contracted worker or being employed in the Public Service. These persons who are employed by contract are on the traditional Public Service establishment.

Programme 481 – Ministry Administration – \$153,568,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 482 – Social Services – \$4,840,589,000

Ms. Sampson: Mr. Chairman, I would be grateful if the Hon. Minister refers to line item 6116 – Contracted Employee, and I note that there has been a great increase under Staffing Details from sixty-nine to hundred and six, thirty-seven more, and because of that, the Ministry is spending \$40 million more. Can the Hon. Minister tell me which categories are involved here?

8.02 p.m.

Ms. Manickchand: The Ministry has expanded its child protection services. Over the last year it launched and established a Childcare and Protection Agency which has employees under it. Ministry also, in keeping with the published documents, the minimum standard in care and regulations for homes, has employed in all the children's homes new officers. If the Hon. Member is talking about categories, those would add to what appears to be an increase in number. There are Social Services Assistants - eleven, it appears; a Legal Officer, House Services Supervisor, Deputy Director of Children's Services, Director of Children's Services, Drivers - all staff for the new Childcare and Protection Agency.

Ms. Sampson: Line item 6242 - Maintenance of Buildings, \$21 million: Could the Minister say which building this refers to?

Ms. Manickchand: In keeping with Government's policy to protect vulnerable groups, the Hon. Member will be aware that there are several different buildings housing some of those vulnerable people. For the Palms, the Ministry has allocated \$10 million, and for the Guyana Women's Leadership Institute (G.W.L.I), which trains mostly single parents and vulnerable women who have become vulnerable for different reasons, \$4 million, and the remainder to the Night Shelter and the New Amsterdam office.

Ms. Sampson: 6284 – Other: I noticed there has been a slight increase. Could the Minister indicate what this refers to?

Ms. Manickchand: This is what the Ministry would pay to the post office. Every voucher that the post office cashes it gets paid - \$40 per voucher. There are 44,000 persons now receiving old-age pensions and about 15,000 who are receiving public assistance. Both have been

increased over a couple of years, particularly over the last year. So that reflects the increase there.

Ms. Sampson: On 6294, that “Other”, what does that one refer to?

Ms. Manickchand: There is at the Palms in excess of 230 persons every day, and a night shelter which provides a home for people who would have otherwise been without a home, in excess of 180 persons every night. So, the Ministry has to take care of them with barbering and other services which would make those persons comfortable as though they were living in their own home. It is under this line-item that the Ministry does that. Stipends for the Board member for the Local Board of Guardians are paid through this line-item.

Ms. Sampson: During the budget debate the Hon. Ministers spoke of women's development taking off this year - being on the front burner. I notice the Ministry has \$14 million allocated for training and scholarships. Could the Hon. Minister indicate who would benefit from this training?

Ms. Manickchand: Most of this is allocated to Guyana Women's Leadership Institute (G.W.L.I.) which is where the Ministry trains women to become self-sufficient so that they can better take care of themselves and the children, and other dependants that they have depending on them.

Ms. Sampson: Line item 6321 - Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Could the Hon. Minister indicate to me whether the subsidy of \$1 million allocated for the National Commission on Women indicates that this group or organisation will be revamped?

Ms. Manickchand: The National Assembly has gone through, particularly the Committee of Appointments, on grave efforts, to nominate persons to the Commission for Children and the Commission for Women which will both be constitutional commissions. I would think that those would be the bodies that would address issues relating to those two particular groups, so that any other existing body, which existed prior to the birth of those two, would most likely be best subsumed under those two constitutional bodies which have been established by this National Assembly.

Ms. Sampson: The reason I asked is because I know that National Commission of Women has not really done any work for the last year, and I just wondered why this sum was allocated for it. I move on. I notice there is, under that same subsidy organisation, Drop-in Centre - Sacred Heart Primary School. What is the correct name of this, or where exactly is this Drop-in Centre located? I think recently there was a fire somewhere at Mildred Mansfield Youth Club. Where exactly is this Drop-in Centre?

Ms. Manickchand: This is a misnomer. The Drop-in Centre started under the guidance of the then Minister of Human Services, Mrs. Indra Chandarpal. It started out as a service, sometime in 1993, which allowed children from the street to go in and get a hot meal. That has since evolved into a full fledged home. Members will probably not see this money reflecting in next year's budget because it will be subsumed under the newly established Childcare and Protection Agency.

Ms. Sampson: Mdm. Minister, through you, Mr. Chairman, I was not really referring to the amount, I just wanted to know the correct name. I know Sacred Heart Primary School does not exist anymore. I had wanted to know exactly where this is.

Ms. Manickchand: It is still called the Drop-in Centre, but as I said it is now a misnomer, so the Ministry will have to change that. It is located in Hadfield Street. This is the Home which just had the fire a few weeks ago. The Ministry has since placed those children somewhere else. It is in the process of repairing the damage that was done.

Programme 482 - Social Services - \$4,840,589,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 483 – Labour Administration - \$267,849,000

Mr. B. Williams: Line-item 6321 - Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, the details at page 391, Labour Administration, Board of Industrial Training, the allotment has been increased from \$85 million, by \$35 million, to \$120 million. Could the Hon. Minister tell this Hon. House what items would this money be expended on?

Mr. Nadir: These moneys will go towards staffing - \$19.5 million dollars. The training programme for the National Training Project for Youth Empowerment will get close to \$75

million dollars. The single parents training will also be in receipt of some ... I do not have the exact amount; but if one adds up the staff, all the field materials, and janitorial supplies - I have all the lists here - it is going to come up to \$119.837 million.

Mr. B. Williams: Is the Hon. Minister saying that the training staff is separate and distinct for both training programmes? Or would he have one training staff to execute both programmes?

Mr. Nadir: The \$19.5 million covers the salaries for the administration of the Board of Industrial Training. For the training staff under single parents training, and also the National Training Project for Youth Empowerment, the Ministry has to go out to hire. It has to outsource. These are particular cost directly to those programmes. So those who the Ministry hired with the skills to impart this knowledge on our young people and our single parents are paid for directly from the programme. But the \$19.5 million and close to \$100 million are spent on training. That \$19 million covers basically all of the staff of the Board of Industrial Training and all of the materials, the maintenance of the office equipment, and so forth.

Mr. B. Williams: Line-item 6322 - Subsidies and Contributions to International Organisations, the details are on page 395, the International Labour Organization (I.L.O). No contribution was paid - that is a contribution of over \$2 million - in 2008, neither was any paid in 2009. Is that directly related to the rejection of our Government being seated at the I.L.O. annual conference because of the non-inclusion of a member of the Guyana Trade Union Council?

Mr. Nadir: Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Member continues to misrepresent Guyana's impeccable standing at the International Labour Organization. Guyana has never been refused to be seated and it has never been thrown out of the I.L.O. In fact, its annual contributions to the I.L.O. had been re-assessed and it is paying a lot of money, prior, that had built up credits with the I.L.O. That is, maybe, why it is on such good standing. Guyana had enough credits so that it was able to satisfy all of its contributions up to date, up to the end of 2009. What we see here is now going to be contributions to the I.L.O for 2010.

Mr. B. Williams: In 2008 the same sum was paid as in 2009, which was proposed. The sum that is proposed now for 2010 is the same sum that was paid in 2008. So I do not know what short payment and what benefits are being gained. My question to the Hon. Minister is, after two years

of non-payment, the fact that he is now paying in 2010, is it that he is optimistic that Guyana will be seated at this year's I.L.O. conference?

Mr. Nadir: I was not here but I heard the definition of a Georgetown-based lawyer, and perhaps that is his logic. Guyana has never been refused to be seated. Guyana has a policy of going to the I.L.O. every two years. There was another word used, I do not want to use it, it ends with 'ro'. Guyana has never been refused to be seated. It chooses to go every two years. There was one year that it did not send a full delegation. It sat there with full accreditation in 2008. This is the year Guyana is supposed to go with its full delegation and it intends to make those submissions. Never have Guyana has been refused to be seated. It invoices from the I.L.O. can substantiate what the Government has said. It is going to provide them to the Hon. Member Mr. Williams. But I know he would stand up here because he verily believes that, and he is totally wrong in this case.

Mr. B. Williams: Could I ask the Hon. Minister of Labour whether his delegation for this year's I.L.O conference, for which this money has been budgeted, would include a representative of the Guyana Trade Union Congress.

Mr. Nadir: This particular line item deals with Guyana's contributions to the I.L.O. The I.L.O. says its delegation should consist of:

- A representative from the worker's organisation.
- A representative from the employer's organisation.

And the Government gets to nominate two members of that delegation.

It does not say that Guyana must bring the Private Sector Commission or it must bring the Guyana Labour Union. The I.L.O. formulation says the most representative organisations of workers and employers. Shall Guyana go, it intends to so constitute its delegation.

Programme 483 – Labour Administration - \$267,849,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 481 – Ministry Administration - \$27, 300,000

Programme 481 – Ministry Administration - \$27,300,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 482 – Social Services - \$344,500,000

Programme 482 – Social Services - \$344,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 483 – Labour Administration - \$14,400,000

Programme 483 – Labour Administration - \$14,400,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Assembly resumed

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members that concludes our business for today. I would like to thank you for your cooperation for today's debate. I look forward to having you tomorrow again when we continue and to which day this National Assembly is adjourned.

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

Adjourned accordingly at 8.19 p.m.