



OFFICIAL REPORT

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION (2020-2021) OF THE TWELFTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA HELD IN THE DOME OF THE ARTHUR CHUNG CONFERENCE CENTRE, LILIENDAAL, GREATER GEORGETOWN

25TH Sitting

Tuesday, 2ND March, 2021

**PARLIAMENT OFFICE
HANSARD DIVISION**

The Assembly convened at 10.09 a.m.

Prayers

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (71)

Speaker (1)

*Hon. Manzoor Nadir, M.P.,
Speaker of the National Assembly,
Parliament Office,
Public Buildings,
Brickdam,
Georgetown.

MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT (38)

(i) MEMBERS OF THE PEOPLE’S PROGRESSIVE PARTY/CIVIC (PPP/C) (38)

Prime Minister (1)

+ Hon. Brigadier (Ret’d) Mark Anthony Phillips, M.S.S., M.P.,
Prime Minister,
Prime Minister’s Office,
Colgrain House,
205 Camp Street,
Georgetown.

Vice-President (1)

+ Hon. Bharrat Jagdeo, M.P.,
Vice-President,
Office of the President,
New Garden Street,
Georgetown.

[Absent]

+ Cabinet Member

* Non-Elected Speaker

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs (1)

+ Hon. Mohabir Anil Nandlall, M.P.,
Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs,
Ministry of Legal Affairs,
Carmichael Street,
Georgetown.

Senior Ministers (17)

+ Hon. Gail Teixeira, M.P.,
(Region No. 7 – Cuyuni/Mazaruni),
Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance,
Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance.
Government Chief Whip,
Office of the Presidency,
New Garden Street,
Georgetown.
+ Hon. Hugh H. Todd, M.P.,
(Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica),
Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Lot 254 South Road,
Georgetown.

+*Hon. Dr. Ashni K. Singh, M.P.,
Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance
Ministry of Finance,
Main & Urquhart Streets,
Georgetown.
+ Hon. Bishop Juan A. Edghill, M.S., J.P., M.P.,
Minister of Public Works,
Ministry of Public Works,
Wight’s Lane,
Kingston,
Georgetown.

+ Hon. Dr. Frank C. S. Anthony, M.P.,
Minister of Health,
Ministry of Health,
Brickdam,
Georgetown.

+ **Cabinet Member**

* **Non-Elected Minister**

+ Hon. Priya D. Manickchand, M.P.,
(Region No. 3 – Essequibo Islands/West Demerara),
Minister of Education,
Ministry of Education,
Lot 26 Brickdam,
Georgetown.

+ *Hon. Brindley H.R. Benn, M.P.,
Minister of Home Affairs,
Ministry of Home Affairs,
Brickdam,
Georgetown.

+ Hon. Zulfikar Mustapha, M.P.,
Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne),
Minister of Agriculture,
Ministry of Agriculture,
Regent and Vlissengen Road,
Bourda, Georgetown.

+ Hon. Pauline R.A. Campbell-Sukhai, M.P.,
Minister of Amerindian Affairs,
Ministry of Amerindian Affairs,
Lot 251-252 Thomas & Quamina Streets,
South Cummingsburg,
Georgetown.

+ Hon. Joseph L.F. Hamilton, M.P.,
Minister of Labour,
Ministry of Labour,
Brickdam,
Georgetown.

+ **Cabinet Member**

* **Non-Elected Minister**

+ Hon. Vickram Outar Bharrat, M.P.,
Minister of Natural Resources,
Ministry of Natural Resources,
Lot 96 Duke Street,
Kingston,
Georgetown.

+*Hon. Oneidge Walrond, M.P.,
Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce,
Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce,
Lot 229 South Road,
Bourda, Georgetown.

+ Hon. Nigel D. Dharamlall, M.P.,
(Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supenaam),
Minister of Local Government and Regional Development,
Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development,
DeWinkle Building,
Fort Street,
Kingston,
Georgetown.

+ Hon. Collin D. Croal, M.P.,
(Region No. 1 – BarimaWaini),
Minister of Housing and Water,
Ministry of Housing and Water,
Brickdam,
Georgetown.

+ Hon. Vindhya V. H. Persaud, M.S., M.P.,
(Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica),
Minister of Human Services and Social Security,
Ministry of Human Services and Social Security,
Lot 357 East and Lamaha Streets
Georgetown.

+ Hon. Charles S. Ramson, M.P.,
Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports,
Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports,
Main Street,
Georgetown.

+ Hon. Sonia Savitri Parag, M.P.,
Minister of the Public Service,
Ministry of the Public Service,
164 Waterloo Street,
North Cummingsburg,
Georgetown.

+ **Cabinet Member**

* **Non-Elected Minister**

Junior Ministers (4)

Hon. Warren Kwame E. McCoy, M.P.,
Minister within the Office of the Prime Minister,
Office of the Prime Minister,
c/o Colgrain House,
205 Camp Street,
Georgetown.

Hon. Deodat Indar, M.P.,
Minister within the Ministry of Public Works,
Ministry of Public Works,
Wight’s Lane,
Kingston,
Georgetown.

Hon. Anand Persaud, M.P.,
Minister within the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development,
Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development,
Fort Street,
Kingston,
Georgetown.

Hon. Susan M. Rodrigues, M.P.,
(Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica),
Minister within the Ministry of Housing and Water,
Ministry of Housing and Water,
Lot 41 Brickdam & United Place,
Stabroek,
Georgetown.

Other Members (14)

Mr. Dharamkumar Seeraj, M.P.,
Lot 71 BB Eccles,
East Bank Demerara.
Mr. Alister S. Charlie, M.P.,
(Region No. 9 – Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo),
148 Lethem,
Central Rupununi,
c/o Freedom House,
41 Robb Street,
Georgetown.

Dr. Vishwa D.B. Mahadeo, M.P.,
Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne),
Lot 4 Public Road,
No. 66 Village,
Corentyne,
Berbice.

Mr. Sanjeev J. Datadin, M.P.,
Lot 60 Section ‘K’,
John Street,
Campbellville,
Georgetown.

Mr. Seepaul Narine, M.P.,
Lot 321 BB Seventh Street,
Eccles,
East Bank Demerara.
Mrs. Yvonne Pearson-Fredericks, M.P.,
Mainstay Lake/Whyaka Village,
Mainstay Lake, Essequibo Coast,
c/o Freedom House,
41 Robb Street,
Georgetown.
Dr. Bheri S. Ramsaran, M.P.,
Lot 340 East Street,
South Cummingsburg,
c/o Freedom House,
41 Robb Street,
Georgetown.
Dr. Jennifer R.A. Westford, M.P.,
55 AA Victoria Avenue,
Eccles,
East Bank Demerara.
Mr. Faizal M. Jaffarally, M.P.,
(Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice),
Lot 16-30 New Street,
New Amsterdam.
c/o Freedom House,
Robb Street,
Georgetown.
Dr. Tandika S. Smith, M.P.,
(Region No. 3 - Essequibo Islands/West Demerara),
Lot 290 Area ‘J’,
Tuschen, North,
East Bank Essequibo.
Mr. Lee G.H. Williams, M.P.,
Paruima Upper Mazaruni,
c/o Freedom House,
Robb Street,
Georgetown.
*Ms. Sarah Browne, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Amerindian Affairs,
Lot 251-252 Thomas & Quamina Streets,
South Cummingsburg,
Georgetown.
*Mr. Vikash Ramkissoon, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Agriculture,
Regent and Vlissengen Road,
Bourda, Georgetown.
Ms. Bhagmattie Veerasammy, M.P.,
Lot 32 Crown Dam,
Industry,
East Coast Demerara.

MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION (32)
(i) A Partnership For National Unity/Alliance For Change (APNU/AFC) (31)

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Joseph F. Harmon, M.S.M., M.P.,
Leader of the Opposition,
Lot 99 Mazaruni Street,
Guyhoc Park,
Georgetown.

Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan, M.P.,
Lot 10 Delph Street,
Campbelville,
Georgetown.

Mr. Roysdale A. Forde, M.P.,
Lot 410 Caneview Avenue,
South Ruimveldt,
Georgetown. [Absent]

Mr. Raphael G.C. Trotman, M.P.,
Lot 3202 Pricese 3,
Providence,
East Bank Demerara. [Virtual Participation]

Ms. Dawn Hastings-Williams, M.P.,
Lot 933 Block 1,
Eccles,
East Bank Demerara.

Dr. Nicolette O. Henry, M.P.,
Lot 2227 Ozama Street, North Ruimveldt,
Georgetown.

Dr. Karen R.V. Cummings, M.P.,
Lot 2 Belfield Housing Scheme,
East Coast Demerara.

Ms. Tabitha J. Sarabo-Halley, M.P.,
Lot 3382 Caneview Avenue,
South Ruimveldt Park,
Georgetown.

Ms. Geeta Chandan-Edmond, M.P.,
Lot 48 Atlantic Ville,
Georgetown.

Mr. Christopher A. Jones, M.P.,
Opposition Chief Whip,
Lot 609 Conciliation Street,
Tucville,
Georgetown.

Ms. Annette N. Ferguson, M.P.,
Lot 842 Eccles,
East Bank Demerara. [Absent]

Mr. David A. Patterson, M.P.,
Lot 151 Durbana Square,
Lamaha Gardens,
Georgetown.
Ms. Coretta A. McDonald, M.P.,
Lot 202 N, Fourth Street,
Alexander Village,
Georgetown.
Ms. Catherine A. Hughes, M.P.,
(Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica),
Lot 13 A, New Providence,
East Bank Demerara.
Mr. Haimraj B. Rajkumar, M.P.,
Lot 18 Public Road,
Johanna Cecilia,
(Region # 2 Essequibo Coast).
Ms. Amanza O.R. Walton-Desir, M.P.,
Lot 1285 EE Eccles Sugarcane Field,
East Bank Demerara.
Ms. Natasha Singh-Lewis, M.P.,
Lot 1110 Plot ‘B’,
Herstelling,
East Bank Demerara.
Mr. Sherod A. Duncan, M.P.,
Lot 590 Good Hope,
East Coast Demerara.
Ms. Juretha V. Fernandes, M.P.,
Lot 1282 Block EE,
Eccles,
East Bank Demerara.
Mr. Vincent P. Henry, M.P.,
(Region No. 9 – Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo),
Shulidnab Village,
South Central,
Rupununi.
(Culvert City Lethem)
Mr. Ronald Cox, M.P.,
(Region No. 1 – Barima Waini),
Mabaruma Compound.

[Virtual Participation]

Mr. Shurwayne F.K. Holder, M.P.,
*(Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supenaam),
Lot 55 Henrietta,
Essequibo Coast.*

Mr. Ganesh A. Mahipaul, M.P.,
*Lot 14 Plantain Walk,
West Bank Demerara.*

Ms. Nima N. Flue-Bess, M.P.,
*(Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica),
Lot 88 Nelson Street,
Mocha Village,
East Bank Demerara.*

Ms. Maureen A. Philadelphia, M.P.,
*(Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica),
Lot 17 Block 1, Section F,
Plantation Belfield,
East Coast Demerara.*

Mr. Deonarine Ramsaroop, M.P.,
*(Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica),
Lot 40 Block 3
Craig Milne,
Cove & John,
East Coast Demerara.*

Mr. Vincero H. Jordan, M.P.,
*(Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice),
Lot 214 Lovely Lass Village,
West Coast Berbice.
C/o Christopher Jones*

Mr. Dineshwar N. Jaiprashad, M.P.,
*Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne),
Lot 80 Babu John Road,
Haswell,
Port Mourant, Corentyne Berbice.*

Mr. Richard E. Sinclair, M.P.,
*(Region No. 8 –Potaro/Siparuni)
Church Street Mahdia.
Lot 4 Public Road,
Stewartville,
West Coast Demerara.*

Mr. Jermaine Figueira, M.P.,
(Region No. 10 – Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice),
Lot 136 2nd Street,
Silvertown,
Wismar, Linden.
Mr. Devin L. Sears, M.P.,
(Region No. 10 – Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice),
Lot 90, Section C,
Wismar, Linden.

(ii) A New and United Guyana, Liberty and Justice Party and The New Movement (ANUG, LJP & TNM) (1)

Mr. Lenox R. O’Dell Shuman, M.P.,
Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly,
St. Cuthbert’s Mission,
Soesdyke Linden Highway.

Officers (2)

Mr. Sherlock E. Isaacs, A.A.,
Clerk of the National Assembly,
Parliament Office,
Public Buildings,
Brickdam,
Georgetown.
Ms. Hermina Gilgeours,
Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly,
Parliament Office,
Public Buildings,
Brickdam,
Georgetown.

Hansard Division Officers (20)

Ms. Allison Connelly,
Chief Editor
Ms. Marlyn Jeffers-Morrison,
Senior Editor
Ms. Shawnel Cudjoe,
Senior Editor (ag)
Ms. Latoiah Joseph,
Senior Editor (ag)
Ms. Carol Bess,
Editor
Ms. Shevona Telford,
Editor (ag)
Ms. Christina Ramroop,
Editor (ag)
Ms. Tesia Ellis,
Reporter
Ms. Indranie Persaud,
Reporter
Ms. Roseina Singh,
Reporter
Ms. Somna Karen-Muridall,
Reporter

Ms. Eyoka Gibson,
Reporter
Ms. Lushonn Bess,
Reporter
Ms. Bianca Cummings,
Reporter
Mr. Rohan Ramjas,
Reporter
Ms. Nadeila Allen,
Reporter
Ms. Celisa DeFlorimonte,
Reporter
Mr. Parmanand Singh,
Pre –Press Technician
Mr. Saeed Umrao,
Audio Technician
Mr. Daison Horsham,
Audio Technician

25TH Sitting

Tuesday, 2ND March, 2021

Presentation of Papers and Reports 3309

Public Business – Government Business 3310-3414

Appropriation Bill - Budget Debate 3311-3412

Adjournment - 3415-3416

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following Paper was laid:

- (1) The Customs (Amendment of First Schedule) Order 2021 – Order No. 5 of 2021.

[Senior Minister in the Office of President with Responsibility for Finance]

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND FIRST READING

The following Bill was introduced and read the first time:

(1) CAPITAL GAINS TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL 2021 – BILL No. 5/2021

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to amend the Capital Gains Tax Act.

[Senior Minister in the Office of President with Responsibility for Finance]

PUBLIC BUSINESS

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MOTION

BUDGET FOR 2021 - MOTION FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 2021

WHEREAS the Constitution of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana requires that Estimates of the Revenue and Expenditure of the Cooperative Republic 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 the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana for the financial year 2021 have been prepared and laid before the Assembly on 2021-02-12.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly approves the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 2021, of a total

sum of three hundred and fifty three billion, eight hundred and thirty three million, six hundred and twelve thousand dollars (\$353,833,612,000), excluding twenty nine billion, two hundred and forty seven million, and seven hundred and forty six thousand dollars (\$29,247,746,000) which is chargeable by law, as detailed therein and summarised in the undermentioned schedule, and agree that it is expedient to amend the law and to make further provision in respect of finance.

[Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance]

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I would give persons a few moments to gather themselves together because we are going to be moving, and there are lots of references to deal with. Let us take a few moments to get ourselves ready and to allow the staff of the Office of the President to be in place.

As everyone knows, the Schedule was agreed on by the entire House. There are specific times slotted for every agency and programme. Let us ensure that we could deal with all of your concerns while, at the same time, keeping our eyes on the time.

Hon. Minister Gail Teixeira, are you and your staff ready? The Office of the President is allocated two hours. The time would start now at 10.15.21 a.m. Could we now turn to pages 62 and 63?

Agency: 01 Office of the President

Current Expenditure

Programme: 011 – Administration – \$1,143,258,000

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, you have the Floor.

Leader of the Opposition [Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon]: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to refer the Hon. Minister to line item 6116, Contracted Employees.

Mr. Chairman: Go ahead Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: Thank you, Sir. I was just hearing some grumbling at the back. Could the Hon. Minister indicate to this Committee what the designations of the 24 additional contracted employees are, their remuneration and the date of their employment?

Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance and Government Chief Whip [Ms. Teixeira]: Members of staff are one Technical Assistant, two Gardeners, a Receptionist/Secretary, a Senior Household Service Worker, a security officer, a Director of Policy, Projects and Public Affairs, a Technical Services Coordinator, a Director of Operations, a Press Secretary, an Assistant Press Secretary, a Clerk II, a Junior Communications Officer, four Household Service Workers, a National Security Advisor, an Administrative Assistant, a Presidential Advisor, an Administrative Support Officer and an Editor. Those are the new members of staff. As you would recognise, a number of them are household staff for the President and State House.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: Their remuneration, please Mr. Chairman. That is one of the questions I had asked.

Ms. Teixeira: Remuneration: Technical Assistant, – \$102,058; Gardner, two at \$70,000 each; Receptionist/Secretary – \$115,000; Senior Household Service Worker – \$120,000; a security officer \$200,000; Director of Policy, Projects and Public Affairs – \$350,000; Technical Services Coordinator – \$298,000; Director of Operations – \$200,000; Press Secretary - \$400,000; Assistant Press Secretary – \$300,000; Cook, two at \$70,000 each; Junior Communications Officer – \$150,000; Household Service Workers – \$70,000 each for four of them; National Security Advisor – \$700,000; Administrative Assistant – \$200,000; Presidential Advisor – \$700,000; Administrative Support Officer – \$150,000; and Editor – \$260,000.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister identify for us the designation of persons who would have been sent off from these positions after the second of 2nd August, 2020, if any at all?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, we are talking of the line item and what exists. I would caution that questions like that could come as a question from an Hon. Member to the relevant Minister.

An Hon. Member: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. Chairman: I am hearing a heckle about line item. This line item pertains to what exists. A question dealing with who was sent off and who resigned is best suited for a question to the Minister. If we are going to maintain the schedule that we have agreed on, we would have to stay on point. Hon. Minister, if you choose to answer, I will allow you.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, the persons whom Mr. Harmon has been inquiring about are not under this programme.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, do you have a follow up?

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: The National Security Advisor (NSA) at \$700,000... Could the Hon. Member indicate to this honourable House to whom does this NSA report and whether...?

Ms. Teixeira: Could you give us the line item?

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: It is the same line item 6116, Contracted Employees. You indicated that there was an NSA that was employed at the sum of \$700,000. We are trying to find out, Hon. Minister, what are the duties of this NSA?

Ms. Teixeira: I believe, Mr. Chairman, this is a question that should come to me as a Minister and not in the budget line item.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: I did not hear the answer, please.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, we did not hear you clearly.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, the question the Hon. Member is asking, in regard to the terms of reference (TORs) of the presidential advisors, is suitable for questions to a Minister. That is not a line item issue.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Minister is saying that she is not in receipt of that information or she is not prepared to answer that question. I would follow up.

Mr. Chairman: Just one second, Hon. Leader of the Opposition, if I get you right, are you asking what are the duties of the NSA person?

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: Yes, please.

Mr. Chairman: I think, Hon. Minister, this is in line with what we could do here. This is sums relating to the policies for which it is going to... if you choose to briefly do it and follow up, no problem.

10.24 a.m.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, Hon. Member, the National Security Advisor, in terms of reference, relates to security. This is the NSA. The Hon. Member who was the former Head of the Ministry of the Presidency and the Minister of State, knows well what the duties of a National Security Advisor are; probably better than anyone else in this Dome,

including myself. The National Security Advisor is hired to advise the President on issues regarding security and defence. Thank you.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: Having regard to that sum, I noticed that there are several appointments that have been made. There are some small sums. This in fact, is the largest sum under this line item. I would like to know, were there any specific qualifications that were required for the NSA to be appointed? What are the specific qualifications?

Ms. Teixeira: To the Hon. Member, in response, the National Security Advisor must have a security background. The person who holds the post has such a background.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: Line item 6117 – Temporary Employees: There are three employees here. Could the Hon. Minister state what jobs they are performing and the skillsets that are utilised here?

Ms. Teixeira: The staff in this line item have not changed. It still remains three staff, as in 2020. The persons are two Accounts Clerk II who are paid \$72,053 and \$73,400 and one Pool Attendant being paid \$70,000. These persons were put there because they are in transition to the Fixed Pensionable Establishment. That was what was inherited.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: Line item 6291 – National and Other Events: Could the Hon. Minister indicate to the Committee, what are the national events that this allocation caters for when the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) environment is factored in?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, is it “what were” or “what is”?

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: It is, “what is”. What does it cater for? Sir, I think, if we are going to have these sorts of interruptions, I do not believe that the Minister will hear my question.

Mr. Chairman: Just filter out the noise. Hon Minister, we are at line item 6261, National and Other Events.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, as you will notice, there is a decrease in the allocation for this amount of money due to the COVID-19 restrictions. This line item usually covers events such as the national holidays, annual staff luncheons and media brunches. There are activities that the Office of the President and the President may hold. This is what comes under that line item.

Mr. Deputy Speaker [Mr. Shuman]: In relation to line item 6116, Contracted Employees, could the Hon. Minister say to this Committee, how much of that money would be directed towards the Commission of Inquiry (COI) that the President recently announced into the General and Regional Elections fiasco last year?

Ms. Teixeira: Hon. Member, line item 6116 deals with contracted employees. Therefore, if or when the President moves in the direction that you spoke of, it would most likely come under another line item for the use of funds for that Commission of Inquiry.

Mr. Mahipaul: Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to lay over the breakdowns of line items 6284, Other and 6294, Other?

Ms. Teixeira: Could I just find my reference? I have been jumping around line items and I am sorry. For the information of the Committee, it can be laid over, but sometimes the Committee does not hear what it is only the person who receives it does.

For line item 6284, Other, there are the payments for the *Official Gazette* and the subscription services rendered to television and radio broadcast and consultancies in regard to services for the President, including the areas of National Development Strategies and Climate Change, *et cetera*.

Under line item 6294, Other, this amount of money as you see regard the hosting of state visits; goods for State House, such as groceries; gifts for visiting persons; purchases of utensils, since there are a number at State House; COVID-19 relief packages; and dietary items for the offices under this programme.

Mr. Mahipaul: I am going back to line item 6117, Temporary Employees. We had three employees in 2020 and three months after *Budget 2020* gave us a salary of \$544,000. Mr. Chairman, if you are to divide that by three and multiply it by 12, you will get \$2,176,000. There is a budgeted sum of \$ 3,112,000. These are staff that are on the Fixed Pensionable Establishment. Why is there an increase in the fixed expenditure?

Ms. Teixeira: I thank you, for your Mathematics, my Dear. There were no changes in the staff.

First of all, in 2020 there were three persons and it is the same in 2021. These are contracted employees which the previous Government had moved to transition to the Fixed

Pensionable Establishment. They are sort of in limbo waiting on the Public Service Commission (PSC).

Secondly, the figure that you referred to, Mr. Mahipaul, because they are contracted workers, they receive all their benefits under this line item. That is why there is a difference. They receive their salaries plus whatever allowances and benefits they are entitled to.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister indicate what this increased allocation for the maintenance of buildings would detail and what works would be done for this sum of money that has been allocated?

Ms. Teixeira: For the first time in, I think, several decades, there are going to be repairs and renovations done to the apartment villas in the Castellani House’s compound...
[*Interruption*]

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: I am sorry; I am not hearing the Minister.

Ms. Teixeira: Is it not line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, Minister. Hon. Members, *a quiet speech is mark of refinement*, as we were taught. We have a very refined Minister on the floor. Please, let us ease the noise so that we can hear her. Hon. Minister, you have the floor.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, could I remove my mask, my colleagues are all masked?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, Ms. Teixeira.

Ms. Teixeira: Thank you. I am sorry, Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon. To answer your question, this includes repairs and renovations to the apartment villas in the Castellani House’s compound for \$31 million. These villas have not been repaired for a long time. They are going through major repairs as you know how old they are. They go back to the 1980s. That is a special inclusion which has driven up the cost.

There are repairs and maintenance of buildings in the Office of the President’s complex. The Hon. Member knows all of the buildings in the Office of the President’s complex, which is approximately \$48.9 million. There are also general repairs to be done at the State House, the Valerie Rodway House – which you know that it was where the National Trust of

Guyana was located – that is the present publicity unit, in the building next door to State House and the Walter Roth Museum of Anthropology for approximately \$23.1 million.

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6264 – Vehicle Spares and Service: Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say how many vehicles are in the fleet? Who are the vehicles assigned to or to which designation or office is holding them?

Ms. Teixeira: There is a part of the Hon. Member’s question that I did not get. Is the Hon. Member asking to know how many vehicles are where?

Mr. Mahipaul: How many vehicles are in the fleet under the Programme: 011– Administration, line item 6264?

Ms. Teixeira: Yes. I understand that, thank you. For line item 6264, Vehicle Spares and Service, the number of vehicles under this programme is 118.

Mr. Mahipaul: Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to lay over in writing the offices that are holding the 118 vehicles?

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, I believe these are security issues. This is the Office of the President. I think it would be inappropriate and risky for the 118 vehicles. By the way, as you may have noticed in the advertisement in the press, the Office of the President is boarding 37 vehicles. They are being decommissioned due to their ages and the state of their conditions. So, that is just for your information.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, I am asking the Hon. Minister, because we are talking about 118 vehicles and I am sure that there are vehicles that are assigned to persons who will not pose any national risks in terms of their usage. I can understand if the Hon. Minister is saying five for the President and whoever else but there must be

Mr. Chairman: I understand that the Hon. Minister said that there are security issues over all the vehicles. Could you move on with another question?

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: Line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants: Could the Hon. Minister indicate to this Committee, the size of the fleet and if there are any new additions that would require this amount of money to be spent on fuel and lubricants?

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, it is the same 118 vehicles for fuel and lubricants. When we come to the budget, we will see that we are adding some vehicles in the capital expenditure which is to cater for these vehicles.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: When the Hon. Minister says, “we are adding some vehicles”, could the Hon. Member be more specific about how many are being added?

Ms. Teixeira: There are 118 vehicles in the fleet. I said there is a provision in the capital expenditure for seven additional vehicles which would be added to the 118. That is why there is an increase under line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricants.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: Line item 6271 – Telephone & Internet Charges: There is \$43,500,000 allocated under the line item. It reflects a substantial increase which is almost about 126% over what was allocated in 2020. Could the Hon. Minister indicate what areas will benefit from this increased allocation, in particular, the designations of persons who are employed and who will benefit from this increase?

10.39 a.m.

Secondly, would the Government, be acquiring any facilities in this regard that is owned by the Government?

Ms. Teixeira: The telephone charges include Wireless Fidelity (Wi-Fi), internet, *et cetera*. To advise the Hon. Member, in the column for 2020 revised, we are dealing with the three months for 2020 and not the entire year. One would have to add the entire year. It is the Ministry of the Presidency’s figure plus the figure that is there. Then, there is the difference of only \$1.2 million.

The increase caters for additional Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) lines for the new units that are being set up including research, and monitoring and evaluation units.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: The Hon. Minister stated that the National Security Advisor would be receiving \$700,000. Could the Hon. Minister state what other benefits the NSA is entitled to, the amount and the date of employment of the NSA?

Ms. Teixeira: The National Security Advisor would get what I believe is the normal allowances and benefits which includes: duty allowance and telephone allowance.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: I asked for the amount and the date of employment.

Ms. Teixeira: Mdm. there is \$20,000 for the duty allowance and \$15,000 for telephone allowance.

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6264 – Vehicle Spares and Service: How many are new vehicles that were added from the 118 vehicles from August, 2020?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I think that I heard the Minister saying 118 exists and they are adding seven if you go to the Capital Estimates. We have to be careful...

Mr. Mahipaul: No. How many have been added since August, 2020, to bring it to 118 vehicles?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, how many vehicles have been added since August?

Ms. Teixeira: In the 2020 Budget, six vehicles were in the Capital Estimates. They have been added and, therefore, totals to 118 vehicles.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: Line item 6272 – Electricity Charges: There has been an increase in this allocation. I would request the Hon. Minister to give us an explanation as to what is the cause of this increase to the allocation for electricity.

Ms. Teixeira: Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon, thank you very much for your question. This figure includes approximately \$163 million that accrued over the last five years that were not paid for the Citizenship and Immigration building, Stephen Campbell building which is opposite Office of the President.

Apparently, for five years no electricity bill was paid. It was very lucky to receive electricity without paying. Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon, \$163 million is included in the \$232 million to pay off that debt with the Stephen Campbell building.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d). Harmon: Line item 6273 – Water Charges: The sum of \$10 million is allocated under this line item for water charges. Could the Hon. Minister confirm that this is water charges for the Office of the President only or is this like the electricity situation where you are paying off other bills?

Ms. Teixeira: Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon, thank you. The water charges would include buildings under this programme. It would be the Office of the President, Stephen Campbell building, State House, Castellani House, the Villas, *et cetera*.

Opposition Chief Whip [Mr. Jones]: Line item 6311 – Rates and Taxes: Could the Hon. Minister indicate whether or not these taxes are only for the Office of the President or does it include other buildings? Is the Hon. Minister aware that the Mayor and City Council requires rates and taxes to be paid within the first quarter of the year? This is just to confirm whether or not this sum of \$10,250,000 would be paid during this first quarter.

Ms. Teixeira: I am asking for one second if you do not mind.

Mr. Chairman: Sure, please.

Ms. Teixeira: Thank you for the question. This figure is only for the Office of the President in particular.

Mr. Jones: Mdm. Minister, just to confirm, would it be paid within the first quarter of the year as required by the Mayor and City Council?

Ms. Teixeira: Sir, once you approve the Budget, yes. It will be paid. It is in your interest not to block the Budget.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: Line item 6293 – Refreshment and Meals: Does this allocation of \$12 million caters for meals for the President, for the Ministry itself or for all the persons in that Ministry?

Ms. Teixeira: Hon. Member, you would notice that there is no increase under Refreshments and Meals, partly because we are dealing in the virtual world. This is where Cabinet meetings would have been covered and this also includes Office of the President, if Officers work beyond the normal call of duty, refreshment for students on educational tours at the Office of the President and we have put in money for Cabinet meetings as we hope to get back to meeting in person. We have not put in a large amount. There are some refreshments for the Cabinet sub-committees if those are met; that is where the \$12.5 million is stated.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): A total of \$9 million is allocated for Training (including Scholarships. I would wish to know whether in fact the Office of the President would be running parallel training programmes to the Ministry of the Public Service.

Ms. Teixeira: Thank you, Hon. Member. These training programmes, as you know, would be held virtually in May. There are training to do with staff capacity building, which are short training programmes of two weeks and it would have approximately 50 officers attending; Office of the President Project Management course which is longer for about six months and would have between eight or 10 persons attending; Office of the President Leadership Training which would be one month and between eight to10 persons attending. Each of these courses is totalled to \$9.5 million.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: I am sorry to belabour the point but as far as I heard from the... [*interruption*]

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I am trying to hear Ms. Sarabo-Halley.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: ... Hon. Minister that a date of employment was not given to the NSA. I want to confirm that she said that the duty allowance is \$300,000.

Ms. Teixeira: I did not hear what Ms. Sarabo-Halley said.

Mr. Chairman: She is asking for the date of employment for the NSA and if she heard correctly that the duty allowance is \$300,000.

Ms. Teixeira: Sir, I never said that. I do not know if my Friend is not hearing but, if that is the case, I apologise. The National Security Advisor receives \$20,000 for the duty allowance and \$15,000 for telephone allowance. Those are the only two allowances he gets other than the \$700,000. The date of appointment is 8th August, 2020.

Mr. Chairman: There is some correlation, because \$20,000 x \$15,000 is \$300 or \$3 million somewhere there. Hon. Member, Ms. Sarabo-Halley will have the floor, then the Hon. Member, Mr. Jones. Hon. Member Mr. Jones, you may have the floor because Ms. Sarabo-Halley has declined.

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Cde. Chairman. I am following-up on the same question in terms of the NSA. Is there a staff complement that is assigned to the NSA? If so, how many persons, what are their salaries and designations?

Mr. Speaker: I think you may want to ask which line item they will come under.

Ms. Teixeira: There are no special persons assigned to the National Security Advisor. The support staff is taken from the Office of the President including mainly clerical and office support from line item 6114. No person was hired additionally for that Advisor.

Programme: 011 – Administration – \$1,143,258,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 011 – Administration – \$427,600,00

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: The sum of \$65 million is asked to be approved but we would like to have a total breakdown of this sum, exactly on what item it is to be spent.

In the legend it states that it is for the provision of upgrading the facilities at State House and the Office of the President. It

also states for the upgrading of electrical systems at Office of the President. We would wish to know what sums are specifically identified for each of these items.

10.54 a.m.

Ms. Teixeira: Upgrade of the electrical systems at State House, Office of the President – \$6 million; construction of storeroom, State House – \$12 million; construction of an information centre, compound of the Office of the President – \$8 million; construction of a garage at the Stephen Campbell House – \$15 million; concreting of the compound, Stephen Campbell House – \$9 million; construction of a garage at the Castellani House – \$15 million. The total is \$65 million.

Mr. Mahipaul: Last year, we approved a sum of money for the electrical systems at the State House. I see that there is a request here, again. Could the Hon. Minister inform this House what happened to last year’s estimate and is it a continuation from last year into this year?

Ms. Teixeira: Thank you, Hon. Member. This is a continuation of a programme that started in 2020. There are several buildings – the State House and the Office of the President – where we have to continue the project to upgrade the electrical system.

Mr. Mahipaul: Is the Hon. Minister confirming that part of the electrical work was done in 2020 and that another part is going to be done in 2021? If so, why is it that it was put that way, given that it is an electrical issue that is being rectified?

Ms. Teixeira: The Office of the President is doing it in phases with availability of money. In August 2020, we all know what was going on. This is the anniversary of that day. This will be a project that is continuing into 2021 based on the available funds.

Mr. Mahipaul: Project code 2405200 – Land Transport – Administration: I took note of the Hon. Minister when she indicated that six vehicles were purchased under this programme. We had \$95 million allocated there last year, which I am assuming bought the six vehicles.

Now, I see \$67,600,000 for the purchase of vehicles. Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say how many vehicles will be purchased with the \$67,600,000 and to which office these vehicles will be assigned to?

Ms. Teixeira: Hon. Member, as we stated last year, six vehicles were purchased and seven vehicles are proposed for this year. The vehicles include: a land cruiser, a sedan, a 30-

seater minibus, vehicles for the Office of the President in terms of the administration and one vehicle for the President’s Press Unit (PPU). This is an upgrade to the fleet due to a return, as you know, of a number of vehicles that were found to be defective and are being decommissioned.

Mr. Mahipaul: Project code 1701700 – Minor Works – Administration: A sum of \$245 million and in the Legend, it states:

“for developmental, humanitarian and other activities.”

Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to explain what the developmental, humanitarian, and other activities are?

Ms. Teixeira: I think Mr. Mahipaul is very familiar with this head. These are discretionary funds of the President; and you are well aware of that. These are used for humanitarian purposes, for people who are in trouble and who are in need. This was being used by Presidents from the time the country became a Republic to right through. It is to do with the schools, if any schools have requests in terms of developmental works; to assist a particular community or school; *et cetera*. These are all based on humanitarian issues. It cannot be projected, but it is an estimate in terms of what funds are available. The moneys that were for 2020, as you know was the COVID-19, *et cetera*. I cannot give you a breakdown of these amounts of moneys, but I think that this is the President’s discretion. We could say to you, to go on the record, in this Committee, is that we will account for every single cent of this money.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: Project code 2507900 – Furniture and Equipment – Administration: A sum of \$50 million is allocated for the purchase of furniture. Could the Hon. Minister provide a breakdown as to the offices that will benefit from this purchase?

Ms. Teixeira: Excuse me, Hon. Member, are you asking just about furniture?

Mr. Chairman: It is Furniture and Equipment.

Ms. Teixeira: The list is rather long. These are State House furnishings such as: sofas, lamps, desk, refrigerator, television and security cameras. For the Office of the President itself: computers, printers, stabiliser, copier, electric kettles, water dispensers, pump, uninterrupted power supply (UPS) batteries, office chairs, microwaves, binding machines, laminating machines, shredders, refrigerators, cupboards, filing cabinets, television, kitchen units, office desk, couch,

projectors, smoke detectors, digital screens, scanner, 12 extractor fans, one mist blower for the COVID-19, one sofa set, one gym equipment – which you know about Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon. This is the gym that was in the Office of the President and is still there. It is being upgraded and some equipment would be brought in for the staff to use – upgrade to the telephone systems and, some new furnishings in their buildings for the presidential guard. That is the total of \$50 million.

Programme: 011 – Administration – \$427,600,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 012 – National Policy Development Presidential Advisory Services – \$1,095,959

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: There is a reduction of 46 staffers under this line item. Could the Hon. Minister indicate to this Committee the designation of the 46 contracted employees who were reduced? Could the Hon. Minister identify for us the designation of the persons who were employed after 2nd August, 2020, and emoluments under this line item?

Ms. Teixeira: The staff count is 46, in 2021, due to three resignations, one death and 42 members who were sent home. The resignations are the Senior Political Advisor, the Head of the Political Division – I think you know all these persons, Sir – an Administrative Officer and a vehicle driver who died. That is the one person who is reflected as a death. The staff who were sent home are the Senior Confidential Secretary, Political Assistant, Personal Assistant to the Minister of State, Confidential Secretary, Driver, Administrative Assistant to the Minister of State – I think you know who the Minister of State was – Special Advisor to the Minister of Social Cohesion, Secretary, Special Assistant, Administrative Assistant, Political Assistant, Director General – I think you know who that is too, Sir. That is Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon himself – an Administrative Officer, Financial Officer at Office of Climate Change (OCC), Executive Assistant, Receptionist, Project Manager, Financial Officer at Office of the Prime Minister, Operations Manager, Ministerial Advisor, Ministerial Advisor, Operations and Administrative Assistant, Senior Administrative Assistant to Presidential Advisor on the Environment, Researcher, Transcriber, Receptionist, Secretary, Vehicle Driver, Green Tourism Officer, Communications Specialist, Public Relations Officer, Senior Advisor to the President, Environmental Photo Videographer and Head of the Office of Climate Change. I will continue.

Some of these you will know very well: Regional Community Development Officer, Research Assistant, Ministerial Advisor on Constitutional Reform, Head of the Public Parks – you know who that is too. That takes care of the 42 officers who were sent home.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: There is another part of the question. The other part of the question speaks to the designations and emoluments of those persons who came on.

Ms. Teixeira: I think there is a variation in line item 6116 and there was a reduction in staff, in which I thought the Hon. Member would have been happy to know that because we are saving money versus what was happening before. However, Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon, regarding the persons who were removed, the officers who were sent home, I think that you are very familiar with those staff since you hired them and signed the contracts. If you insist, I could read it all out again.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: That is not the question.

Ms. Teixeira: Is that your question, Sir? Am I misunderstanding you?

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: You are certainly misunderstanding me, Mdm. I am asking now about the persons who have replaced them, in cases where there were replacements for the designations of those persons and their salaries pending.

Ms. Teixeira: No one has been replaced under this Programme, under line item 6116. There have been no replacements of those who were terminated.

Mr. Chairman: Before the next question, I just want to caution the Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul. He was just addressing you as “Aunty Gail”. You cannot talk to your family while you are sitting in here.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, that is not true. I did not say anything.

Mr. Chairman: Do you want me to get the transcript? You did say, “Aunty Gail”.

Mr. Mahipaul: No. I did not.

Mr. Chairman: Yes. About two and a half minutes ago, you did.

Mr. Mahipaul: I am sorry. I cannot recollect saying that.

Mr. Chairman: Please, if you want to speak to your family, you know what to do. Hon. Leader of the Opposition, please proceed.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Line item 6117 – Temporary Employees: There are three employees here. Could the Hon. Minister state what jobs these persons are performing, the skillset and, additionally, the seven persons who were previously there who were sent home?

11.09 a.m.

Ms. Teixeira: Thank you very much, Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon, I am glad that you have asked that question. Just to advice, I am not aware that I am related to Cde. Mahipaul. I have no genealogical link. However, I know it is the old-time way and that he has respect for the elders, so I accept that, in that context. But there is no biological connection between Mr. Mahipaul and me.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, are you pulling the string?

Ms. Teixeira: I beg your pardon, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Speaker: Are you pulling the string?

Ms. Teixeira: Yes, I am trying to; sorry.

To answer the Hon. Member’s question, the three staff here are: the Cook – \$70,000; the Household Service Worker – \$70,000; and a Videographer – \$162,293.

The staff decrease of six, these persons were not terminated or sent home, they were transferred to Programme:015 – we will come to that programme in a little while. So, there are six persons and they are as follows: a Confidential Secretary, a Climate Change Officer, a Technical Assistant, a Project Manager, a Science and Technology Officer, and a Technical Officer in the Office of the Climate Change (OCC). They are strictly technical people, except for one, who is the Secretary, and they have been moved to Programme: 015 and were not sent home.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: Line item 6284 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister indicate what is the expenditure incurred under this line item and could she provide a breakdown for the total \$20 million allocated?

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6284, relates to a number of areas where the President could hire consultancies. It includes payments for the *Official Gazette*; the installation of carpets in the Office of the President – the villas at State House; waste disposal; payments for signs and banners; payments for

cable services; consultation fees; cubicles at the Office of the President and the Vice- President’s Secretariat; payment for airtime on radio and television; services rendered; installation of fibre optics and miscellaneous.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: Could the Hon. Member give us some more, specific, details about this payment for the fibre optics? There is some other, but it has escaped me now.

Ms. Teixeira: I must apologise, we got line item 6284 mixed up between Programme: 011 – Administration and Programme:012 – National Policy Development Presidential Advisory Services. So, let me read over what Programme: 012 is; my apologies. These include consultation fees, office furniture, repair services, waste disposal services, supplies for beautification such as carpets and mat treatment, computer software and miscellaneous. That comes to \$70 million. There is no fibre optic cable in there. My apologies; it was in Programme: 011.

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6264 – Vehicle Spares and Service: I should seek clarity, the 118 vehicles, are they for the Office of the President or all of the Programmes under the Office of the President or just for Administration?

Mr. Chairman: Which 118 vehicles, is that from the previous programme?

Mr. Mahipaul: Pardon me, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Chairman: Which 118 vehicles, is it from the previous programme?

Mr. Mahipaul: No. I am asking at line item 6264, how many vehicles are in this Programme?

Mr. Chairman: I thought you stated a specific number, just now.

Mr. Mahipaul: If the Hon. Minister could say if it is the 118 vehicles for the entire Office of the President, then I am...

Ms. Teixeira: Hon. Member, this is Programme:012. So, this caters to the vehicles under this programme. The 118 vehicles are to Programme:011. The number of vehicles for this Programme is 18. Therefore, the vehicle spares and maintenance are for those 18 vehicles.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you.

Mr. Jones: Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Under this line item, I note that it has here amongst the list of local organisations, the Youth

Advisory Council. Could the Hon. Minister please provide an organisation chart for this group or body? I am not too familiar with it.

Ms. Teixeira: Thank you very much for the question, Hon. Member. I am sure you have heard that the President announced that we would be establishing a national advisory council on youth. This is in the process of being set up this year with a secretariat and representatives from each of the 10 regions. This figure that is under the heading here is to include a youth empowerment coordinator and also for representatives from each of the 10 regions; so, it is a secretariat that would be setup. It is the Presidential Youth Advisory Council; it is not a non-governmental organisation (NGO). It will be an advisory council under the President. Is that all right?

Mr. Shuman: Mr. Chairman, I had previously asked under Programme:011, on line item 6116 – Contracted Employees, and I, again, ask the question under Programme:012, line item 6116 – Contracted Employees. Could the Hon. Minister say how much of that money, if any, or where I could find it, the allocated for the establishment of the Commission of Inquiry into the electoral process last year?

Ms. Teixeira: Hon. Member, line item 6116 and those that come under the employment cost are related to staff. If there is a special programme such as a Commission on Inquiry, that would normally come under line item 6284 because those are not long-standing bodies and are setup for a specific purpose which is to provide a service in terms of that. In this case, those numbers that you see there have nothing to do with the Commission of Inquiry.

Mr. Shuman: Thank you.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: Under line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations and line item 6322 – Subsidies and Contributions to Intl. Organisations: there is an increase in the allocation for the Office of the First Lady – that is \$25 million allocated. Could the Hon. Minister state what additional programmes will be engaged in, that requires this increase from \$10 million to \$25 million?

Ms. Teixeira: The Office of the First Lady has always had money allocated to it throughout the years. In this case, we have a new First Lady, who has a number of programmes and projects that she would like to be part of and to lead. This is to cater for a number of these programmes and projects, which she has adopted, like the First Ladies in other countries of their special programmes. Thank you.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: What I am trying to find out is whether there are any specific projects or programmes for which we are allocating this money. Or are we just allocating a lump sum and the First Lady will decide how she would spend it?

Ms. Teixeira: I think that it is the same practice that has gone on for decades and that is, the allocation is made to the First Lady, she spends it according to her programmes and projects, and she is accountable, in terms of the expenditure, through the Office of the President.

Programme: 012 – National Policy Development Presidential Advisory Services – \$1,095,959,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 012 – National Policy Development Presidential Advisory Services – \$68,000,000

Programme: 012 – National Policy Development Presidential Advisory Services – \$68,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 013 – Defence and National Security – \$189,642,000

Mr. Jones: Line item 6294 – Other: I see an allocation of \$100 million. Could the Hon. Minister please indicate what this sum will be used for?

Ms. Teixeira: The issues, as I am sure you are aware, under this line item has to do with operational activities regarding our territorial and maritime integrity.

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6264 – Vehicle Spares and Service: Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say how many vehicles are under this programme?

Ms. Teixeira: Hon. Member Mr. Mahipaul, under line item 6264, this is for 14 vehicles including motorbikes – that is broken down to nine vehicles and five motorbikes.

Mr. Mahipaul: I turn the Hon. Minister’s attention to line item 6116 – Contracted Employees. The staffing details is guiding me to four staff, which we had in 2020, and a fixed payment of salaries and other benefits expended to \$4,318,000 for these four staff. When I divide that by three and multiply it by 12, I get \$17,271,000, but I see an allocation here of \$11,953,000. Is that a mistake, or has there

been a reduction in the salaries of the four contracted employees?

11.24 a.m.

Ms. Teixeira: This basically caters to the civilian members of staff – the contracted employees. The difference, Mr. Mahipaul, has to do with the fact that the then Head of the National Intelligence Committee resigned and that is why you are having the difference of \$7 million or \$8 million, between last year and this year. The staff who are there now are the two Defence Board Officers, the System Administrator and the close-circuit television (CCTV) Technician. The staff count remains unchanged.

Mr. Mahipaul: If I heard the Hon. Minister correctly, the reason there is a significant difference, more so, a decrease, is because one person has resigned.

Mr. Chairman: Yes. You have heard correctly.

Mr. Mahipaul: The one person, who has resigned, was clearly – from what the Minister said – catered for under line item 6116. However, I am still seeing four staff in 2021. Was there not supposed to be a reduction from four staff to three staff?

Ms. Teixeira: These are civilians that are paid their contracted sums including their allowances. The person who has taken the place of the person who resigned, is paid through the Guyana Defence Force and not under the Office of the President.

Mr. Mahipaul: I do not know if I am understanding this clearly. The Hon. Minister said that the reason there is a difference in terms of less money being here, is because one person has resigned, which indicated that the person was being paid, in 2020, from this line item. I am saying that the staffing details for 2020 has four, which meant that person was included under that line item. Now, since he has resigned, there is supposed to be three staff under that line item for 2021, but we are still seeing four. Could the Hon. Minister please, attempt to answer, again?

Mr. Chairman: Maybe, he resigned this year.

Ms. Teixeira: They are not the same four persons, Mr. Mahipaul. I am advised that the number remains the same, but it may not be the same persons. The two Defence Board Officers – one and two – the System Administrator and the CCTV Technician, have been brought into this. These are

contracted employees, and the administrative staff are paid under another head.

Mr. Mahipaul: Is the Hon. Minister retracting that the person who resigned was not paid from this line item?

Ms. Teixeira: Yes. He was paid from this line item. There were four persons. One person resigned, leaving three persons. Then, as I mentioned, the two officers were added and one other person left, which was the Driver; the System Administrator and the CCTV Technician remained – they were there all along. So, the Driver and the Head of the Committee, were replaced with the two Defence Board Officers. That comes back to the same four persons.

Mr. Mahipaul: For the avoidance of doubt and, for further clarity, could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to layover the designations of the four who were in 2020 and the designations of the four who are now in 2021?

Ms. Teixeira: I think that I could provide that now and that is, as I said, in case it was not clear, the Head of the Unit, the Driver, the System Administrator and the CCTV Technician were the four in 2020. The head resigned, the Driver was sent off and two remained – the System Administrator and the CCTV Technician; then the Defence Board Officers – one and two – were brought in. Again, some people have real problems with mathematics.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, I would like to go back to line item 6284 – Other: the answer which the Hon. Minister gave that this was a security matter, I understand that. But what is happening here is that we are lumping Defence Board matters, which are not security, with matters that are for the National Intelligence Unit. I would like to determine...

Mr. Chairman: Is that statement of fact or are you asking a question?

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, I am asking a question as to what the distinction is.

Mr. Chairman: Very well.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: First of all, I asked the question of how this sum was accounted for. The Hon. Minister said that it was for national security. I am now asking for a determination as to how this sum is allocated [*inaudible*].

Ms. Teixeira: Just to be clear, is it line item 6284 or line item 6294?

Mr. Chairman: He said line item 6284. I do not think that we went there before.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: Line item 6294 – Other.

Mr. Chairman: It is line item 6284, thank you. That is why I was bit confused, Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Ms. Teixeira: I was confused too, thank you.

Line item 6294 relates to operational activities with regard to our territorial and marine activities. I am sure the Hon. Member knows that we have issues with a neighbour and that we are before the International Court of Justice (ICJ). And as such, we have to heighten some of our activities. This is \$100 million under this Programme – Defence and National Security.

Programme: 013 – Defence and National Security – \$189,642,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 013 – Defence and National Security – \$40,000,000

Programme: 013 – Defence and National Security – \$40,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 014 – Public Policy and Planning – \$316,750,000.

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6264 – Vehicle Spares and Service: Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say how many vehicles are assigned to this programme?

Ms. Teixeira: There is only one vehicle.

Mr. Mahipaul: May I ask if the person who is employed under the Public Policy and Planning Programme, is the person himself or herself driving the vehicle or is a driver assigned?

Mr. Chairman: Is there someone employed? I did not see that.

Ms. Teixeira: There is only one vehicle and that is for the staff who is in this unit. What we have done is to pull staff from a couple of areas from in the Office of the President, to

start to build this section. The staff is being paid from other programmes so that we could properly get this set up.

Programme: 014 – Public Policy and Planning – \$316,750,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 014 – Public Policy and Planning – \$10,000,000.

Mr. Mahipaul: Project code 3401900 – Guyana Office for Investment: Could the Hon. Minister say how many vehicles will be purchased with \$8,500,000? What does she mean by provision for building? If it is for the rental of a building, could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say which building?

Ms. Teixeira: The \$8.5 million will cover the cost of a motor vehicle for the Guyana Office for Investment (GO-Invest) and the building expansion on Church Street of \$6.5 million at GO-Invest.

Mr. Mahipaul: A follow-up question: May I ask, what type of vehicle, who will it be assigned to, in terms of the office?

Ms. Teixeira: The estimated cost of the vehicle is \$2 million. It is for the use of the office and not for any particular individual.

Programme: 014 – Public Policy and Planning – \$10,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 015 – Environmental Management and Compliance – \$1,454,363,000.

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6264 – Vehicle Spares and Service: Could the Hon. Minister say how many vehicles are assigned to this programme?

Ms. Teixeira: There is one vehicle, and it is for the use of the office.

11.39 a.m.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I notice that there is a decrease by five employees. Could we have the designations of the nine contracted employees and their emoluments?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, could you give the designations and emoluments of the contracted employees?

Ms. Teixeira: Yes. Thank you.

There is a variance of \$13 million less and there are nine members. They are as follows: six of them were transferred into this unit from another programme under the Office of the President – Programme: 012, as I reported earlier. The Confidential Secretary, Office of Climate Change –\$84,628; the Climate Change Officer – \$224,696; the Technical Assistant – \$102,058; the Project Manager, Project Management Office – \$518,840; the Science and Technology Officer – \$381,053; and the Technical Officer, Office of Climate Change – \$225,758. These are the six persons who were transferred into the unit.

These are the three persons, who were originally there and who remained, the Renewable Energy Liaison Officer – \$306,247; the Environmental Officer – \$145,148; and the Data Management Officer – \$173,329.

That accounts for the nine persons who are on contracts under this line item 6116.

Mr. Ramsaroop: I just have a follow-up question under the same line item 6116 – Contracted Employees. Under this line item, there is a reduction in staff by nine which gives a difference of five, but there is a budget of \$34.665 million and, in 2020, there was a spending of \$5 million. So, while there is a reduction in the staff, there is a heavy increase in the wages and salaries. Could the Hon. Minister explain this, for us?

Ms. Teixeira: Just a couple of things. First of all, when you look at the column for 2020, this is not for the whole year, Sir. This allocation in the budget was for October to December. So, if you were to calculate and add January to December, which is the Ministry of the Presidency and the Office of the President, it will actually result in a deficit or a reduction in the cost of this unit by \$13 million.

The original unit was closed and it was reorganised. Hence, the numbers went up to nine and I gave the breakdown – six were brought over from Programme: 011 and the remaining three were originally in the Programme. That is how we came up with nine. As I said, the original 14, when we closed the office, were terminated.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Hon. Minister. Hon. Ms. Flue-Bess, you have the floor.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Line item 6117 – Temporary Employees: I have noticed that there are two temporary employees added and the sum allotted is \$6,323,000. Could the Hon. Minister give us the designations of these two temporary employees and their emoluments? Thank you.

Ms. Teixeira: These are two contracted employees that we inherited and who are in transition. They are contracted employees who are supposed to transition to the fixed establishment of the Public Service Commission. That has not taken place as yet. So, they have remained as contracted employees, but under the ‘temporary’ heading, until they move and the Public Service Commission properly accommodates them, in terms of them being on the fixed establishment.

The two officers are: a Driver, \$104,561 and a Project Manager, \$375,000; both receive allowances. The staff count remains two, as it was in 2020.

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: there is a significant reduction for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) when compared to 2020. In 2020, the Environmental Protection Agency was given, from the Ministry of the Presidency, a sum of more than \$402 million and, from the Office of the President, a sum of more than \$306 million, which is, based on what is here now, the sum of \$609 million; it is roughly about \$100 million less. Could the Hon. Minister indicate why there is a significant reduction for such an important agency that plays a vital role in the protection of our environment?

Ms. Teixeira: I think I know the answer, but could you just confirm for me the line item you are using, Mr. Mahipaul?

Mr. Mahipaul: It is line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations.

Ms. Teixeira: Very well, I just wanted to verify.

If you go to Volume 2 of the Estimates, page 594, you will see the Environmental Protection Agency has a projection of its budget for \$609,057,000 for 2021. The EPA is treated as a subvention agency and the budget has been increased from \$306 million to \$609 million.

Mr. Mahipaul: *[Inaudible]*

Ms. Teixeira: Excuse me? Who are you talking to?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Mahipaul, if you want to ask a question, please rise. The cross talking, please...

Mr. Mahipaul: Thank you very much, Sir.

In 2020, there are two sums that are here. The Ministry of the Presidency gave the Environmental Protection Agency \$402,912,000 and for the last three months of the year, the Office of the President gave \$306,591,000. Those figures would give us roughly more than \$700 million for the year 2020.

We are in this oil and gas industry and a whole host of other things relating to the EPA. Now, I am seeing an allocation of \$609 million which is \$100 million, or more, less from 2020. So, I am asking, why the reduction and could the Minister endeavour to give a reason for the significant reduction?

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Hon. Member Mahipaul for restating.

Hon. Minister, please, go ahead.

Ms. Teixeira: The reduction that the Hon. Member is referring to and we have seen it in almost all the agencies as we have gone through, is the EPA itself said that there has been a reduction in the field visit inspections, and so on. So, the reduction is due to the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the inability to operate in the same way, especially, in terms of the inspections and going out into the fields, *et cetera*. Hence, this is the cause for the reduction, in 2021.

Programme: 015 – Environmental Management and Compliance – \$1,454,363,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 015 – Environmental Management and Compliance – \$313,622,000

Mr. Jones: Project code 3401500 – Environmental Protection Agency: There is an allocation of \$30 million. Could the Hon. Minister please indicate which amount is for the completion of the roof and which amount is for the purchase of furniture and equipment?

Ms. Teixeira: From the total \$30 million, the sum of \$2,298,000 is the rollover for the completion of the roof. The rest of the funds are for new projects. It is \$2.8 million.

Mr. Jones: Just a confirmation, is it \$15 million for equipment and furniture?

Ms. Teixeira: The difference of \$2.8 million from \$30 million. The balance such as furniture and electrical systems and those things will come to the difference. It is \$2.8 million deducted from the \$30 million, giving you about \$27 million.

Mr. Mahipaul: Project code 3401700 – National Parks Commission: I see that there is a provision for stands. Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say where and amount – in terms of the number of stands – and what exactly are the works to be done?

I would also like to ask, of this sum, how much is catered for the Joe Vieira Park in Region 3?

Ms. Teixeira: The buildings of the eastern stands of the National Park. This is one figure of \$13,271,000. This is a project that started in 2020 and would be completed in this year. It is for the rehabilitation only of the eastern stands – no other entity under the National Parks Commission.

Mr. Mahipaul: Project code 3402500 – Wildlife Management Authority: Could the Hon. Minister be kind to say what type of vehicle would be purchased?

Ms. Teixeira: This is just a regular vehicle for use by the Wildlife Management Authority. It is approximately \$3 million, and that amount has been budgeted. This is for use by the office of the Wildlife Management Authority.

Mr. Mahipaul: I am not sure if I heard right, but I was asking what type of vehicle.

Ms. Teixeira: I am the worst one to ask about vehicles, but I understand that it is a sedan. We cannot give the type because, obviously, we have to go to procurement.

Mr. Mahipaul: But if you have a costing here of \$3 million, you must have an idea of what you are going to purchase. And so, you must know if you are going to buy a motorbike for \$3 million or a car for \$3 million and what type of motorbike or what type of car.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister is there not a brand?

Ms. Teixeira: It is a sedan. It is a four-door car. It is not a sport utility vehicle (SUV). It is not a truck. It is not a canter. It is just a regular car and therefore just a sedan. When it goes to tender, it will depend on the price of the tenders, but that is what is allocated for it; no more than that.

11.54 a.m.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Hon. Minister. A regular four-door sedan, Hon. Member Mr. Mahipaul.

Hon. Member, Mr. Jones you have the floor.

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Cde. Chairman. Project code 4403600 – Guyana Protected Areas System: Just for clarity, it states here ‘Provision for the management of selected protected areas...’, but it has the word ‘GERMANY’. I am trying to clarify what ‘GERMANY’ means?

Ms. Teixeira: You are correct Hon. Member. This is the \$250 million from the German funds. The breakdown would include the office at Lethem; the construction and supervision of ranger stations and outposts; two double cab 4x4 vehicles for Shell Beach and Kanuku; a boat and engine for Shell Beach; motorcycles; aerial surveys, ranger kits; smart devices; Global Positioning Systems (GPS’s); drones and power generation for Shell Beach, Kaieteur and Kanuku; and consulting services \$46 million. That totals to \$250 million.

Programme: 015 – Environmental Management and Compliance – \$313,622,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 016 – Police Complaints Authority – \$33,181,000

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: There are five employees in 2021 and there were five in 2020. Based on the amount of money we spent in 2020 for the three-month period – \$2,885,000 – if my calculation is correct, in 2021 we are supposed to be spending \$11,540,000. I see a reduction to \$8,802,000. Could the Hon. Minister explain if there was a reduction in terms of the benefits and salaries of these workers or were these workers in 2020 replaced with new workers and new contracts?

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, just to remind Colleagues here in the Committee, the Police Complaints Authority came under the former Ministry of Public Security. It is now under the Office of the President, that is number one. Number two is that the administrative staff is now catered for under line item 6111 – Administrative. One officer is there. Then, under line item 6114 – Clerical and Office Support, there are additional staff that are catered for under there. I think there has been some reorganisation. I am not sure of the numbers. Line item, 6115 – Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled, it

is the same thing. Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees, there are four Investigators and one Confidential Secretary who are under this heading.

Mr. Mahipaul: Follow-up: Sir, if I may, are these investigators...

Mr. Chairman: I am just checking to see if the Minister was finished.

Ms. Teixeira: One of the things that may be different here is the gratuity, which would have been included.

Mr. Mahipaul: I did not get the last part of the Hon. Minister’s response.

Ms. Teixeira: As per usual, Mr. Chairman, line item 6116 – Contracted Employees, includes all the allowances and benefits as contracted workers under this head.

Mr. Mahipaul: The four Investigators...

Mr. Chairman: Are?

Mr. Mahipaul: Pardon me, Sir?

Mr. Chairman: Are the four investigators...

Mr. Mahipaul: (*Inaudible*), Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Okay.

Mr. Mahipaul: Are the four Investigators and the one Confidential Secretary – the five staff – the same persons as were in 2020?

Ms. Teixeira: The list is the same, Sir. The numbers are the same, the persons are the same. The number that you are looking at in the 2020 column is for the three months of 2020. That is why there is this big difference in the salaries. In fact, for 2020, if what was under the Ministry of the Public Security and the Office of the President for October to December is added, you will see the variation is not very large.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, believe me I do understand that this is a three-month period here for the revised 2020. I heard the Hon. Minister when she said that the gratuity is included. Now one would expect that if the gratuity was included, the amount would go up because a 12-month period is now being catered for. I am saying that, in the three months of October, November and December, we spent \$2,885,000. If we divide that number by three and we get the amount we spent per month, then we multiply it by 12 and we will know how

much we spend per year. When I did that, I got \$11,540,000, but I am seeing here \$8,802,000. A reduction of roughly \$3 million.

Mr. Chairman: It was a reduction based on your calculations. You have to be very specific.

Mr. Mahipaul: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: You have to ask the question: Is this sufficient?

Mr. Mahipaul: No, my question is not whether it is sufficient. My question is why is there a reduction? If the Hon. Minister said that the gratuity is now included, it is supposed to go up. I am asking: Was the contract altered? Was there a revision of the contracts of these five employees? I should ask what their salaries are, remuneration packages, benefits and others under this line item.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, in 2020, under the Ministry of the Public Security, for the period January to September, it was \$5,227,000 in addition to what you are seeing in the column for Office of the President – Police Complaints, \$2,885,000. First of all, there is no reduction. Secondly, in terms of your calculations, that would not be how it is done because everyone’s allowances are not the same. This includes their allowances and their salaries. As far as I am advised, this is calculated correctly, so that no staff would lose their benefits and the allowances they are entitled to on the contract.

Mr. Mahipaul: Given what the Hon. Minister would have said that, earlier, the allocation for the nine-month period was more than \$5 million. Given that she would have said that there is now, for the last three-month period, \$2,885,000 in 2020. Is it fair to conclude that we would have overbudgeted for this three-month period for this particular 2020 expenditure?

Mr. Chairman: We are asking questions relating to 2021. We are confined to 2021.

Mr. Mahipaul: Yes, Sir. I am trying to get guidance because I am guided by the revised 2020 number. Based on the revised 2020 number that was the base of my calculation that led me to conclude that it was more than \$11 million. The Hon. Minister was kind enough to say what was the expenditure for the first nine months of 2020. She then added that the \$2,885,000 is for the remaining three months of 2020. I am asking if it was overbudgeted or underbudgeted for?

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman and Hon. Member, the money that was spent in 2020 was \$8,208,000. The money allocated in 2021 is \$8,802,000. There is an additionality of \$594,000. This is a 7% increase. This covers the Investigators and the Confidential Secretaries, their vacation allowances and gratuities for 2021.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, I will move on. Under line item 6272 – Electricity Charges and line item 6273 – Water Charges, I have noticed that, in all the other programmes going back, there were charges that were put for electricity, for example, defence and national security [**An Hon. Member (Opposition):** (*Inaudible*)] No, that is zero. There were no charges other than for administration. I am assuming that administration covered water and electricity for the entire Office of the President. I see the Police Complaints Authority has an electricity charge which indicates to me that it is located outside of Office of the President, but I see no water charge. Will they not be paying the water bill?

Ms. Teixeira: Thank you for the question, Hon. Member. The Police Complaints Authority, as one may know, is housed on Brickdam in the same building as the Office of the Ombudsman and the Public Service Appellate Tribunal (PSAT). They are all in one building on Brickdam, just a door away from the Ministry of Housing and Water. The electricity charges here, is where the Police Complaints Authority has its own meter in the building, and it pays for its electricity. The PSAT pays for the electricity with the Office of Ombudsman. They share the cost of the electricity for the rest of the building and PSAT covers the water charges for the entire building.

Programme: 016 – Police Complaints Authority – \$33,181,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 016 – Police Complaints Authority – \$5,500,000

Mr. Mahipaul: Project code 2608700 – Police Complaints Authority: The project entails provision of a generator. I am assuming that this generator will be at the same building at Brickdam where the Hon. Minister would have told us is the location of the Police Complaints Authority.

Ms. Teixeira: Yes, it would be, Sir. It is located in the same place.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, therefore, is this generator going to provide backup services to the other offices that are also occupying that same building?

Ms. Teixeira: I am not aware of that arrangement with the other offices in the building.

Programme: 016 – Police Complaints Authority – \$5,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, this concludes our consideration of Agency 01, at 12.08 p.m. We have done well. Let us continue like this as we move forward.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, this is a good time to take the suspension.

Sitting suspended at 12.09 p.m.

1.19 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 1.19 p.m.

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

Agency 53: Guyana Defence Force

Current Expenditure

Programme: 531 Defence and Security Support - \$13,683,779,000

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, is your team ready?

Ms. Teixeira: Yes, Sir.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: I would like to refer to line item 6116 – Contracted Employees. There is a sum of \$323,400,000 that is budgeted for but, of course, the staffing details are not there. I understand that to be a security issue. The question I would like to ask is: What are these Contracted Employees going to do? Is it that the Guyana Defence Force (GDF) is contracting out defence services? If so, what are these services that are being contracted out?

Ms. Teixeira: The increase relates to 80 civilian employees who were formerly catered for under line item 6115. They have been moved to line item 6116, under Contracted Employees. There is no increase in the number of persons. It is the same 80 persons under line item 6115 – Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled – in previous budgets.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: While the number of persons may remain the same, the actual allocations are significantly different. I would just like to get an explanation for it.

Ms. Teixeira: Before this heading included the Civil Defence Commission (CDC) staff who have now been moved to the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). These 80 civilian employees, who I spoke of earlier, are specialists hired as civilians in the GDF. As I said they were there before and there is no increase in the numbers they were being paid before. What has happened now is that the GDF have rectified where they should be placed. They were under line item 6115 – Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled – and now they are under line item 6116 – Contracted Employees – which is a correction of where they were located in the budget items.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: As I said we usually do not question the staffing details but, under line item 6116, usually the contracted employees are stated there. His Excellency the President had made a very clear statement that they were going to be a border patrol team. Since we were not given any of these figures, my question is whether they are included in the current staffing numbers for the GDF or whether, in fact, there is going to be a special unit that will be contracted out under contracted employees?

Ms. Teixeira: Hon. Member, they are included in the total staff for GDF. As per norm since I have been a Member of Parliament (MP), which is a long time ago, the staffing details have never been broken down for the GDF.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: I know this.

Ms. Teixeira: No. I am just clarifying this because we have new Members.

Mr. Mahipaul: Could the Hon. Minister say how many CDC staff were transferred to the Office of the Prime Minister?

Ms. Teixeira: A total of 21 members of staff from the CDC were transferred from this head to Office of the Prime Minister.

Mr. Mahipaul: There is an increased allocation for total wages and salaries which is an indication that staff had increase. I noticed there are reductions under line items 6221, 6222 and 6224. I would like to have some clarity for line item 6221, given that we are in a Covid-19 pandemic? Why is there a reduction in drugs and medical supplies when there is an increase in personnel?

Ms. Teixeira: The reason for the \$10 million decline or reduction has to do with the fact that this would have catered for the CDC and this no longer includes the 21 CDC staff. They would now be catered under OPM, in terms of drugs and medical supplies.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, I am a new Member and so I am not sure if the Hon. Minister would be kind enough to breakdown line items 6284 and 6294.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6284 – Other: This is generally for software licenses, force events, laundering of uniforms and other services related to the army. Line item 6294 – Other: These relate to service operations of the GDF, medical agents, uniform material, specialised kits *et cetera*.

Mr. Mahipaul: The sums allocated under these two-line items are large sums and I do recognise that the Hon. Minister attempted to explain what the sums are for. I am trusting that, given she did not say how much money is allocated for whatever she called out, is it possible that the Hon. Minister could lay over the document that breaks down line items 6284 and 6294?

Ms. Teixeira: I appreciate the Member’s question. However, what I gave in terms of the general areas are the basic operations of the GDF and it would be difficult to do breakdowns because there are other issues that are included, and which are of security nature. It is not normal for us to do lay overs with the GDF’s internal budget.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, may I be specific and ask how much money is allocated specifically for uniforms because the Hon...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, are you sure you would like to ask that question because then you could get all kinds of extrapolation.

Mr. Mahipaul: With all due respect, I know that I am a Member of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and the Hon. Minister is also a Member...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, what is the sum allocated specifically for uniforms?

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6284 relates to the laundering of the uniforms. I am not sure... It depends on how they are used and if they get dirty, also if there are ceremonial occasions where they have to take them out of the closets and get them ready. Line item 6294 deals with uniform materials. So, all we could give the Hon. Member is the quantum of the

uniform materials, but, obviously, there are going to be differences because of the different ranks and ceremonial verses when they go into the jungles/rainforest and when they are in their normal uniforms.

Programme: 531 – Defence and Security Support - \$13,683,779,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 531 Defence and Security Support - \$1,105,000,000

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: Project code 1200100 – Building: A sum of \$300 million is allocated and in the legend. It states:

“Provision for buildings, fence, quarters and payment of retention.”

“The project details includes:

Payment of retention,

Construction of Defence Headquarters, passenger lounge, mess halls...”

The question that I would like to ask is whether, in fact, this is a new defence headquarters that is being constructed and, if so, whether it is going to be on the same site? That is the first question.

1.34 p.m.

Ms. Teixeira: There are four projects that are rollovers with a 50% retention rollover for four buildings; the new troop accommodation, Timehri; the Arm’s Store; and Regions 7 and 8 Drill Halls.

With regards to the question relating to the new Defence Headquarters, due to revisions in the budgets prior to the finalisation of the Budget, the Defence Headquarters was removed from the Budget. Therefore, the profile does not reflect what is the case. The new Defence Board is not budgeted for at this point for the GDF.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Project code 2800100 – Pure Water Supply: I see the sum of \$30 million allocated to this area. I was just wondering if it is for the construction of a new well or is it (*inaudible*).

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, could we ask the Hon. Member to speak louder? I know the mask is muffling her. She does not have a big voice like mine.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Okay. Are you hearing me now?

Ms. Teixeira: Yes, much better. Thank you.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Okay. Project code 2800100 – Pure Water Supply: I am looking at the allotted sum for the provision of pure water and I am asking if it is for a new well or for lines to be run to the various buildings?

Ms. Teixeira: This really does not have so much to do with construction but improving the distribution of the potable water for the ranks in the GDF at different locations across the country. So, this is not actually for the digging of a new well. It is really dealing with distribution issues.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: Project code 1200300 – Marine Development: I am going to ‘profile page’ No. 291. It speaks to the construction of bases and the procurement of boats, outboard engines and equipment at the sum of \$225 million. Could the Hon. Minister be a bit more specific in providing some details about the base, whether it is a security issue, or if it is boats...*(inaudible)* If it is in fact, I will accept that, but if it is not, could you please provide the details?

Ms. Teixeira: In this programme, for the sum of \$225 million, there are no provisions for new bases or large boats. The other provisions had to do with smaller engines for the marine section as well as just basic areas of that.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: This really is a misdescription of what the Budget really is. I will go to the next project code 2404600 – Air, Land and Water Transport and that is ‘profile page’ No. 292.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister...

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: I have not yet asked the question.

Mr. Chairman: Sorry.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: There is a sum here of \$350 million. Again, it is for the procurement of trucks, vehicles, outboard engines and boats. So, here is another project with the same procurement. I am trying to find out what boats will be procured under this and, if so, what type of boats will they be?

Ms. Teixeira: Just to answer the Hon. Member, when you asked the question on project code 1200300 – Marine development, that is specific to the Coast Guard. When we deal with the question now being asked under project code 2404600 – Air, Land and Water Transport, that is the GDF. That is just be clear on the distinction. In this one, we have a

series of vehicles and relatively small outboard engines that are involved for the general use by the GDF in the interior locations of Guyana.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: It is a very fine distinction; I must say because the marine assets of the GDF usually come under the Coast Guard. Things that are specific to the Coast Guard are specific to the Coast Guard, but I would not make a big fuss out of this.

I will go to the next item please and that is project code 2404600 – Air, Land and Water Transport. In our last Budget, under this said project code, we did make provision for the purchase of some helicopters. I see here that we are building lounges and so on, I suppose for the aircraft. I am just trying to get a sense now of whether, in fact, this aircraft has arrived and whether we have actually catered for the maintenance and the scheduled maintenance for the aircraft that we budgeted for in the last Budget?

Ms. Teixeira: The Bell helicopter that was in the supplementary last year will be arriving in Guyana on Saturday. The questions that you are asking now should have been asked when we were dealing with the current expenditures for the GDF. The preparation for the operational cost and the maintenance of that would be under the current expenditure and not the capital expenditure.

Lt. Col (Ret’d) Harmon: Let me go back, since we are under the capital expenditure and ask, specifically, about this lounge that is being built. What is it for and where is it going to be?

Ms. Teixeira: The lounge that you are asking about is provided for and will be located at the air core in Timehri.

Mr. Jones: Project code 2800200 – Agriculture Development: We see here the provision for land development as well as a processing plant. Could the Hon. Member indicate whether the land development will be at Garden of Eden, if not where, and as well, where is the processing plant and equipment being placed?

Ms. Teixeira: Yes, Sir. It is at Garden of Eden, as you asked.

Lt. Col (Ret’d) Harmon: I was just basically following up on the Opposition Chief Whip’s question. That is the second part of it which has to do with the processing plant and whether in fact it is also at Garden of Eden or someplace else? In fact, what is it really processing?

Ms. Teixeira: Thanks for both questions. The location is at Garden of Eden. That is where the processing and development will go on. Also, as you know, at Garden of Eden, a lot of swine are produced, so this will be for the production of bacon or ham, I guess. I see my Colleague, Mr. Ramjattan, suddenly woke up when he heard that. It is also for the inclusion of poultry rearing and probably some form of processing.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Jones, you had a query?

Mr. Jones: No, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Is that okay now?

Mr. Jones: Yes.

Programme 531: Defence and Security Support – \$1,105,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Let me take this time to thank the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance and Government Chief Whip and the officers of the GDF for taking us through that head.

Ms. Teixeira: Thank you, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much.

Agency 02: Office of The Prime Minister

Current Expenditure

Programme: 021 – Prime Minister’s Secretariat – \$380,353,000

Mr. Mahipaul: Thank you, Sir. Line item 6114 – Clerical and Office Support, the Staffing Details indicate 13 staff in 2021 and 13 in 2020. Similar to what occurred earlier, I am seeing a decrease. My calculations tell me, once all goes well in terms of the staffing salary, it is supposed to be \$15,636,000.

1.49 p.m.

Instead, I am seeing \$12,687,000. Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say why the reduction? I am assuming these are staff under the fixed establishment.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul, you could get us a bit confused. You have to say that it is based on your calculation. As far as I see, it is not a reduction, but based on

how you calculated, it is below what could accommodate these people. At least, for me, and I am very slow.

Hon. Prime Minister, Mr. Mahipaul has calculated that the sum required would be higher than stated. Am I putting it the other way correctly, Mr. Mahipaul, Hon. Member?

Prime Minister [Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips]: If I should answer, Mr. Chairman, the staff count remains the same. Maybe, I should read it out: Typist Clerk II, employed for \$92,588; Clerk III transferred from the Ministry of Public Telecommunications with effect from 1st October, 2020 – salary – \$76,166; Driver/Mechanic...

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, may I ask if I could just...

Mr. Chairman: No. Allow him to answer and then you could come back.

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: Driver/Mechanic transferred from the Ministry of Public Telecommunications with effect from 1st October, 2020, salary – \$70,000; Accounts Clerk transferred from the Ministry of Public Telecommunications with effect from 1st October, 2020, salary – \$73,000; Clerk III transferred from the Ministry of Public Telecommunications with effect from 1st October, 2020, salary – \$76,821; Office Assistant transferred from the Ministry of Public Telecommunications with effect from 1st October, 2020 – \$70,000; Clerk III transferred from the Ministry of Public Telecommunications with effect from 1st October, 2020 – \$77,528; and Clerk III transferred from... with effect from 1st October, 2020 – \$77,538. Those are the details.

Mr. Mahipaul: Clearly, the staff members who were transferred, effective 1st October 2020, are the staff that made up the complement of 13 in 2020. Those are the very 13 that are now there in 2021. In 2020, these 13 staff, for three months, were paid \$3,909,000. When one divides that by three and then multiply it by 12, one would get \$15,636,000, based on my calculation. The budgeted sum in 2021 is \$12,687,000. From my calculation, it is a deficit of anywhere around \$3 million. The Hon. Prime Minister was kind enough to say that the very staff they had in 2020 are what they now have in 2021. Could I endeavour to get some guidance from the Hon. Prime Minister?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: It is an increase for 12 months, Hon. Member.

Mr. Chairman: The Hon. Prime Minister said it is an increase for 12 months.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, I do recognise that. I am saying that the \$3,909,000 is for a three-month period.

Mr. Chairman: Let us get the Prime Minister’s staff to guide him again. We do not need to repeat three times.

Mr. Mahipaul: After I heard him answer and say it is an increase...

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: Mr. Chairman, the \$12,687,000 is adequate to pay the salary for 12 months.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, Hon. Prime Minister.

Mr. Mahipaul: If I may, again, go to the very line item, it is visible that it is \$12,687,000, as the Hon. Prime Minister alluded. Mr. Chairman, I am saying to the Hon. Prime Minister, through you, that if the staff are being paid the same money they were paid in October, November and December, 2020... Are the staff being paid, in 2021, the same moneys they were paid in October, November and December?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: Mr. Chairman, we are paying the same salary and the sum listed, which I mentioned earlier, is adequate to pay the salary in 2021.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, Hon. Prime Minister. Hon. Member Mr. Mahipaul, you have to move on to a new question.

Mr. Mahipaul: If I am guided correctly, it is our time to ask the questions. If we are not satisfied with an answer, we could...

Mr. Chairman: It is four times you have asked the same question in different formats. The Prime Minister said that the sum stated would adequately provide for the existing staff based on the same salaries.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, with all due respect, my understanding is that we are using our time. Am I incorrect that we are using our time?

Mr. Chairman: I agree. The time is yours. There is also an issue of repeating to the extent of it becoming badgering. You get a fifth bite of the cherry now.

Mahipaul: I seek your guidance, Sir. If I want to ask all the questions and exhaust all the time on this one...*[interruption]*

[Mr. Chairman hit the gavel.]

Mr. Chairman, may I engage you now? I am asking, if I want to ask all the questions on this same line item, is that not permitted?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, if any Member wants to ask the same question five times, I will cite the Standing Order with respect to repetition. If you want to ask different questions surrounding the same item, I will allow it.

Mr. Mahipaul: Thank you, Sir. Kindly engage me with one more question pertaining to the same line item.

Mr. Chairman: Please, Sir. Go ahead, Hon. Member.

Mr. Mahipaul: Just for emphasis, I wish to repeat that, in 2020, the 13 staff were paid \$3,909,000. When that is divided by three, as I said earlier, it is \$1,303,000. When it is multiplied by 12, it is \$15,636,000. I am repeating it to understand how is it that \$12 million would cater for the same 13 staff.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you. Hon. Prime Minister, how is it that this \$12 million would cater for the same 13 staff?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: In 2020, we had some mergers and we had some separations. The figure remains the same but because of these movement of people, that is what is reflected here. I wish to assure the Hon. Member that the amount listed is adequate to pay the 13 staff for 2021.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I see there is an increase of five new contracted employees. Could the Hon. Prime Minister give us the designations of the five new contracted employees and their emoluments? Thank you.

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: To answer the Hon. Member’s question, the new employees are: Receptionist, \$70,000 with effect from 2020-11-09 in the Office of the Prime Minister; Digital Communications Officer, \$70,000 with effect from 20th November, 2020; Regional Representative, salary of \$236,000 with telephone and other allowances with effect from 10th August 2020; Confidential Secretary, salary of \$160,000, duty allowance, \$20,000; telephone allowance, \$5,000 with effect from 16th October 2020; and Personal Assistant to the Hon. Prime Minister, the salary is \$300,000; duty allowance, \$20,000 and telephone allowance, \$10,000, with effect from 2020-08-10.

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6131 – Other Direct Labour Costs: Could the Hon. Prime Minister be kind enough to say if there are staff members under his watch currently who are acting in

positions or if they are performing additional duties other than their own?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: The allocation caters for acting allowance for Assistant Secretary General, \$72,041; acting allowance for EPMA 1, \$22,208; duty allowance for 1 - \$35,000; acting allowance for Assistant Accountant - \$26,789; acting allowance of \$3,201; duty allowances for four Drivers and two Driver/Mechanics – \$15,000 each; and duty allowances for two Confidential Secretaries - \$10,000 each.

Mr. Mahipaul: Regarding the positions that currently attract actors, is the Office of the Prime Minister going to, soonest, explore the option of filling those vacancies, through the Public Service Commission (PSC), by advertising, employing and going through the normal procedure of the PSC in order to fill those vacancies that currently have actors?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Prime Minister, I do not think that pertains to a specific sum allocated, but please.

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: I did not hear you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: The Hon. Member is speaking about filling the vacancies that exist because there are a lot of acting appointments.

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: We are on the course of doing this now, but I wish to mention that this is a sore issue that we had inherited upon assuming Office.

Mr. Mahipaul: Thank you. A follow-up: I am happy to hear that the Hon. Prime Minister is trying his utmost to fix the issue. May I ask if notice was already given to the Public Service Commission so that they could commence the process to fill those vacancies?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: Mr. Chairman, I wish to remind the Hon. Member that the PSC is an independent body. It is my duty to decide when to take the necessary action.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, with your permission, I agree and accept fully that the Public Service Commission is independent. When there is a vacancy that is available in a Ministry, it is the Permanent Secretary’s duty to notify the Public Service Commission so that it could place the advertisement and commence the process.

My question is, to fill these vacant positions, where we are paying actors from line item 6131, have you, Hon. Prime

Minister, commenced the process by way of notifying the Public Service Commission so that advertising and so on and the necessary process could start to fill these vacancies?

2.04 p.m.

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: I wish to, again, assure the Hon. Member that I will take necessary actions as I see it fit. The matter is being discussed with the senior executives in my agency.

Mr. Mahipaul: Thank you, Sir. If I may have one more question on this very line item where we have all these actors...Would the Prime Minister endeavour to commence the process so that we could fill these vacancies and have substantive appointments before the end of March – to start the process at least?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, is there another question on this line item? I would like to put the programme. I now put the question that the sum stated for...

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, the...

Mr. Chairman: Go ahead, Sir. Let me hear the question, Hon. Member.

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6284 – Other: Could the Hon. Prime Minister please give a breakdown of the line item?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Prime Minister, you have the floor. Please allow the Prime Minister to answer the question.

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: The justification is that the policy oversight sector requires technical skills. As a result, consultants in this sector are highly skilled and will be remunerated commensurate with their skills. [Mr. Hamilton: He is a sanctimonious gangster.]

Mr. Chairman: Gangster is not a word we use in the Assembly. Hon. Minister of Labour, please, you can read.

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6264 – Vehicle Spares and Service: Would the Hon. Prime Minister be kind enough to say how many vehicles are in the fleet?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: There are 16 vehicles in the fleet. They are: PLL 4661, PSS 744, PSS 742, CK 3361, CK 2700, PPP 10, PVV 1782, PWW 5214, PPP 12, PXX 3393, PXX 5681, PSS 6, PTT 3303, PRR 8646, PSS 3034, PZZ 4373 and three motorcycles.

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister say which infrastructure this is? [**Hon. Member:** *[Inaudible]*]

Mr. Chairman: Please do not mention the word bangle. The leading jeweller in the country told me that sales drop every time we say bangle in the House.

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: Line item 6255 caters for maintenance of the outdoor facilities, including a swimming pool that was inherited. Therefore, the Prime Minister, being a resident there, has to do the responsible thing and maintain the pool.

Mr. Holder: Line item 6283 – Cleaning and Extermination Services: In 2019, the Government spent \$1,697,000. In 2020, the Government budgeted \$5,000,000 but only spent \$2,583,000. How do you justify budgeting \$8,000,000 for the year 2021, given that the Government spent under \$2 million in 2019?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: In 2020, the Ministry of Health had helped in the fumigation of both premises, the Office of the Prime Minister and the official residence of the Prime Minister. However, this year, we have to fund the fumigation and other activities. Therefore, there is an increase in the budget.

Programme: 021 – Prime Minister’s Secretariat – \$380,353,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 021 – Prime Minister’s Secretariat – \$211,030,000

Mr. Jones: Project code 1701000 – Minor Works: Under provision for buildings, it is explained here that, amongst other things, there is the design and construction of a building and the rehabilitation of the official residence of the Prime Minister. My question is: is it the official residence of the Prime Minister as current or is it the official residence of the Prime Minister as in the building?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: This is the breakdown of the sum: the renovation of the ceiling at the official residence of the Prime Minister – \$6,000,000; renovations and repairs to the windows at the official residence of the Prime Minister – \$5,530,000; and renovation to the fire escape at the official residence of the Prime Minister. It is a five-story building, by the way, with three living areas and two towers. Therefore,

there is the need for a fire escape, and it will be \$6.5 million for that renovation.

With regard to the construction of the new office, that is a two-year project. The sum of \$150 million will be expended in 2021 towards the design and consultancy related to the start of that project.

Mr. Jones: Follow-up: Could the Hon. Prime Minister indicate where this building is going to be constructed?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: That will be on Hadfield Street – the old National Frequency Management Unit (NFMU) building.

Mr. Jones: Project code 2404000 – Land Transport: There is a sum of \$23 million here. Could the Hon. Prime Minister indicate the type and number of vehicles to be purchased?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: The sum represents the purchase of two escort cars. As the Hon. Member knows, the Prime Minister inherited some vehicles from the former Prime Minister who had inherited those same vehicles and never changed them. Those vehicles need changing now. Likewise, for the household, there is a Sport Utility Vehicle (SUV).

Mr. Patterson. On the same project code 2404000, Land Transport, in the 2020 Budget, if the Prime Minister could remember, there was \$18,882,000. In that profile, there was the purchase of a vehicle. Could the Prime Minister say what type of vehicle was purchased and at what cost in 2020? Also, could the Hon. Member say what are the new vehicles that are budgeted to be purchased?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: The Hon. Member knows the difference between \$18 million and \$8.5 million. I do not know if you want all the details, but this is vehicle for the Second Lady.

Mr. Patterson: I thought I was clear, Sir. The 2020 Budget stated that there would have been the purchase of a vehicle. That is in the capital profile. Obviously, by the end of January, 2021, the purchase would have been completed. In 2020, the Hon. Member budgeted moneys to purchase a vehicle. All I am asking the Prime Minister is: What type of vehicle did he purchase and what was the cost? What are the types of vehicles that the Hon. Member is budgeting to purchase now?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, before I ask the Prime Minister that, earlier today we had addressed the issue of

allocations in 2020. So, I am not going to be too lenient with respect to questions relating to...

[*Interruption*]

Mr. Patterson: Sir, ...

Mr. Chairman: I am speaking, Sir. Would you take your seat? I am not going to be too lenient with respect to Members asking about sums allocated in Budget 2020 for 2020. We had that opportunity. I think the Prime Minister did answer for what he was going to get; it is two escort vehicles along with an SUV with the current budget allocation. Should I have heard differently, I will ask the Prime Minister if he will answer again.

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: Mr. Chairman, an off-road vehicle was purchased in 2020 for the Prime Minister to use on his outreaches. The Prime Minister is in possession of that vehicle. I hope that answers the Hon. Member’s question.

Programme: 021 – Prime Minister’s Secretariat – \$211,030,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

2.19 p.m.

Current Estimates

Programme 022– Disaster Preparedness, Response and Management– \$483,045,00

Mr. Mahipaul: Earlier when we were dealing with the Guyana Defence Force (GDF), the Hon. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance was kind enough to say that 21 staff from the Civil Defence Commission (CDC) were transferred under the Office of the Prime Minister. I am looking at line item 6111 to line item 6117 and I am seeing no reference or record of the 21 staff. Could the Hon. Prime Minister say where the 21 staff are located?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: If the Hon. Member would look under staffing details at line item 6116, he would see it caters for 25 contracted employees. They are: Training Officer, salary at \$201,954 with effect from 1st January, 2021; Project Manager, salary at \$227,174 with effect from 1st January, 2021; Senior Logistics Officer, salary of \$133,428 and duty allowance of \$2000 with effect from 1st January, 2021; Procurement Officer, salary of \$192,352 and duty allowance of \$10,000 with effect from 2021-02-03; Motor Operation Transport Officer, salary of \$192,352, uniform allowance, \$6000 – obviously has to wear overalls – with effect from 21st

January, 2021; Warehouse Supervisor, salary of \$256,402, traveling allowance, \$13,000 and uniform allowance with effect from 1st January, 2021; Handy Man, salary of \$105,777; another Handy Man at \$94,513 and duty allowance of \$4000, respectively, with effect from 1st January, 2021; Driver, salary of \$133,000 with an allowance of \$6000 with effect from 1st January, 2021; Driver, salary of \$133,428 with an allowance of \$6000; Community Based Development Risk Management (CBDRM) Officer, salary of \$192,352 with effect from 30th June, 2020; Boat Operator, salary of \$161,769 with effect from 1st January, 2021; Information Technology (IT) Officer, salary of \$236,587 with effect from 1st January, 2021; that is one IT Officer; Administrative Officer, salary of \$192,353 with an allowance of \$7,280; Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, salary of \$291,934; Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) Supervisor, salary of \$132,644 with effect from 1st January, 2021; Finance Clerk, salary of \$169,000 with effect from 1st January, 2021; Driver, salary of \$133,000 and, again, a uniform allowance of \$6000 with effect from 30th September, 2020; Driver, a salary of \$132,665 and uniform allowance of \$6000 with effect from 1st January, 2021; Secretary, salary of \$126, 869 with effect from 1st January, 2021; Cleaner, salary of \$82,010 with effect from 1st January, 2021; Finance Supervisor, a salary of \$132 with a duty allowance of \$10,000 with effect from 1st July, 2020; and Training Officer, a salary of \$201,954 and duty allowance of \$10,000 with effect from 1st July, 2020.

Mr. Mahipaul: May I ask the Hon. Prime Minister if the 21 staff from the Civil Defence Commission, who the Hon. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance alluded to earlier as having been transferred to his Office, are included in the 25 contracted employees under line item 6116?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: The answer to the Hon. Member’s question is yes, they are included in the 25.

Mr. Mahipaul: If I am correct, the 21 who were transferred plus 4 would give one 25. Based on the answer the Prime Minister provided just now in terms of reading out when they were employed from 2021-01-01, in 2020, there were 25 employees there also. Would the Hon. Prime Minister say what has happened to the 25 who existed which has caused them to get 25 new staff for 2021?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: I wish to inform the Hon. Member that these are not new staff. What we had was an expiration of contacts and the contracts are now taken over by the Office of the Prime Minister.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, that is rather alarming because when we were dealing with the Guyana Defence Force, these 21 staff were catered for in the 2020 Budget of the Guyana Defence Force. Then they were transferred, in 2021, to the Office of the Prime Minister. How is it that you can say that you had 21 who existed in 2020? You should get more. I am asking the Hon. Prime Minister if he could further clarify line item 6116. If they are renewing the staff, then it should be the 25 that existed plus the 21 that were added, to which the Hon. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance alluded.

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: I think this should clear the confusion of the Hon. Member. The staff were given new contracts when they came over unto the list of the Office of the Prime Minister with effect from the 1st (*inaudible*).

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Prime Minister, was that from the 1st of October or the 1st January?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: Let me explain to you. We took over the staff from the 1st October. As their contracts came to an end, we kept renewing contracts. What I read out here just now...there were dates when contracts came to an end and therefore the dates represent renewal of contracts from that date. We took over the staff from 1st October.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, I am still having some difficulties and I would gladly like for it to be clarified before I go home and sleep with a heavy heart on this matter. Sir, in the 2020 Guyana Defence Force Budget, these 21 staff were catered for ... [*Interruption*]

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Chairman...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Prime Minister, please allow him to continue. Remember, he has to reach to number five – five times to ask the same question. Go ahead.

Mr. Mahipaul: Thank you, Sir. In the 2020 Budget, which is what I have here, for the Guyana Defence Force, these 21 staff were there. They were there for October, November and December. They were paid from the GDF. Now, we have moved to 2021. The Hon. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance said that 21 persons were taken out of Guyana Defence Force and put into the hands of the Prime Minister, the Civil Defence Commission. The Prime Minister accepted that the 21 are under his watch so that means 21 plus 4 is 25. In 2020, the Prime Minister had 25 also. So, I am asking what has happened to the 25 in 2020 that has caused the number, in 2021, to remain as 25, notwithstanding there being 21 from the CDC added.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Prime Minister, you have another opportunity to answer the same question.

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: Mr. Chairman, I could only answer for the Civil Defence Commission. I cannot answer for the GDF. The Hon. Member, Ms. Gail Teixeira, answered for the GDF already. With effect from 1st October, the staff came over to the Office of the Prime Minister.

Ms: Flue-Bess: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Prime Minister say to which other infrastructure he is referring?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: The details are: installation of perimeter lighting for \$2.4 million at Timehri. That is the alternate National Emergency Operation Centre. Revetment to the eastern drain for \$2million. That is at the Civil Defence Commission headquarters, Georgetown. Shelves for storage containers for \$600,000. Again, this is at the Civil Defence Commission headquarters. That will give us a grand total of \$5 million.

Mr. Patterson: Line item 6111 to line item 6117. All of them...

Mr. Chairman: Is it line item 6117?

Mr. Patterson: It is line item 6111 to line item 6117.

Mr. Chairman: You could only speak to line item 6116 where there is a sum allocated.

Mr. Patterson: Sir, I am just taking it in totality. I am speaking to line item 6116.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Sir.

Mr. Patterson: Could the Hon. Prime Minister say if the Civil Defence Commission, which he said is now under him, is now responsible for the search and rescue operations?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: I wish to inform the Hon. Member that the Civil Defence Commission really has a coordinating function. If they are involved in a search and rescue operation, it is from a point of view of coordinating. The actual search would be done by an appropriate agency that is qualified for that, but the CDC would do the coordination in terms of bringing the resources together and informing the political directorate from time to time.

Mr. Patterson: Follow-up: In other words, it is the lead coordinating agency? Hon. Prime Minister, if it is, could you

say to us who of the Contracted Employees under line item 6111 are specifically tasked with the search and rescue coordination?

Secondly, under what legislation are these persons operating?

2.34 p.m.

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: There is no legislation, I am advised. All staff are involved in the coordinating function. The actual conduct of the search and rescue will be done by the appropriate agency. As you are aware, as the former Minister, the Maritime Administration Department (MARAD) is responsible for anything that pertains to sea. The Guyana Defence Force Air Corps will deal with land-based searches and rescues.

Mr. Patterson: Final follow-up question: The Civil Defence Commission (CDC), as the Prime Minister just confirmed, is the coordinating entity. Did the CDC coordinate the recent search for the missing boat with the engine and bodies of dead persons?

Brigadier (Ret'd) Phillips: That was not a national disaster; it was a search and rescue mission that was ably coordinated by the MARAD. There was no need to involve the CDC there. The CDC, obviously, had been informed as to what was happening, but there was no need for the CDC to be coordinating that.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, this is a good time to put the question. Ms. Flue-Bess...

Mr. Figueira: Sir...

Ms. Flue-Bess: Mr. Chairman, I will yield.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Ms. Flue-Bess. The rule is the Member that first catches the eye of the Chairman. I saw the microphone on... Hold on, Hon. Members, I am speaking. I do not need a lecture; I have been around a long time. I am telling the Hon. Members what the convention is. I do not need to be directed as to who is first, who is second, or who is third. The rule, the convention, is that the person who first catches the eye of the Chairman, and Ms. Flue-Bess caught my eye, so I called on her. If she does not want to speak, I can now look again.

Hon. Member Mr. Figueira, please.

Mr. Figueira: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Hon. Prime Minister, could you say if all of these 25 contracted employees have the same contractual timeframe?

Brigadier (Ret'd) Phillips: I will just ask the Hon. Member to speak up.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Prime Minister indicate if all of the contracted employees have the same duration in their contractual arrangements.

Brigadier (Ret'd) Phillips: No. They would not have the same duration because, as you know, contracts of this nature are done individually.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Mr. Figueira, do you have a follow-up question?

Mr. Figueira: Hon. Prime Minister, I do not follow what you are saying. Are you saying no? If it is no, could you state the shortest contractual arrangement and the longest contractual arrangement? And, more so, could you give the numbers of how much these different contractual arrangements ... If there is five for five years, seven, *et cetera*. That type of breakdown would really be appreciated, if there is any.

Brigadier (Ret'd) Phillips: If I should answer the Hon. Member, the shortest contract is one year and the longest is three years. That conforms to what obtains, widely, within the public service, in the private sector, and wherever.

Mr. Figueira: Could you indicate how many of the 25 contracted employees have a one-year contract and how many have a five-year contract, or three, so be it?

Brigadier (Ret'd) Phillips: There are three-year and one-year contracts. I do not have those figures.

Mr. Figueira: Final question, Hon. Prime Minister.

Mr. Chairman: You first address that to me, not to the Prime Minister. So, you should say: Final question, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Figueira: Okay, Cde. Chairman. Hon. Prime Minister, could you indicate if all of the 25 contracted employees will be placed on the fixed establishment?

Brigadier (Ret'd) Phillips: No, they are contracted employees. There was a decision taken to have them as contracted employees, and they are contracted employees. I cannot predict the future, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Figueira: Could the Hon. Prime Minister indicate to this Committee if it is the intention of the Government to have all contracted employees placed on the fixed establishment?

Brigadier (Ret'd) Phillips: I wish to say two things: One, this is a situation we inherited – contracted employees. Secondly, I think the question is irrelevant.

Mr. Figueira: I appreciate the Prime Minister recognising that it is a situation he has inherited. Given the fact that it is the situation, could you state what the Government’s intention is with respect to contracted employees in Government service? Is the intention to have those contracted employees placed on the fixed establishment? It is your Government.

Brigadier (Ret'd) Phillips: That is not a question for the Prime Minister. There is an appropriate time during this estimate when you can ask that question. What I can tell you is that this is a practice that was inherited and there is no reason why we should not continue to have contracted employees.

Mr. Figueira: With the greatest respect to the Hon. Prime Minister, Sir, this is your Government. I am asking if your Government has any intentions placing contracted employees on the fixed establishment?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I think the Prime Minister said that there is going to be an appropriate time. I guess the policy person dealing with contracted persons might ... Hon. Prime Minister, do you want to respond?

Brigadier (Ret'd) Phillips: The question was already answered as far as I am concerned, Mr. Chairman. There is no need to answer.

Mr. Holder: Mr. Chairman, given the Government’s reluctance in renegotiating the oil contract to ensure that oil companies are held ...

Mr. Chairman: Could you direct me to a line item?

Mr. Holder: Sorry, Mr. Chairman.

Line item 6284 – Other: Given the Government’s reluctance in renegotiating oil contracts to ensure that companies are responsible for any oil spills, *per se*, is there any provision under this line item, or anywhere in the Budget, as a matter of fact, to deal with any major oil spills?

Mr. Chairman: He could only answer for this line item.

Brigadier (Ret'd) Phillips: I wish to advise the Hon. Member that we are a proactive Government. We have, in the Budget, field testing and training on oil spill equipment; we have a national oil spill plan; and, as you know, annually, we have what we call Exercise Tradewinds. This year, Exercise Tradewinds will be held in Guyana and the focus will be on preparing for oil spills.

Mr. Holder: A follow-up question: Could the Hon. Minister state what is the allocation that caters for the oil spill? I heard him mention that they will be doing some trainings and so forth. Could he give the amount that is allocated for that?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Prime Minister, a breakdown on the types of training, especially on oil spills, is being requested.

Brigadier (Ret'd) Phillips: Let me advise the Hon. Member that if he had listened carefully to what I said just now, he would not have arrived at dealing with figures. However, we have \$3 million in our Budget for training. We will also benefit from similar training through our international partners, including Exercise Tradewinds as mentioned earlier. We do not have the amount that will be expended for the provision for that training. However, Guyana will benefit from that training.

Programme: 022 - Disaster Preparedness, Response and Management – \$483,045,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 022 – Disaster Preparedness, Response and Management – \$80,000,000

Mr. Patterson: Could the Hon. Prime Minister disaggregate the amounts for \$80,000,000, because in the Legend states that it is for payments of retention and provision of building, equipment, and furniture.

Brigadier (Ret'd) Phillips: Retention payment for consultant, CDC expansion, Head Quarters, Georgetown, Region 4 – \$624,073; Retention payment, CDC Headquarters, Lethem, Region 9 –\$6,968,394; retention payment for consultant on Lethem warehouse, Lethem, Region 9 – \$470,854; rollover for perimeter fence, Lethem warehouse, Region 9 – \$6,170,460; construction of CDC Headquarters, Georgetown, Region 4 – \$35,000,000; construction of three guard huts at the CDC Headquarters and an alternative national emergency operation centre at Timehri –\$4,000,000; 24 beds for Lethem, Region 9 – \$2 million; eight air conditioning units for Georgetown, Region 4 –\$1.2

million; 15 laptops – \$5,589,000; six executive desks, Georgetown, Region 4 – \$1.5 million; six executive office chairs – \$360,000; 15 office desks – \$1,500,000; 30 office chairs – \$900,000; 12 conference tables – \$1,440,000; 30 conference chairs – \$1,650,000; all-terrain vehicle (ATV) battery charger for Lethem, Region 9 – \$45,000; two flatscreen television, 50-inches, Georgetown, Region 4 – \$900,000; two 10-pound jacks, Georgetown, Region 4 – \$151,792; four wireless headsets for Region 4, Georgetown – \$51,792; one mobile projector screen with stand for Region 4, Georgetown – \$40,000; and one small compressor for Region 4, Georgetown – \$35,000.

2.49 p.m.

Those give a total of \$80 million.

Programme: 022 – Disaster Preparedness, Response and Management – \$80,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 023 – Power Generation – \$3,472,617,000

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Patterson, you have the floor.

Mr. Patterson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is only one line item here. I hope I do not have to keep referring to it every time I ask a question. Is that satisfactory? It is line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, Hon. Member, you will have some latitude.

Mr. Patterson: Pardon me, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Chairman: It is Subsidies to National Organisations.

Mr. Patterson: I am asking questions on that line item because there are several agencies that come under that head. I just hope that I do not have to repeat which line item every time I ask a question.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Patterson: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I will start off with Kwakwani Utilities Incorporated (KUI). There is a sum of \$490 million there; could the Hon. Prime Minister...

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: No, Hon. Member.

Mr. Patterson: My apologies, Sir. I think the Hon. Prime Minister is confused. There is only one item under this line. [**An Hon. Member:** *(Inaudible)*]. You are correct. Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations is the only line item with an allocation under Current Expenditure. Is the Prime Minister following me?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: Yes, Hon. Member.

Mr. Patterson: Thank you very much. Under Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations – I ask permission from the Chairman, without referring to the line item, to ask questions in any order under this line. I started off with KUI. I would just like the Hon. Prime Minister to give, not in detail, but an overview of what the sum of \$490 million includes and the purpose for which it would be used.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, are the questions in relation to KUI?

Mr. Patterson: That is correct, Mr. Chairman.

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: In the 2021 Budget, we have \$490 million to cover KUI. I have the breakdown with everything...

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, all I am asking for is a brief overview of what the sum of \$490 million will be used to cover for KUI. What are you covering with the \$490 million? I did not ask for a breakdown.

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: The Kwakwani Utilities Incorporated is a special place. It is not just about electricity. We are also covering water and sanitation for Kwakwani. Basically, everything that is considered utilities for Kwakwani are covered with the sum of \$490 million.

Mr. Patterson: That is the answer I was looking for. I just wanted to ensure I was not off-track. In his 2020 Budget speech, the Hon. Member, Mr. Indar, stated that Kwakwani Utilities Incorporated is owed \$81 million and that the Hon. Prime Minister would be carrying a Cabinet Paper for emergency funding for the said company. I checked and the disbursement here is exactly the same but a few dollars more than what it was in 2021. Could the Hon. Prime Minister say where is the sum of \$81 million, as the Hon. Member had said, which went to Cabinet to be disbursed as emergency to KUI?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: Mr. Chairman, he is talking about the 2021 Budget. I have the figures for the 2021 Budget. The Hon. Member is asking about the 2020 Budget.

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, I think you have to clarify this for me, for the *Hansard* and for every Guyanese here. The 2020 Budget is an estimate of what the Government was going to do. The 2021 Budget has the estimates of what they are going to do in 2021. Is the Hon. Member saying that we cannot ask if he had completed what he said that he was going to do in 2020?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, what I am saying is that you cannot ask for the sums allocated for 2020. However, if I were you, I may have asked whether we paid that sum and, if we did not, is it included in this \$490 million.

Mr. Patterson: That is exactly what I am trying to find out.

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

Mr. Patterson: Is the sum of \$81 million included in the sum of \$490 million?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Prime Minister, did we pay it last year? If not, is it included here?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: Mr. Chairman, listed here is a budgeted sum of \$322.8 million as at the end of September. For the Revised Budget, which is the emergency Budget that obviously catered for 1st October to the end of the year, there was an additional sum of \$147,348,000. That will bring us to a revised position at the end of the year of a sum of \$470,184,000. It is obvious that what was required for KUI for the rest of the year of 2020 was provided for in the emergency Budget. Perhaps, with a little bit more research, the sum that you are talking about, you will find that it was part of the emergency Budget.

Mr. Patterson: Are you saying that Kwakwani Utilities Incorporated has no outstanding liabilities for 2021 and that the sum of \$490 million is to cater for everything?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Prime Minister, does this sum cater for any outstanding liabilities?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: The simplest answer I could offer is, no.

Mr. Patterson: Sir, have you muted my microphone?

Mr. Chairman: No, I have no control over your microphone; not as yet.

Mr. Patterson: Moving on, Sir. As I said, I have no particular order in asking my questions. I see a sum of \$2.3 billion catered for the Linden Mining Enterprise (LINMINE).

In 2020, the sum paid was \$4.5 billion and, in 2019, it was in excess of \$3 billion. Could I ask the Prime Minister why there is a reduction?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Prime Minister, is the reduction sufficient?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: Mr. Chairman, the reduction is sufficient. As the Hon. Member mentioned, we had a sum of \$4 billion in 2020. That sum of \$1.059 billion covered the shortfall in payments for 2018 and 2019 for Bosai Minerals Group Guyana Incorporated, while the sum of \$1.038 billion catered for value-added tax (VAT) for 2018 and 2019 and this was covered in the 2020 Budget. The 2021 budgeted amount is based on projected energy consumption and fuel cost, with the exclusion of VAT. So, that will cover the figure here of \$2.3 billion for 2020.

Mr. Patterson: Sir, once again, in the 2020 Budget, the Hon. Member Mr. Indar made a bold statement that LINMINE was owed \$728 million. Is the sum of \$728 million included in the sum of \$2.3 billion that you have allocated this year?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: As I recall saying, we covered all the expenses and all the arrears. It stands to reason that it will be included, so I consider the Hon. Member’s question answered.

Mr. Patterson: The Guyana Energy Agency (GEA), nothing of any relevance... could the Hon. Prime Minister provide us, or I hope he could lay it over, with a general summary of the staffing complement for the GEA which is catered for in the sum of \$329 million?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, just for clarification, do you want the information to be laid over or do you want a presentation and a layover?

Mr. Patterson: Sir, I asked if the Hon. Member could lay it over, but I have a follow-up question. I do not want the details.

Mr. Chairman: Do you want an overview and then a layover?

Mr. Patterson: Pardon me, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Chairman: Do you want a quick overview and then a layover?

Mr. Patterson: I would accept an overview. He could tell me how many employees are there. Please do not tell me about the cleaners...

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: There is 114 staff, and I could read out them for you.

Mr. Chairman: You could lay it over, Hon. Prime Minister.

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: I can lay it over.

Mr. Patterson: That amount of 114 staff is excellent. Are you catering for the additional staff hired? That is a general overview that I want, and then I want to ask a follow-up question regarding this.

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: The GEA has one vacancy that I can assure you will be filled in 2021.

3.04 p.m.

Mr. Patterson: Under the same line item, can I confirm that the Guyana Power and light is under the Office of the Prime Minister?

Mr. Chairman: Are you asking me or the Prime Minister?

Mr. Patterson: I am asking you, Sir?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: The Guyana Power and Light (GPL) is coordinated by the Prime Minister.

Mr. Patterson: The Minister of Finance stated in his Budget speech, if you can recall, that \$2 billion has been allocated to address the arrears of GPL. Could the Hon. Prime Minister say where is this sum located?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: That money was transferred from the Ministry of Finance to GPL to cover the arrears and unpaid bills by many Government agencies. That is an exercise that had started since last year when we transferred \$6 billion to GPL. This is an additional \$2 billion and, by my estimation, we still have another \$8 billion to clear in all expenses owed to GPL.

Mr. Chairman: Is it owed to GPL or owed by GPL?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: It is owed to GPL.

Mr. Chairman: Okay.

Mr. Patterson: Let me confirm what the Prime Minister is saying. Is he saying that this money has already been transferred? Mr. Chairman, did you hear that?

Mr. Chairman: No. I understand the Prime Minister to be saying that the transfers of funds to GPL come from the

Ministry of Finance for outstanding liabilities from the Government.

Mr. Patterson: Sir, I hope you will remember that particular answer when...

Mr. Chairman: That is my understanding, but I can ask for clarification.

Mr. Patterson: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: He is saying that \$2 billion is going to be taken care of in this Budget.

Hon. Prime Minister, just an affirmation that...

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: The Minister of Finance will answer, but it is here in the Budget.

Senior Minister in the Office of the President with responsibility for Finance [Dr. Singh]: Mr. Chairman, just to clarify that those amounts are budgeted under the Ministry of Finance under ‘Electricity Charges’. We will deal with it when we get to Agency 3.

Mr. Patterson: Could we go back to Hinterland Electrification Company Incorporated (HECI)? I would like to ask the same question that I asked in relation to GEA as it relates to the overview of the staff – the 2020 and the 2021 staffing complement.

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: The HECI has nine staff and it intends to employ an additional three before the end of 2021.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Patterson, do you want to ask a follow-up question, because I saw the microphone for the Hon. Khemraj Ramjattan?

Mr. Ramjattan: [*Inaudible*].

Mr. Chairman: Was it an accident?

Mr. Ramjattan: Yes.

Mr. Shuman: Could the Hon. Prime Minister say, from the more than \$61 million which is budgeted for the Hinterland Electrification Company Incorporated, how much is allocated for the upgrading of the St. Cuthbert’s Electrification Grid?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: The sum of \$15 million is budgeted to upgrade the distribution network at St. Cuthbert’s Mission.

Mr. Patterson: Just for clarification, is that under line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations?

Mr. Chairman: The Hon. Member is asking if it is catered for under line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations.

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: That is a capital expenditure.

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: The question was asked so should I deny the Hon. Member an answer to his question? Mr. Speaker, I am guided here.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I think the capital part is going to come up at page 618 and 619.

Mr. Patterson: For the record, someone should state that the response there is for capital as opposed to current, if that is not clarified...

Mr. Chairman: I did state the sum for Agency 02, Office of the Prime Minister, Programme: 023 – Power Generation, Current Expenditure. That is the proposal that I put. We are going to get to that.

Mr. Shuman: In light of the confusion that this seemed to have caused my Colleagues, I wish to withdraw that question and pose it at the appropriate time.

Programme: 023 – Power Generation – \$3,472,617,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 023 – Power Generation – \$4,934,800,000.

Mr. Shuman: I will pose the correct question to which my Colleague is alluding about the sum allocated for Hinterland Electrification Company Incorporated. Could the Hon. Prime Minister say how much is allocated for upgrade to the grid in St. Cuthbert’s Mission?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: The upgrade of the distribution network at St. Cuthbert’s Mission is \$15 million.

Mr. Patterson: Project code 2606700 – Hinterland Electrification: How much is catered for the construction of the distribution network in Kato? Is that sum for the transmission distribution to carry Kato to the APNU/AFC’s project, which is the Kato hydro electrical [*inaudible*]?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: The construction of distribution network for the Kato hydropower project – \$80 million.

Mr. Patterson: I have a question under the same project code. Under the APNU/AFC Government, the distribution network was supposed to be extended all the way to Paramakatoi. Is the Prime Minister saying...?

Mr. Chairman: Can you clarify this for me: Are you saying all the way to Paramakatoi from Kato?

Mr. Patterson: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Alright.

Mr. Patterson: That was catered for under a budgeted sum of US\$1 million. Has the Government, through the Prime Minister’s Office, disbanded with the provision of supplying electricity to Paramakatoi?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: I am advised that plan was changed two years ago. Bear in mind, we only assumed Office on 2nd August. This plan was changed two years ago by the Government at that time and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

Mr. Patterson: Sir, I would like to tell the Hon. Prime Minister that he was incorrectly advised, and I will provide him with the information.

Mr. Chairman: I would like to hear you question, Hon. Member?

Mr. Patterson: That was not a question, Sir; it was a statement. He has been incorrectly advised, but I would not go there at the moment. Can I continue?

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Patterson: There is the procurement of generators under the same Project Code with which the Deputy Speaker started, so I am following up on the good question which was asked by the Deputy Speaker. In relation to Karasabai, Mahdia and Port Kaituma, could the Hon. Member say how much was budgeted per community. Secondly, could he say when was the last time generators were procured for those three communities?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: For Mahdia and Port Kaituma, engines were procured in 2019 for both locations. Did that answer your question?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, would you like to ask another question?

Mr. Patterson: Sir, I asked the cost per generator per community and when last were generators procured. That is the question I asked.

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: We are procuring additional engines for Mahdia at the sum of \$13 million, one for Port Kaituma at \$15 million and for Karasabai at \$8 million.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, if he does not stand and address the Chairman with a question please ignore it.

Hon. Members, I just want to bring your attention to the time. We are supposed to finish this particular Agency at 3.30 p.m. In fact, we added on 13 minutes that we saved from the previous programme head. Let us keep our eyes on the clock.

Mr. Patterson: Could the Hon. Prime Minister state for this House the tariff that the people of Kato will be paying per unit of electricity after the completion of the hydro project?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: I am advised that there is a plan to charge \$54 per kilowatt hour (kWh).

Mr. Patterson: I will come off of that quickly because you mentioned about the time but, if the time permits, I will be happy to return to it.

In relation to the power utility upgrade programme, there is a sum of \$1.8 billion budgeted for 2021. My first question...

3.19 p.m.

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: Mr. Chairman, we just need a minute to change around. [*Pause*]

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you may ask the question.

Mr. Patterson: The Power Utility Upgrade Program (PUUP) – there is \$1.8 billion budgeted. Could I ask the Hon. Prime Minister, does this include Lots A, B and C and payment?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: The sum includes the following: Lot A, 319 kilometre of rehabilitation retention – \$186.3 million; and Lot B, 310 for meter rehabilitation – \$1.217 billion.

Mr. Patterson: From the response, Lot C has not been included in Budget 2021. When is this loan coming to an end?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: I will just ask the Hon. Member to repeat the question.

Mr. Patterson: I am seeking when the loan comes to an end – the IDB/the PUUP. The Hon. Prime Minister is saying that no part of Lot C is included in this. I am trying to establish, officially, when the loan period comes to an end – the loan period, the extensions, *et cetera*.

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: The loan comes to an end on 10th October, 2021.

Mr. Patterson: Could the Hon. Prime Minister state, for the records, the completion percentage overall for this project, as of today?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: I will ask the Hon. Member to repeat the question, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Patterson: The loan comes to an end in 2021. I am asking the Hon. Prime Minister, what is the overall percentage of completion from the PUUP under this loan as of today or as of the most recent update he has?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: The project is 75% completed.

Mr. Patterson: Thank you. The first item states that there is provision for loss reduction. Could the Hon. Prime Minister state what is the current loss reduction at 75% completion in the programme?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: I am advised that the current loss is 28%.

Mr. Patterson: Time is mindful. The Prime Minister cannot provide the response in vacuum to the Guyanese people. What is the loss at the start of the programme? The programme is at 28%. Has this increased or reduced from the start of the programme? What is it, Sir?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: I am advised that it decreased from just over 30% to 26% now.

Mr. Patterson: Is the Member acknowledging that there has been a 5% reduction in line loss over the last six years at the Guyana Power and Light, Inc (GPL), from when you started to now?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: I am advised that this was not a reduction in line loss alone. It was a reduction in total loss for the sector.

Mr. Patterson: I am moving on; I am looking at the time. I acknowledge it is both commercial and technical combined. You did not answer that over the last six years, the losses of GPL, Inc had been reduced by 5%. That was the question I asked, Mr. Prime Minister.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Prime Minster, is it over the six years that we have had a total 5% reduction in losses?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: I accept the statement, Mr. Chairman – 5% over six years, as mentioned.

Mr. Patterson: A follow up: Could the Prime Minister hand over, in writing, the money equivalent to the 5% reduction over the last five years? I know that he would not have it with him at the moment. I would ask if the Prime Minister is willing to lay that over.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Prime Minister. The Prime Minster has acknowledged that he is prepared to lay that over.

Mr. Patterson: I am moving on quickly. If we go to the next one – Sustainable Energy Programme.

Mr. Chairman: I just want to ask Mr. Holder if he wants to follow-up.

Mr. Holder: *[Inaudible]*

Mr. Chairman: There is no follow-up. Go ahead, Hon. Member Patterson.

Mr. Patterson: I do not want to monopolise the floor. On the Sustainable Energy Programme, there is the construction of a hydropower scheme at Kato. Could the Hon. Prime Minister say when this project was started? How many times over the life of this project was it tendered, when was the award made and when will it be completed?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: Mr. Chairman, the contract was awarded in September, 2019 after being tendered twice. The project should have completed in March, 2021. As it is, only 25% is completed now and the new complete date is 31st December.

Mr. Patterson: Just for clarification, when the Prime Minister said twice, does he mean two times before the final award or is he saying once?

Mr. Chairman: What does twice represent? Does it mean one current and one previous?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: I am advised that this project was tendered twice before it was awarded under the current timeline that I just gave to you.

Mr. Patterson: I am moving on. I do not want to put the Prime Minister in anymore difficulty.

Mr. Chairman: Do you want to give Mr. Holder an opportunity before you move on?

Mr. Patterson: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Holder: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Project code 2610000: While this is a continuation of the Coalition’s plan, in 2020 we noticed that a budgeted allocation was there for \$218 million. We heard a lot of plans on how that would improve the lives of people in the hinterland because these are solar systems for households in the hinterland communities. If one looks at the Budget, one will see that they failed to spend one, single dollar for 2020. They are now asking for \$500 million which is more than twice that amount. It is still just about a quarter of the total amount for the project.

My question to the Hon. Minister is: Why has the Government failed to execute that leg of the project? How does it intend to correct those missteps, this time around, to ensure that it has that technical capacity and administrative will to spend these huge sums of money in 2021?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: This project is still with the Government of India. I guess we have to wait a little while before everything is sorted out, for us to move forward.

Mr. Holder: I did not get that. Sorry, Mr. Chairman, I could not hear the response.

Mr. Chairman: Could you repeat, Hon. Prime Minister? The Hon. Member did not hear you.

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: This project is funded through the Government of India. We have to wait until everything is sorted out before it can be delivered to the people of Guyana.

Mr. Patterson: Just a follow-up on Mr. Holder...

Mr. Chairman: I am at 3.31 p.m., one minute over the allocated time for this agency. You could ask this last question then I will put the rest.

Mr. Patterson: Would this be the last question. I would not even have to follow-up because you will deduct that from my time. On Energy Matrix Diversification Programme, project

code 2609500, there is the installation of mini grids in Bartica, and I have several questions. The first one is: Could the Hon. Prime Minister inform us of the status of the tenders for Bartica, Mahdia and Lethem?

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: Bartica and Lethem have been awarded, whereas for Mahdia we are completing the Environmental Impact Assessment. After then, this will go through the process for it to be awarded.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Hon. Prime Minister. Hon. Members, I will put the question.

Mr. Patterson: Sir...?

Mr. Chairman: I will now have to put Agency 02 – Programme 023 – Power Generation.

Programme: 023 – Power Generation – \$4,934,800,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

3.34 p.m.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 024 – Telecommunications and Innovation – \$2,032,475,000

Programme: 024 – Telecommunications and Innovation – \$2,032,475,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 024 – Telecommunications and Innovation – \$287,277,000

Programme: 024 – Telecommunications and Innovation – \$287,277,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 025 – Government Information and Communication Services – \$784,117,000

Programme: 025 – Government Information and Communication Services – \$784,117,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Ms. Hughes: I am sorry, Mr. Chairman. With deep respect, we have questions on the other areas.

Mr. Chairman: With deep regrets, Hon. Member, the time allocated for this agency is one and one half hours. We took one hour and forty-seven minutes. The time programmed for this is 2.00 p.m. to 3.30 p.m. As we have said, when the time expires, we will have to put, not propose, put the questions for the other heads. My deep regrets. We are now about to take the vote on Capital Expenditure for Programme: 025.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 025 – Government Information and Communication Services – \$177,200,000

Programme: 025 – Government Information and Communication Services – \$177,200,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Let me thank the Hon. Prime Minister and staff for taking us through his agency, which has concluded at 3.35.50 p.m.

We are now preparing to receive the Minister and his staff for Agency 52: Ministry of Legal Affairs.

Hon. Attorney General, is there no staff? Are you doing this all by yourself? Let us give the staff of the Hon. Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs... Hon. Members, I will not start the clock until they are settled. In the meanwhile, we can turn to Pages 400 and 401. Thank you. Hon. Members, we will start at 3.38 p.m.

Agency 52: Ministry of Legal Affairs

Current Expenditure

Programme: 521 – Policy Development and Administration – \$116,020,000

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6113 – Other Technical and Craft Skilled and line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I noticed in 2020 there were no staff there. Notwithstanding that, moneys were paid or used there to pay whom? I do not know. I see that there is one staff each, for each line item in 2021. Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say what is the designation of those two staff in each line item and why were moneys used from the line item in 2020, when there were no staff there?

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs [Mr. Nandlall]: Mr. Chairman...

Mr. Chairman: Go ahead, Hon. Minister.

Mr. Nandlall: Thank you very much, Sir. There was a combination of Programme: 521— Main Office and Programme: 522 — Ministry Administration, which were renamed Programme: 521— Policy Development and Administration with effect from October, 2020. That has caused a number of the differentials that Hon. Members would observe on the accounting architecture of this agency.

Mr. Mahipaul: A follow-up: I heard the Hon. Minister. If you turn to the next page it is the one that is merged, I am guessing, with Programme: 521— Policy Development and Administration, but there is expenditure for 2020 in Programme: 522 — Ministry Administration, that caters for those two staff. I am recognising that there is also expenditure catered for them in Programme: 521 — Policy Development and Administration, but the staffing details show that there were no staff there in 2020. They are staff now in 2021. Moneys were used in 2020 from the line item to pay for whom? I do not know. Could the Hon. Minister help me out here?

Mr. Nandlall: Sir, I am told that the person was on the previous programme until October and was then transferred to the new programme from October to December, 2020.

Mr. Mahipaul: Could the Hon. Minister go that over, please?

Mr. Nandlall: The person was paid \$300,000 for three months, from October to December but was under the previous programme, from January to September.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, with all due respect, they are reflected in the second programme. They are reflected there with a sum of money allocated and they are also reflected in the first programme with money allocated. If one is catering for them in this document under one programme, then one would expect them not to be mentioned in a second programme with the same moneys. Could the Minister kindly clarify?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, before you clarify, you may want to pay courtesy to the House by standing when you reply.

Mr. Nandlall: I am sorry, Sir.

I am advised that they were projected for and provided for from January to September under one heading, then from October to December in another programme. I do not understand why my Friend does not understand that.

Mr. Chairman: The number five is magical.

Mr. Nandlall: Maybe it is because I stood up, Sir. Thank you.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, may I ask what are the designations for the two employees now reflected under line item 6116, Contracted Employees, and their salaries and other benefits?

Mr. Nandlall: A Telephonist, \$70,000 and a System Development Officer, \$120,000.

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6273 — Water Charges: Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say if Programme: 521 — Policy Development and Administration and Programme: 523 — Attorney General’s Chambers, are housed under one building? Are the two programmes housed in one building?

Mr. Nandlall: Yes. They are, Sir.

Mr. Mahipaul: A follow-up: Are there any other buildings, apart from the building at Carmichael Street, catered for under Programme: 521 — Policy Development and Administration?

Mr. Nandlall: The line item that my Friend may have been referring to is line item 6241, Rental of Buildings. There is a building being rented there at 341 East Street, South Cummingsburg, Georgetown. That building is where the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) funded Support for the Criminal Justice System Programme is being accommodated. It used to be accommodated at a building on Hadfield Street. When we inherited Government, that building was being rented for \$880,000. The area and the locality caused staff to complain that their vehicles were being vandalised and there were inadequate parking places. We found a new building at East Street and we are paying less rent — \$625,500 — with a lot of parking places.

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6131 — Other Direct Labour Costs: The line item that caters for acting and duty allowances. Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say how many staff in his Ministry are performing additional duties or acting in other capacities, other than the ones they are employed under?

Mr. Nandlall: The staff referred to in that column are five Drivers and two Clerks. The actual [*inaudible*] \$10,000 and more than \$3,000.

Mr. Mahipaul: Is the Attorney General and his Chamber engaging the Public Service Commission to fill the vacancies that exist in the Ministry and how soon do we expect those

vacancies to be filled, so that the full capacity of the work at his Chamber can go on?

Mr. Nandlall: Could the Hon. Member direct me to the line item?

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6131, Other Direct Labour Costs.

Mr. Nandlall: Were you asking me whether...? I will answer the question. When the new Government took Office, there were a number of vacancies in the professional component of the Ministry, both in the department of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel, as well as in the Advice and Litigation Department. We have constantly been filling these vacancies as we have received applications. My Friend would know that we are dealing with lawyers and lawyers become available only at certain times of the year when there is graduation from the law schools.

3.49 p.m.

We also have a physical space problem at the Ministry. Quite frankly, we would like to hire many more professional staff. If my Friend looks at the capital portion of the Budget, he would see the building itself is undergoing massive expansion and this is, precisely, to cater for more staff. And most of the staff who are hired to fill these professional posts are hired *via* the Ministry of Public Service.

Mr. Mahipaul: Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to give us a breakdown of line items 6284 and 6294?

Mr. Nandlall: I did not hear what my Friend wants me to do.

Mr. Chairman: He would like to have a breakdown for line items 6284 and 6294. Would you like to lay over or to present it?

Mr. Nandlall: No, Sir. Line item 6284 caters for the Ministry to acquire certain anti-virus computer programmes and we are paying for certain computer programmes, like Microsoft *et cetera*. It allows us to have better access and quality to these programmes. I am told that the other line item 6294 deals with in-service attachments. As part of the professional training at the regional law schools, students are required to do attachments with lawyers and legal offices, including the Attorney General’s office, and annually we have been accommodating students who are prepared to come, on attachment, to the Chambers for experience.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, the use of the word “certain” is very ambiguous. May I ask the Hon. Minister, to layover what

exactly they are going to spend the provision catered for in line item 6284? In terms of the types of programmes, he must know what kind of programmes they are going to purchase and install.

Mr. Nandlall: Sir, what programme are you referring to?

Mr. Chairman: This is the services and not so much the computers.

Mr. Nandlall: We would be using Microsoft.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, he would like you to lay over the document.

Mr. Nandlall: Sir, these are technical terms that I am not *au fait* with.

Mr. Mahipaul: Lay it over.

Mr. Nandlall: Computer software features, one-year anti-virus subscription, Microsoft office pro-licenses, Windows, *et cetera*.

Mr. Jones: Cde. Chairman, a question to the Hon. Minister. Line item 6311 – Rates and Taxes: Could the Hon. Minister indicate if this is the rates and taxes for the Carmichael Street building, if there is any other building in Georgetown, if rates and taxes are going to be paid for those as well, and what are the amounts?

Mr. Nandlall: Through you Mr. Chairman, it is only one building that we are paying rates and taxes for and it is at 95 Carmichael Street Georgetown.

Mr. Jones: Just a quick follow-up question. I would like to confirm with the Hon. Attorney General (AG) that the Mayor and City Council (M&CC) requires rates and taxes to be paid in the first quarter of the year. Is this an assurance this sum would be paid to the Mayor and City Council in this quarter?

Mr. Nandlall: It would be a great abdication of responsibility if I come here and project the money and the Accounting Officer does not pay it.

Mr. Shuman: Mr. Chairman, I am struggling, maybe because I am new to the Budget. Would the Hon. Attorney General direct me as to where I could find a quantum that would be dedicated to the recently established Law Reform Commission?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Deputy Speaker, the line item, please?

Mr. Nandlall: Sir, I would assist the Hon. Member. It is under a different programme.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much.

Programme: 521 – Policy Development and Administration – \$116,020,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 521 – Policy Development and Administration – \$359,382,000

Mr. Ramjattan: Project code: 1501500 – Justice Sector Programme: Could I just ask the Hon. Minister for an understanding of what the \$325,000,000 for the Justice Sector Programme would go to? I noticed there are components 1 to 6. Could Hon. Nandlall say how much money is going to components 1–4?

Mr. Nandlall: Yes. Sir, this is the justice improvement programme that I referred to in my Budget speech a few days ago. It is a multi-year programme. On the question asked by my Friend, the answer is as follows: design and implementation of the restorative justice programme, \$9,340,800; implementation of case management in court scheduling system, \$122,432,242; and pre-trial detention interventions, \$4,170,000.

Component 2, alternative sentencing intervention, \$445,713,208; strengthening of probation services, \$72,795,000; support to the Law Reform Commission, Hon. Member Shuman, \$42,743,500; law revision, \$16,137,900.

Component 3, project implementation, \$11,488,350. In these provisions would be the prosecutorial programme that I spoke about, the training of the persons who have their Bachelor of Law (Legum Baccalaureus (LLB)) degrees, to enrol them into a programme at the University of Guyana (UG). The syllabus is being designed, a Lecturer would be paid, and the University would also be paid for managing and accommodating the programme and for certifying it in the end with some form of certification.

Mr. Ramjattan: How many persons are projected to be qualified and certified at the end of the year?

Mr. Nandlall: The Ministry put an advertisement out and, the last time I checked, over 65 persons expressed interest. These are persons with the Bachelor of Law Degree. Once I clarify the issues of salaries, *et cetera*, I anticipate that we

will get a greater response. Also, this figure does not include Police Prosecutors who are currently in the system and whom we intend to engraft into the programme.

Mr. Mahipaul: Project code 1201300 – Buildings: This project entails the completion of the extension of the building, and it started in October, 2020. Could the Hon. AG indicate when this building would be completed? Maybe he did mention last year, but I may have forgotten... Where is the building located?

Mr. Nandlall: As the Hon. Member may be aware, we are operating under a signed contract awarded by the National Procurement and Tender Administration Board (NPTAB) under the Procurement Law. The contract has a fixed date of completion which is 31st March, 2021; and the project is on its way.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, I also asked, where is the building located?

Mr. Nandlall: It is an expansion of the current Attorney General’s building at 95 Carmichael Street, going to the back and to the side.

Programme: 521 Policy Development and Administration – \$359,382,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 523 – Attorney Generals Chambers – \$388,886,000

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, earlier the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs was kind enough to indicate that the Policy Development and Administration Programme and the Attorney General’s Chambers are housed in one building. I would like to turn your attention to line item 6273, Water Charges. I see there are moneys allocated for water charges here and also in Programme 521. If it is one building I am assuming, also, that it is one line that is carrying water to the building. I find it strange that there are two allocations for two separate programmes housed in one building. Could the Hon. Attorney General clarify, please?

Mr. Nandlall: This question has always puzzled me, but it was always like this. I do not know why but it is like this every year. My Friend could go and check the budgets for the last 30 years and it is one building but there are different accounts charged for the water and, I believe, the telephone as well, even though it is the same set of telephone lines. If

one looks at the amount it is two million and something dollars allocated.

4.04 p.m.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, I take note of the Hon. Minister’s response. It has even puzzled him. I would like to suggest, if I may, that we need to correct it because if it is one building, then there should be one charge. I do not think that there is more than one lines.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I take your advice, but if I will call on the Hon. Member, the Senior Minister within the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance, who is very qualified in finance matters. To share my own experiences, when there are different cost centres in the same overhead, one tends to allocate portions to get a true picture of the operating cost for a particular programme within the [*inaudible*]. That is why it is done. Hon. Member, the Senior Minister within the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance, do you wish to offer some assistance, please?

Dr. Singh: No, Mr. Chairman. You are absolutely correct to the extent that it is not always easy to do, but we could portion the cost that is associated with each programme we try to. Like I said, this is an imprecise science. There are instances where we could ascertain or try to assist the cost to the [*inaudible*]. So, it is exactly as you said; you are absolutely, correct.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6281 – Security Services: Does the same explanation hold because there is a charge therefor security services? On the first programme, Police Development and Administration, there is also a cost there for security services.

Mr. Chairman: I think ditto might be the answer.

Mr. Nandlall: No, Sir. There is a slight difference here. The provision here is for security services that are provided at the residence of the Drafting Consultant, which is a part of that person’s contract.

Mr. Mahipaul: Would the Hon. Attorney General (AG) be kind enough to give laid over breakdown of line item 6284, Other, which has a sum of \$115 million?

Mr. Nandlall: No, Sir. I will read it out. May I, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Chairman: Yes. You may read it out.

Mr. Nandlall: As I have said publicly on a number of occasions, the AG’s office will be executing a number of projects which include Constitutional Reform, through this very National Assembly here in the Constitutional Reform Committee. A specific task will be carried out in relation to the reformation of electoral laws to strengthen our electoral process. We are propagating series of new legislations including a new arbitration bill that requires training in public awareness with the judiciary and the bar, including my Friend, Mr. Ramjattan. We are budgeting here also for this charge Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CLT) obligations, which fall under the Ministry. We are also providing here for online libraries; LexisNexis *et cetera*; advertisements and public outreach that eventuate due to these programmes. Those are some of the major components of expenditures.

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6264 – Vehicle Spares and Service: Could the Hon. Attorney General be kind enough to say what is the total vehicles assigned to the Ministry of Legal Affairs?

Mr. Nandlall: It is for the routine maintenance of two vehicles.

Programme: 523 – Attorney General’s Chambers – \$388,886,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 523 – Attorney General’s Chambers – \$8,500,000

Programme: 523 – Attorney General’s Chambers – \$8,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 524 – State Solicitor – \$35,740,000

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: May I ask, is this the salary for the State Solicitor?

Mr. Nandlall: Several years ago, there was an amalgamation of the office of state solicitors, public trustees and the official receivers. Instead of having three persons performing those functions, it was found to be expedient to pay one person and that has been the position for a very long time. That is the

salary and remuneration of the persons holding those two offices. That has been so under my predecessor as well.

Programme: 524 – State Solicitor – \$35,740,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 524 – State Solicitor – \$598,000

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, there is only one project code here. Project code 2501700 – Furniture and Equipment: May I ask the Hon. Attorney General, what equipment is being looked at to purchase here?

Mr. Nandlall: Through you, Mr. Chairman, the equipment to be purchase are one invertor Air Conditioner (AC) unit with 24,000 British Thermal Units (BTU); three stand fans, one colour printer and one fire extinguisher.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much.

Programme: 524 – State Solicitor – \$598,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Let me thank the Hon. Minister of Legal Affairs and Attorney General and his staff for taking us through that agency.

Mr. Nandlall: Thank you very much, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, at this moment, noting that we have to mobilise our staff for the next agency, I proposed that we take the suspension now and we resume at 5.12 p.m.

Sitting suspended at 4.15 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 5.28 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: We shall resume in the Committee of Supply.

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

Mr. Chairman: Just some housekeeping, we resumed at 5.28 p.m. We have saved 18 minutes from the last head which I will apply to this head.

I now call on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. The Hon. Minister and his team is in place.

Agency: 12 Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

Current Expenditure

Programme: 121 – Development of Foreign Policy – \$1,823,671,000

Ms. Walton-Desir: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to draw our attention to line item 6284, Other, there is an allocation there of about \$400 million. I would be grateful if the Hon. Minister could provide a breakdown of that sum.

Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation [Mr. Todd]: Hon. Member, it is for the payment for legal fees – \$330 million; other consultancy services, border controversies and public relation – \$40 million...

Ms. Walton-Desir: Sir, I am afraid that I am having difficulty hearing.

Mr. Todd: It is for payments of bank charges and remittance to the overseas missions – \$20 million; license and other fees – \$10 million; which the grand total is \$400 million.

Ms. Walton-Desir: Mr. Chairman, I am afraid that I will have to ask the Hon. Minister to repeat. We could only account for about \$30 million of the \$400 million.

Mr. Todd: It is for the payment of legal fees – \$330 million; other consultancy services, which would include border controversies and public relations – \$40 million; bank charges and remittance for overseas missions – \$20 million; and license and other fees – \$10 million. A total of \$400 million.

Ms. Walton-Desir: Follow-up: I heard the Hon. Minister, reference public relations expenditure. I was wondering if he would be kind as to provide some details on that particular expenditure.

Mr. Todd: For public relations, I think it is quite explicit. What does public relations mean? Is it the first time you have heard of that term?

5.32 p.m.

Ms. Walton-Desir: Mr. Chairman, if I may, I do not know if it is a case where Mr. Todd does not have an answer and he believes that engaging in red herring would suffice. My question is very simple. He said that these are public relations expenses. I asked, could he provide an insight as to what it entails. For example, if he needs assistance, I will say that when he and I met and in his Budget speech he said that...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, you have the floor.

Ms. Walton-Desir: Mr. Chairman, if I may finish, because clearly, I would have to give him details so that I could get the answer that I need.

I am curious as to whether this public relation entails the education drive *et cetera* that he indicated in his Budget speech, would be forth coming in terms of the border controversy? That is what I was trying to get too, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister and Hon. Members, those who want to shout, I would caution you again.

Hon. Member Mr. Mahipaul, if you want to ask a question, press your microphone so I could recognise you.

Mr. Todd: Mr. Chairman, just for clarity to respond to the Hon. Member. What she is referring to with regard to my budget presentation would go to line item 6224 Print and Non-Print Materials. That is catered for in what she is referring to. What was contained in what I previously discussed is dealing with our legal fees as well for the Attorneys.

Ms. Walton-Desir: I thank the Minister for that clarification. I wanted to turn our attention to line item 6294 – Other, we look at the subsidies and contributions to international organisations.

Mr. Chairman: Are you dealing with line item 6294 – Other and line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Authority?

Ms. Walton-Desir: I am sorry, Sir. Line Item 6322 – Subsidies and Contributions to International Organisations, when you look at the allocations, you would see that there is about \$666 million allocated and of that, Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has a sum of approximately \$319 million allocated to it, which I would say is about 48% of the total allocation. I wondered, could the Hon. Minister clarify whether this sum is Guyana’s contribution to CARICOM as it were or are there other head items under that allocation?

Mr. Todd: Mr. Chairman, to respond to the Hon. Member, that is the total sum allocated to CARICOM from Guyana.

Ms. Walton-Desir: I was just curious, Sir. We are on the same line item. Given that this is approximately 48% of the total amount under this item, I wonder if the Hon. Minister could indicate to us whether he believes that a value for money assessment in this regard is maybe important or even necessary, so that in a way we are sure that Guyanese

taxpayers are getting value for this amount of money that they are expecting.

Mr. Todd: Mr. Chairman, the answer is yes.

Ms. Walton-Desir: Thank you for that. We are *ad idem* on that matter. Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: where we deal with the contracted employees. We noted that there is an increase of about four to the complement. Could the Hon. Minister indicate the positions that have been added that would occasion the increased?

Mr. Todd: To respond to the Hon. Member, we have an advisor to the Minister, we have a Foreign Secretary, Personal Assistant to the Minister and a Personal Assistant to the Foreign Secretary.

Ms. Walton-Desir: Mr. Chairman, through you, could the Hon. Minister provide us with the details in terms of the emoluments?

Mr. Todd: Mr. Chairman, for the Advisor to the Minister – \$927,922, Foreign Secretary – \$700,000, Personal Assistant to the Minister – \$300,000 and the Personal Assistant to the Foreign Secretary – \$150,000.

Ms. Walton-Desir: There is one metric that he has not mentioned. I asked for the names of the individuals who are filling these positions.

Mr. Chairman: I did not get that. Could you repeat?

Ms. Walton-Desir: I was saying that I had asked whether he would be so kind as to provide us with the names of the persons.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to be clear that, I am asking to find out, who is advising our Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation? If it is not allowed then, I would be guided by you. I believe that this person holds an office, and the Guyanese people should know who is advising their foreign Minister.

Mr. Chairman: We do have a convention here that we do not provide names, but we provide the positions.

Mr. Todd: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Walton-Desir: I am so guided. Could I proceed with my other question?

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Ms. Walton-Desir: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: We know that it was increased by 30 employees as I said previously. I wonder whether the Hon. Minister could advise us as to the methodology used to procure these services. Was it advertised? Was there internal advertising? Was there an interview panel *et cetera*? How were these persons employed?

Mr. Todd: To respond to the Hon. Member’s question, it was an internal process of evaluation that determined the suitability of the persons who were hired.

Ms. Walton-Desir: Mr. Chairman, I do not know if I am the only person suffering the same faith, but I would really appreciate if the Minister could use his microphone a little more, because he is a bit muffled. I suspect the mask is not helping.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, you may take off the mask because the rest of persons around you are masked. If it would assist, please.

Mr. Todd: Mr. Chairman, do you wish that I repeat?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, Hon. Minister.

Mr. Todd: To respond to the Hon. Member’s question, we used an internal evaluation system to determine the suitability of the persons who were hired.

Ms. Walton-Desir: Would I be correct to conclude that there was no external advertising of these positions, *et cetera*?

Mr. Todd: No. We did not go to the market, because that was not necessary.

Ms. Walton-Desir: Sir, if you indulge me one more question under this line item. I am wondering whether the Minister could guide me as to whether... Is this the head under which the Permanent Secretary, for example, is remunerated?

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Hon. Member. Hon. Minister, the Hon. Member did not point to a specific line item but, do you want to assist her?

Mr. Todd: Yes.

Ms. Walton-Desir: The Permanent Secretary is remunerated under line item 6116 – Contracted Employees. **[An Hon. Member:** *[Inaudible]***]** I ask the specific question, he responded to that, so now I am seeking clarity.

Mr. Todd: The Permanent Secretary came under line item 6116 – Contracted Employees in February, 2021. It was not last year.

Ms. Walton-Desir: Is there any other person within your Ministry who is paid on the scale of the Permanent Secretary?

Mr. Chairman: Could you just repeat that?

Ms. Walton-Desir: It is still tied to the line item, Mr. Chairman. My apologies. It is a follow-up to the question that I asked on the line item.

Mr. Todd: Mr. Chairman, No.

Ms. Walton-Desir: Thank you for that. Line item 6265 – Other Transport, Travel and Postage: I wonder, would the Minister be so kind as to give us a break down of that sum?

Mr. Todd: Mr. Chairman, the revised budget for 2020 – \$57,658,000; the revised budget for 2020 – \$19,447,000; the budget for 2021 – \$67 million a variance of \$47,553,000 which is 244.53%.

Ms. Walton-Desir: If I was a mean person, I would say to the Hon. Minister that he has never heard of the term composition, but I would not do that. What I would say is that I would repeat my question. Could the Hon. Minister indicate what is the breakdown of this? What are we using this line item for?

Mr. Todd: The question is a bit clearer; you needed the justification. I will respond to that. These increases cater for payments of air fare, shipping, personal and household effects, postings, pre-postings and cross-postings of staff.

Ms. Walton-Desir: I then must ask, could we draw our attention to line item 6261, Local Travel and Subsistence, there is an allocation of \$41 million. I am not sure how much local travel and flying around... What does that entail? What are we using that amount for?

5.47 p.m.

Mr. Todd: Just to be clear, Mr. Chairman, is the Hon. Member requesting a justification?

Ms. Walton-Desir: If that is how you term it, I just want to know what we are using it to do.

Mr. Todd: The Hon. Member is saying that she wants a description and that is all right. There are major postings to be done in 2021. This includes the replacement of

Ambassadors and postings of home-based staff to our missions. It caters also to repost staff on missions to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation’s Head Office and cross-postings from missions to missions.

In addition, there would be administrative visits by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation’s Head Office’s staff to missions and engagements with the diaspora. There are expenses resulting also from official travel such as costs of transportation, hotels accommodations, meals and excess baggage. These are all budgeted under this line item.

Ms. Walton-Desir: Thank you for that explanation, Hon. Minister. I think the last question under this programme would be under line item 6294, Other. There is an allocation there for \$75 million. I would be grateful if the Hon. Minister could provide a breakdown of that allocation.

Mr. Todd: The description would be that the increase caters for transportation to visit the delegations, promotional items on missions, official visits, the purchase of drinking water and other miscellaneous items.

Mr. Mahipaul: I have one question under line item 6264, Vehicle Spares and Service. Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say how many vehicles are in his fleet for this programme?

Mr. Todd: We have 21 serviceable vehicles.

Programme: 121 – Development of Foreign Policy – \$1,823,671,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 121 – Development of Foreign Policy – \$8,000,000

Ms. Walton-Desir: Just one clarification, please, Mr. Chairman, through you, project code 2407800, Land Transport...Mr. Chairman, I am not sure, are you getting a feedback from the microphone? [**Mr. Hamilton:** You are *[inaudible]* the microphone.]

Thank you, Sir. I am saying that I just wanted clarification on project code 2407800, Land Transport. There is an allocation there of \$42,823,000 for the purchase of vehicles, when you check the profile... I am sorry.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, are we in the same place?

Ms. Walton-Desir: Mr. Chairman, I think that I am ahead of you, my apologies.

Mr. Chairman: We are at page 623, Programme: 121 – Development of Foreign Policy. There are two project codes under that.

Ms. Walton-Desir: Yes, Sir, I am aware. I am ahead of you and I apologise.

Mr. Chairman: Are you ahead of me?

Ms. Walton-Desir: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you.

Programme: 121 – Development of Foreign Policy – \$8,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 122 – Foreign Policy Promotion – \$3,462,704,000

Ms. Walton-Desir: Mr. Chairman, I want to draw our attention to line item 6116, Contracted Employees. There is a decrease in the staffing complement from 18 to 14. However, based on the calculations that I made, there is not a concomitant decrease in the amount expended under this programme; there is actually an increase. I wonder whether the Hon. Minister could render an explanation as to what occasions this.

Mr. Todd: That is due to the fact that in the 2020 Budget we catered for three months and in the 2021 Budget, we are dealing with 12 months.

Ms. Walton-Desir: I am aware of that but even when I use that three-month figure and did the calculations it gives me somewhere about \$265,884,000. I am saying that you have a decreased staff, but an increased sum allocated. It therefore means that you have less employees and you are paying them more. What does that mean? That is what I want the Minister to say to us.

Mr. Todd: That would be due to the fact that after recalling some of the Ambassadors, we still had to pay station allowance and salaries for up to about three months.

Ms. Walton-Desir: I want to clarify on that same line item. Does this sum envisage an increase in, for example, station

allowance for the respective staff covered under the programme?

Mr. Todd: The answer is, no.

Ms. Walton-Desir: I do not want to belabour the point. I think what I will ask is whether the Hon. Minister could lay over the details of the contracted staff, their designations and emoluments. The Hon. Member does not have to provide this for us immediately; I would be more than happy to receive it at a later date.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Hon. Member. Hon. Minister, would you lay over?

Mr. Todd: Mr. Chairman, I will go through item by item.

Mr. Chairman: The Minister is prepared to provide the answers right now.

Mr. Todd: There staff are: a Principal Foreign Service Officer (FSO) I in Washington District Columbia (DC); a Principal Foreign Service Officer I in New York; Registry Supervisor in New York; a Confidential Secretary in New York; a Foreign Service Officer III in Ottawa; a Principal Foreign Service Officer I in Brussels; a Confidential Secretary in Brussels; an Accountant in London; a Principal Foreign Service Officer I in Havana; Principal Foreign Service Officer I in India; Principal Foreign Service Officer I in Bovista; a Principal Foreign Service Officer I in Barbados; a Deputy Head of Mission in Switzerland; and a Legal Officer in Switzerland.

Ms. Walton-Desir: Mr. Chairman, I did ask for the emoluments. I am more than willing to accept that at a later date, if the Hon. Minister would be kind to lay same over. On the same point and line item, Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Minister mentioned a number of posts at the Guyana Consulate New York. I wonder whether the Hon. Minister could indicate – particularly for the Consulate New York that he just mentioned – the date of that person’s employment.

Mr. Todd: I would deal with the first request. I will give you the salaries that match the order that I called previously. The salaries are: \$294,585; \$294,585; \$112,844; \$112,844; \$151,231; \$294,585; \$183,728; \$139,647; \$294,585; \$294,585; \$294,585; \$294,585; \$606,520; and \$488,250. This will give you a grand total of \$3,865,159.

With regard to the second question, the Permanent Representative (PR) post was occupied with effect from 1st October, 2020.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, could I ask the Hon. Minister to indicate, what is the emolument for the Legal Officer in Switzerland?

Mr. Chairman: Is it the Legal Officer in Switzerland?

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: Yes, Sir. It is Switzerland.

6.02 p.m.

Mr. Todd: Mr. Chairman, that will be \$488,250.

Mr. Mahipaul: Follow-up question on line item 6116 – Contracted Employees. The Hon. Minister took it to detailed emoluments and then he said that it gave a total of \$3,865,000 and some dollars. When that is multiplied by 12, which is the 12 months, it is somewhere within the vicinity of \$46 million, but there is an allocation here of \$280 million. I am wondering if he was correct and, if not, if he could at least layover the breakdown, which would be better on his part, because he seems to be puzzling.

Mr. Todd: There is no puzzling in this direction. I was just responding specifically to the request, but, since I have the time, I will go through the entire schedule if the Hon. Member would bear with me. I will give you the station allowance and the grand total, the National Insurance Scheme (NIS) and the grand total, the domestic allowance and the grand total, the gratuity and the grand total, the vacation allowance, the medical allowance and the education allowance.

So, let us go. The basic salary ...

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, I wish to withdraw the question.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, the Hon. Minister is speaking, you have to stand on a Point of Order. You just cannot stand to say that you withdraw the question; please. You have asked a question and the Minster is prepared to answer.

Go ahead, Minister.

Mr. Todd: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The basic salary was previously called, so I will now move to the station allowance: Washington – \$1,358,500; Public Relations (PR), New York – \$1,254,000; the at the Consulate General (CG) in New Yok, the Registry Supervisor \$376,200; the Confidential Secretary at the same post – \$386,650; Ottawa – \$491,150; Brussels – \$1,358,500; remaining at that same station – \$376,200; London –\$288,629; Havana –

\$940,500; India – \$1,149,500; Boa Vista – \$752,400; Barbados – \$752,400; Switzerland – \$1,149,500; remaining at the station in Switzerland – \$355,091; a grand total of \$10,989,220.

I now move to the NIS paid: for Washington – \$4,200; PR New York – \$23,520; CG New York – \$1,693; staying at New York –\$9,479; Ottawa – \$13,776; Brussels – \$4,200; again, at Brussels – \$2,756; London – \$11,731; Havana – \$4,200; India – \$4,200; Boa Vista – \$4,200; Barbados – \$4,200; Switzerland – \$4,200; Switzerland – \$4,200; and finally, again in Switzerland – \$23, 520; a grand total of \$115,475 for NIS.

I now move to domestic allowance: Washington – \$625,500; PR New York – \$625,500; Brussels – \$729,750; Havana – \$250,200; India – \$420,000; Boa Vista – \$62,550; Barbados – \$667,200; for a grand total of \$3,380,760.

I now move to gratuity: Washington – \$795,380; PR New York – \$795,380; CG New Work – \$304,678; staying in New York – \$304,679; Ottawa – \$429,924; Brussels – \$795,380; staying at Brussels – \$496,066; London – \$188,524; Havana – \$795,380; India – \$795,380; Boa Vista – \$795,380; Barbados – \$795,380; Switzerland – \$1,637,604; and staying in Switzerland – \$1,318,275. That gives us a grand total of \$10,247,410.

I now move to vacation allowance...

Ms. Walton- Desir: Mr. Chairman, if I may. Sir, I believe...

Mr. Chairman: But Hon. Member, the Minister is on the floor and in order to yield, I have to get on a Point of Order.

Ms. Walton- Desir: Sir, could you please ascertain because...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, you may continue.

Mr. Todd: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I now move to vacation allowance: Washington, an even \$3 million; New York – \$2,344,000; again, New York – \$112,844; Ottawa – \$159,231; Brussels – \$4 million; staying in Brussels – \$183,728; London –\$139,647; Havana, an even \$2 million; India, an even \$3 million; Boa Vista, an even \$1 million; Barbados, an even \$1 million; Switzerland – \$606, 520; and finally, again, Switzerland – \$488,250. That gives us a grand total of \$18,147,064.

I will now move to the medical allowance: Washington – \$2.5 million; New York – \$2 million; Brussels – \$2 million;

Havana – \$1,188,450; India, an even \$2 million; Boa Vista – \$500,000; Barbados, an even \$1 million; Switzerland, an even \$1 million; and finally, again, in Switzerland – \$980,784. That gives us a total of \$13,169,234.

I will now move to the education allowance: Washington, \$2 million and Switzerland, \$4 million; for a total of \$6 million.

Mr. Chairman, I will now move to the totals: Washington – \$35,688,800; New York – \$31,510,640; CG New York – \$6,306,366; staying at CG New York – \$6,525,119; Ottawa \$8,554,239; Brussels – \$35,439,800; and staying in Brussels – \$7,432,002. We are moving to London – \$5,608,255; Havana – \$21,857,650; India – \$28,214,800; Boa Vista – \$15,660,200; Barbados – \$23,416,000; Switzerland – \$28,366,764; and finally, in Switzerland – \$13,189,641. That gives us a grand total of the entire schedule of \$280,770,000.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. [*Applause*]

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Hon. Minister.

Hon. Members, if you want it laid over in writing, just say that you want it laid over in writing and...

Ms. Walton- Desir: Mr. Chairman...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I am on the floor.

Ms. Walton- Desir: Sorry, Sir. Go ahead.

Mr. Chairman: While persons are looking at the time, remember that I have added 18 minutes on. Hon. Member Ms. Walton Desir, you have the floor.

Ms. Walton- Desir: Mr. Chairman, I wish to express dismay at what...

Mr. Chairman: Do not express your dismay, ask a question to a specific ...

Ms. Walton- Desir: Mr. Chairman ...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, again, early yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition spoke about respect in this House. I have asked you to ask a question and you continue to speak over me. When the Speaker is speaking, one normally takes a seat. You do not want me standing on you. Thank you.

Hon. Member Ms. Walton-Desir, you have the floor.

Ms. Walton- Desir: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the interest of time, maturity, civility and every such thing, I will turn our attention to line item 6133 – Benefits & Allowances.

6.17 p.m.

There is an allocation there of \$650 million and I am wondering whether the Hon. Minister could indicate or provide us with what this sum entails?

Mr. Chairman: Thank you. Hon. Minister, could you indicate what the sum entails?

Mr. Todd: The description would refer to an increase that is due to the 2021 allocation that caters for 12 months of expenditures, compared to three months in 2020.

Ms. Walton-Desir: Mr. Chairman, perhaps, I remain unclear, so let me rephrase the question. I had asked what it entails – what are we using it for? They are benefits and allowances, what are we talking about? Is it termination benefits, allowances, or gratuity? That is the kind of information that I am seeking on behalf of the people of Guyana, from the Minister.

Mr. Todd: Mr. Chairman, I have additional information that I could provide the Hon. Member with. These are: station allowance, domestic allowance, medical insurance, vacation allowance, and end of contract benefits.

Ms. Walton-Desir: I note that the Minister referenced to the end of contract benefits. I wonder whether the Minister would be so kind as to, and please note my word, layover the details of the designation, emoluments, and other benefits of the person so terminated. I wonder whether he would be so kind as to lay that over in writing.

Mr. Chairman: Just for clarity, for my sake, there are two issues, Hon. Member. The Hon. Member said, ‘end of contract’, and you are asking about termination, is it synonymous?

Ms. Walton-Desir: Yes, Sir. It is my intention that they are.

Mr. Chairman: And are you asking for the Hon. Minister to lay it over in writing?

Ms. Walton-Desir: Yes, Sir, in the interest of time because we do have a few more questions to ask.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much. Hon. Minister would you lay it over in writing? It is a simple yes or no.

Mr. Todd: Mr. Speaker, I prefer to give the ...

Mr. Chairman: No. The request was to lay it over in writing, Hon. Minister.

Mr. Todd: Mr. Chairman, I will deliver it orally in front of the people.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, it was a question for the answer to be laid over in writing. Yes or no?

Mr. Todd: No, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Very well, thank you. Hon. Member Ms. Walton-Desir...

Ms. Walton-Desir: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[*Mr. Chairman hit the gavel.*]

Mr. Chairman: I cannot hear the Hon. Member, who is on her feet.

Ms. Walton-Desir: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I wish to turn our attention, because I do not want to be distracted by the side show, to the rental of buildings. I wanted to know whether the Hon. Minister would be so kind as to give us an idea of the buildings that are being rented and for whom?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, just for my information, what is the line item?

Ms. Walton-Desir: Line item 6241 – Rental of Buildings. There is an excess of \$1 billion. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, it is line item 6241 – Rental of Buildings.

Mr. Todd: Mr. Chairman, I am seeking clarity, does the Hon. Member want the breakdown or the total?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, the Minister is asking if you want the breakdown or the total.

Ms. Walton-Desir: I asked for the buildings that are being rented – where are these buildings located and the sum?

Mr. Chairman: Thank you.

Mr. Todd: In Washington, there are seven properties and in Barbados, two.

Mr. Chairman: The Hon. Member also asked for the rental sums – the location and the cost of the rentals.

Mr. Todd: Very well, I will go through item by item.

These are annual totals that I will be reading. In Washington – \$12.1 million, \$7.5 million, \$11 million, \$9.7 million, \$6,260,000; Barbados – \$10.5 million, \$6.5 million and, finally, \$9,412,200; Toronto – \$22 million, \$12 million, \$5.6 million, \$6.4 million, and \$6.5 million; New York – \$70 million, \$12 million, \$12,345,000, \$10 million, and \$8 million; Switzerland – \$13,652,469, \$12,481,013, \$12,703,142, \$11,372,728, and \$12,482,261. I will now move to London – \$20,880,000, \$16,782,000, \$10,684,000, and \$10,359,000; Nickerie – \$3,302,640, and \$2,502,000; Beijing – \$81,549,000, \$8.4 million, \$7,980,000, and \$9,476,000; Brazil – \$10,027,916, \$3,539,928, and \$3,625,922. I will now move to Suriname and this is in Paramaribo – \$10,008,000, \$3,002,400, \$2,752,200, and \$13,660,745. I now move to Ottawa – \$20,494,761, \$170,000, \$4,347,240, \$170,000, and \$5,508,000. I now move to New York – \$72,975,000, \$19,665,400, \$7,506,000, \$9,007,200, \$938,250, and finally in New York, \$1,459,500. I move to Boa Vista – \$2,920,000 and \$1,940,000; Havana – \$13,761,000, \$16,263,000, \$6,029,000, \$7,006,000, and \$4,874,000; Brussels – \$10,666,116, \$6,978,348, \$5,707,212, \$4,644,060, \$6,030,348, and \$17,326,224. I now move to Kuwait – \$1,238,490; India – \$6,000,000, \$2,244,000, \$1,768,800 and \$2,124,000.

6.32 p.m.

Caracas – \$13,211,000, \$12,936,000, \$6,055,500, \$6,055,500, and \$6,055,500; Trinidad and Tobago – \$17,514,000, \$8,757,000, \$6,255,000, \$5,504,400, and \$5,504,400. I now move to South Africa – \$33 million, \$30 million, \$32 million and \$47,638,928. Also included would be the estimate for Dubai and Doha for the embassies that we plan to open in 2021. Dubai – \$30 million and Doha – \$30 million. This gives a total of \$1,045,000,000.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Walton-Desir: Thank you so much for the details, Minister. In relation to the same line item, it makes me wonder, could the Hon. Minister indicate the locations of properties that we outright own?

Mr. Todd: We have three properties in Washington, London and Ottawa.

Ms. Walton-Desir: I, therefore, have a follow-up because I believe on the list of rentals, Washington is there. So, could the Hon. Minister be so kind to state, what are we renting, and what do we own, outright?

Mr. Todd: Let me just go over that, we actually have four properties. We have two in Washington, we own both; there is one in London which is the office; and one in Ottawa, it is the residence. In Washington, it is both the residence and the office – head of the mission.

Ms. Walton-Desir: The Hon. Minister took quite some time to give us an exhausted list, but I am saying that I wish to know, because he referenced Washington and that we do own properties in Washington, what are we renting? He went *ad nauseum* to tell us the list, so this is what I was simply wanting some clarity on.

Mr. Todd: For clarity, what I would have read on the stations, which I referred to where we own properties, we also have rental of properties for our staff, who are there, and so those were what were mentioned in the exhaustive list that you referred to.

Ms. Walton-Desir: I had particularly asked about buildings for embassies, *et cetera* and not necessarily residences, but that is *water under the bridge*. Sir, I, basically, just have one other question under this head. I noticed that at line item 6284 – Other, there is an allocation of \$70 million. I was wondering whether the Minister could be so kind as to provide us with a breakdown of what that entails?

Mr. Chairman: Is that a verbal breakdown or a written layover?

Ms. Walton-Desir: If he wishes to lay it over in writing, we would be grateful, given that we have a few more questions, and I am sure my Colleagues do.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, what will you do?

Mr. Todd: Mr. Chairman, I will provide the Hon. Member with the breakdown: bank charges – \$25 million; consultancy – \$12 million; upgrade and maintenance to website – \$13 million; and licence fees and other miscellaneous items – \$20 million. That amounts to a total of \$70 million.

Programme: 122 – Foreign Policy Promotion – \$3,462,704,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 122 – Foreign Policy Promotion – \$470,139,000

Ms. Walton-Desir: I wish to turn our attention to project code 1201400 – Buildings: It states, provision for embassies

and there is an allocation of \$407 million. Let me go to the details, it speaks about the completion of the Embassy of Guyana in Brazil and the provision of windows for Washington. I would be grateful if the Hon. Minister could provide the Committee with an update as to exactly what the status of the project is as it relates to the building of the embassy in Brazil, and, the provision of these windows, is it for one of the properties that we own or one that we are renting?

Mr. Todd: The allocation of the sum of \$388,600,000 would complete the construction of the new Embassy of Guyana, an ambassador’s residence and works will also be done on the diplomatic quarters.

Secondly, the installation of new windows at the official residence in Washington, which is owned by the Government of Guyana. There are rubbers on the windows which have become very loose and worn – wear and tear over a single period – and that sums it up. That building was owned since 1966, so it is decades of wear and tear.

Ms. Walton-Desir: I only have one follow-up question and that has to do with whether the Hon. Minister could provide us with an estimated date of completion for the building of the embassy in Brazil?

Mr. Todd: We expect that the works should be completed by April of this year.

Ms. Walton-Desir: I am sorry, but I did not hear what he said.

Mr. Chairman: He said April of this year.

Ms. Walton-Desir: Thank you very much, Sir.

Programme: 122 – Foreign Policy Promotion – \$470,139,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 123 – Development of Foreign Trade Policy – \$55,078,000

Dr. Cummings: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I noticed that it is the same number, but I see a whopping increase – almost five times – moving from \$2 million in the revised 2020 allocation for \$12 million to almost \$13 million. Could you give us the top five contracted persons and why the increase?

Mr. Todd: The increase is due to the 2021 budgetary allocation that caters for 12 months versus the three months in 2020.

Programme: 123 – Development of Foreign Trade Policy – \$55,078,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 123 – Development of Foreign Trade Policy – \$400,000

Programme: 123 – Development of Foreign Trade Policy – \$400,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, according to my clock it is 6.46. p.m. and we have completed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. Let me thank the Hon. Minister and his staff for taking us through these Estimates. Thank you very much.

I now call on the Hon. Minister of the Public Service and her staff. One hour has been allocated to this head. We do not have any savings in time from the previous heads, so we will have to ask our questions and stick to the schedule of one hour allocated for this particular head. We are going to start the clock at 6.48 p.m.

6.47 p.m.

Agency 14: Ministry of Public Service

Current Expenditure

Programme: 141 – Policy Development and Administration – \$168,343,000

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Under line item 6111 – Administrative: Volume two of the Estimates states that one of the strategies of the Ministry of the Public Service is to update the Public Service Commission rules. For my first question: Could the Hon. Minister indicate whether it is the intention of the Ministry to add the word ‘obstructionist’ to the rules to ensure that the actions of the Government conform with the Public Service Commission (PSC) rules when dismissing staff?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, first, please tell me what the line item is?

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: The line item is 6111 – Administrative.

Mr. Chairman: Line item 6111 – Administrative: Hon. Minister, there is an issue with respect to policy, with respect to line item – 6111.

Minister of the Public Service [Ms. Parag]: Line item 6111 – Administrative specifically deals with budget estimates in terms of figures and sums allocated to persons who are employed under that line item.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: As far as I can read, and I think I can, it says Policy Development and Administration. So, I am of the view that any policy issue will be dealt with in this particular area or on this page. I am not sure at what stage I will be able to ask policy questions if it is not here, but we will move forward.

We are going on to line item 6111 – Administrative: Could the Hon. Minister state what the Government’s policy is on continuing the process of transitioning contracted employees to the fixed establishment?

Ms. Parag: The Government’s policy is to revert to pre-2015, which is to implement its programme, and if that is by contracted employees or by the fixed establishment that is how the Government intends to do it.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: I am not sure if we got clarity there. Can the Hon. Minister state what was the pre-2015 policy that she is going back to?

Ms. Parag: That question was asked and answered. I believe it was sufficiently answered.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Line item 6111 – Administrative: Could the Hon. Minister state whether the 37 Community Health Workers who were terminated from the Regional Democratic Council (RDC) of Region 4 will be paid their salaries for January 2021?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Ms. Sarabo-Halley, could you stick to line item 6111 – Administrative, I only see...

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: That is where...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Ms. Sarabo-Halley, I am speaking, and I did not complete.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Sure, no problem.

Mr. Chairman: I saw three persons on the establishment of that, I do not know where the 27 came from so, I would not put that question to the Minister.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Mr. Chairman, just for clarity. The Ministry of the Public Service deals with the entire public service, and so, even though there are persons there who are staff of the public service, the Policy Development and Administration of the Ministry of the Public Service deals with the entire public service.

Mr. Chairman: I am very confident that the issue you raised is going to be captured in a line item subsequently.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Yes, Sir. Very well.

Mr. Chairman: This particular line item deals with three persons...

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: That will be administrating the Policy Development of the entire...

Mr. Chairman: Three persons, Hon. Member, thank you.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Very well, Sir. I will move on to line item 6113 – Other Technical and Craft Skilled. Could the Hon. Minister state the designations of the three technical staff under this line item?

Ms. Parag: Hon. Member, we have one Reporter, one Assistant Accountant and one Coordinator.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Could the Hon. Minister state what is the job description of the Coordinator under this line item?

Ms. Parag: That was a Study Coordinator, I believe the Hon. Member would have been *au fait* with this because this was the person that was employed during that time.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: I am not sure if the Hon. Minister answered the question. I did not hear but I will move on. Could the Hon. Minister say exactly what is the job of the Study Coordinator?

Ms. Parag: I am advised that the Study Coordinator held two portfolios as Study Coordinator and Coordinator of the commission of inquiry (COI) that was under the previous Administration.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Is it that I did not hear her clearly? Did she say what the job description of the Coordinator is? I did not hear it. I do not know if I was just not hearing properly.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, please allow some amount of silence so that the Hon. Member Sarabo-Halley can hear the answers to the questions she asked. Hon. Minister, could you please repeat for us?

Ms. Parag: Yes, Mr. Chairman. The Study Coordinator is a Study Coordinator and a Coordinator with the COI that was held under the previous Administration. The Hon. Member ought to have known what the description of that person was since it was under the employ of the previous Administration.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, she has a right to ask the duties of the Coordinator. Whether she was there before or not, she has a right to ask. Please, could you provide any further amplification?

Ms. Parag: I am guided, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Thank you Mr. Chairman, I will move on. Could the Hon. Minister please give us a breakdown of line item 6284 – Other?

Ms. Parag: Very well. Line item 6284, Other: This programme caters for the payment of E-Networks cable for the Minister, the Permanent Secretary (PS), the purchase of curtains and drinking water, laundering of tablecloths and curtains for three locations, purchase of paintings and picture frames, payment for removal of bees at the Bertram Collins College of the Public Service, purchase of shirts and t-shirts for members of staff, purchase of kitchen utensils for the Minister. That is what line item 6284, Other, caters for.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, noting that your staff is well covered in terms of masks, if you want to resort to removing your mask for better clarity, I would appreciate that.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Under line item 6131, Other Direct Labour Costs, I will ask the question that I attempted to ask before, which is whether or not the Hon. Minister would be able to say whether the 37 Community Health Workers, who were terminated from the Region 4 RDC, will be paid their salaries for January, 2021.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member please, I think I heard the word *res judicata* a lot last year. Hon. Member, I do not see 27 listed in the schedule. Would you like to rephrase that for me, please?

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Under line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister state the designations of the five highest paid officers under this line item?

Ms. Parag: May I clarify under which line item?

Mr. Chairman: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees.

Ms. Parag: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees caters for 19 employees which include the Advisor to the Minister,

three Cleaners, three Driver/Mechanics, one Labourer, one Confidential Secretary, one Driver, one Administrative Assistant, one Administrative Officer, on Chief Accountant, another Confidential Secretary to the Deputy Permanent Secretary (DPS), Heavy Duty Vehicle Driver, Personal Assistant to the Minister, Deputy Permanent Secretary and Driver/Dispatcher.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: I did ask for the five highest and not all 19 but, we will move on.

The Hon. Minister stated that there is an Advisor to the Minister that is being paid under this line. Could the Hon. Minister state the emoluments, benefits and allowances that this Advisor is being paid?

Ms. Parag: The Advisor to the Minister is being paid a salary of \$550,000.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Under line item 6294, Other, which has \$3,765,000, could the Hon. Minister break down for us what is under this line item?

Ms. Parag: This line item caters for payment for carpeting, the washing of buildings at the Ministry of Public Service’s Head Office, Training Division and Staff College, and the purchase of decorations (*Inaudible*).

Programme: 141 – Policy Development and Administration – \$168,343,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

7.02 p.m.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 141 – Policy Development and Administration - \$4,000,000

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Project code 2506200 – Furniture and Equipment: Could the Hon. Minister say for which office the purchase of furniture and equipment will be for?

Ms. Parag: Could the line item be clarified?

Mr. Chairman: Project code 2506200 – Furniture and Equipment.

Ms. Parag: These are: three laptops, two desktops computers, one video conferencing equipment, one printer, one set of installation of cubicles, two black waiting chairs, two sets of black leather couches, two corporate routers, four

filing cabinets, one book shelf, one mini refrigerator and three laptop bags.

Programme: 141 – Policy Development and Administration - \$4,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Current Expenditure

Programme: 142 – Human Resource Development - \$2,837,185,000

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Line item 6112: The total amount I see here, Mr. Chairman, is \$9,723,000. Could the Hon. Minister give us a breakdown of the designations of the five senior technical officers under this line item?

Ms. Parag: We have under this line item a Counsellor, Senior Student Affairs’ Officer, Training Officer II and Student Affairs’ Officer.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I see here \$81,812,000. Could the Hon. Minister explain the reduction of staff – being, in 2020 from 23 to 16 in 2021?

Ms. Parag: This reduction was due to the non-renewal of contracts for two Study Co-ordinators and one Training Officer, one Senior Director, one Study Co-ordinator and an Administrative Assistant and the resignation of one Study Co-ordinator attached to the Bertram Collins College of the Public Service.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: I move on to line item 6302, Training. The Budget has \$2.665 million. Could the Hon. Minister state what plans the Ministry of the Public Service has for the space that was being utilised by the Bertram Collins College of the Public Service?

Ms. Parag: I will ask that the Hon. Member kindly assist me with repeating her question.

Mr. Chairman: Ms. Sarabo-Halley, please repeat the question.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Could the Hon. Minister state what plans the Ministry of the Public Service has for the space that was being utilised by the Bertram Collins College of the Public Service?

Ms. Parag: I am happy to inform the Hon. Member that location is now being used to house the 20,000 online scholarships’ initiative which will commence shortly in 2021.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Mr. Chairman, could I clarity on this same question? The Hon. Minister said that the space would be utilised for online scholarships...

Mr. Chairman: No. She said to house the secretariat that will administer that programme.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Humbly, she did not say that, Mr. Chairman. She said it is to house 20,000 online scholarships. I was just trying to get clarity on that particular line item.

Mr. Chairman: I heard differently. Hon. Minister, could you provide some clarity?

Ms. Parag: Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for your assistance, but I will say what the fact is. It will be housing the secretariat that will be driving the 20,000 online scholarships.

Mr. Chairman: I will ask the Clerk to go back to the verbatim for that particular period, least I did not hear properly. Hon. Member, Ms. Sarabo-Halley, you have the floor.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Line item 6302, the same line item, the Hon. Minister stated ...

Mr. Chairman: Go ahead, Hon. Member.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: The Hon. Minister stated in her Budget speech that 4,500 scholarships will be given out this year. We are still on training. Could the Hon. Minister indicate whether the areas of studies and the number of persons to study in each area were already determined?

Ms. Parag: There are 4,500 scholarships to be offered to all Guyanese – the general public, the Disciplinary Service, the public service and two other categories. The commencement of which will see 4,500 scholarships being granted and will be in various areas that are of necessity, nationally and not only in the public service. Those areas are still being selected but we do have Diplomas and Degrees in Nursing and in different areas that will heavily contribute to Guyana’s human resource.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: I heard the Hon. Minister say that these scholarships will be nationally and not just for, I am guessing, persons in the public service. Could the Hon. Minister say how it was that they were able to determine the necessities or the needs of the country when determining where these particular programmes that will be ...

Ms. Parag: There is an on-going process of a needs assessment survey being conducted in all agencies, not only

in the public sector, but in the country. Based on that, the programmes will be selected.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Could the Hon. Minister state who is carrying out this particular data collection to determine the needs of the country?

Ms. Parag: I am again happy to inform the Hon. Member that the very abled Government of Guyana is carrying out that needs assessment.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: As far as I am aware, the Government is not a person. Could I get some clarity as to if there is a particular agency or if there are particular persons with particular designations who will be assigned to ensure that the needs of the country are being met with the scholarships that will be given?

Ms. Parag: Again, the very abled Minister of the Public Service in collaboration with all of her Colleagues in the Central Government, along with technical teams from each Ministry, will be carrying out that assessment.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Could the Hon. Minister state how long this process will take, if this process has started, ended and what is the timeline?

Ms. Parag: It is on-going and will come to a completion very shortly to enable the rolling out of the 20,000 online scholarships.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: I was also informed by the Hon. Minister that these scholarships will be for everyone. Based on what she said, I interpreted that to mean that the persons who would be getting these scholarships would not necessarily have to be working in the public service. Am I accurate in my interpretation of what she said?

Ms. Parag: Mr. Chairman, I hope we are still on the same line item 6302.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, we are.

Ms. Parag: The scholarships will be given nationally. It is also to enable employment in the public sector. The Government is aware that there are many youths and many persons who are unemployed. In an effort to assist all of those persons and keep the Government’s promise, the Government is providing this higher level of education to the nation.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: On the same line item, the Minister indicated that there may be some percentage of...

Mr. Chairman: Could we now start using the term “Cde. Minister” or “Hon Minister?”

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Sorry, my bad.

Mr. Chairman: The salutation.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Sure, Mr. Chairman. The Hon. Member stated, if I understood her correctly, that some percentage of these scholarship will be for the public service and some will not be for the public service. I just want to get clarity as to what percentage of the 20,000 ... or even if you break it down to this year. Of the 4,500 scholarships, how many will be going to the public service and what percentage will be for nationally?

Ms. Parag: There will be scholarships granted to the entire country in different categories, but a fair percentage will be granted to every category.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Sir, we are still on that line item. Could the Hon. Minister indicate whether or not those persons who will be receiving these 4,500 scholarships will be a signing a contract with the Government of Guyana?

Ms. Parag: The same protocol and procedure will operate with the 20,000 online scholarships as is every other fully funded Government scholarship and scholarships awarded by donor countries. Yes, a contract will be signed.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: The current contract that is signed by persons who are getting scholarships states basically the person has to serve the Government for a period of years, depending on the [*Inaudible*]. I am trying to get clarity as to whether all 4,500 persons, who will be getting scholarships, will have to work in the public service once they have completed.

Ms. Parag: Mr. Chairman, again I am happy to inform the public and the Hon. Member that very contract is under review at the moment and is being revised to not be harsh on the recipients and to, in a way, assist the recipients of the scholarships. The existing contract will not be used anymore.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: If I understand the Hon. Minister correctly and accurately, that means that, at this point, we are not sure whether persons who are getting the scholarships will actually have to work with the Government or not upon receipt of that scholarship as the contract, currently, is in under review?

7.17 p.m.

Ms. Parag: Mr. Chairman, I am not certain whether I can cure the comprehension issues of the Hon. Member, but I will try. Scholarships being granted to the nation will support the public sector. Where they cannot support the public sector, they will support the private sector, but Guyana will gain fully from them.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: The bottom line is that there may be two different contracts being signed by persons who are getting one of the 4,500 scholarships, based on whether or not there is a need within the public sector or if there is no need within the public sector. I am just trying to get some clarity on that one. I do not know if the Minister would like to answer that question?

Ms. Parag: Mr. Chairman, I am not certain whether that question impacts on the estimates that we are dealing with and the line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships), any longer. If I am to provide any clarity to the Hon. Member, I have said prior to this that we are going to revise a contract where Guyana is going to be the beneficiary of the scholarship.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: I think this may be the final question on this, depending on the answer. Could the Hon. Minister state what systems will be put in place to ensure that these 4,500 scholarships are given out equitably?

Ms. Parag: Mr. Chairman, the Government of Guyana has committed to transparency and accountability. Unlike the last five years, where there was no selection committee for scholarships, this Government has implemented a selection committee that will grade and interview every person, so that it will be equitable across the regions and across ethnicities. We are keeping our promise to the country.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Mr. Chairman, I crave your indulgence. How does one go ahead when one is hearing words that are not true? How does one respond to such in this particular environment of being in the Committee?

Mr. Chairman: You are asking the Chairman to give you an answer?

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I am not sure how one deals with untruth at this level. Could you kindly guide me on that?

Mr. Chairman: I would suggest that we move on to the next question.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: That is all right, Sir.

Ms. Parag: Mr. Chairman, I will...

Mr. Chairman: I did not put the question, Hon. Minister.

Ms. Parag: I beg your pardon?

Mr. Chairman: I did not put the question.

Ms. Parag: No, Mr. Chairman. I am respectfully seeking your guidance at this time. It is not to raise a question. I wish for the statement to be retracted because I am at this forum and I am speaking only the truth. I wish that the Hon. Member will retract the statement.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, Hon. Minister.

Programme: 142 – Human Resource Development – \$2,837,185,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 142 – Human Resource Development – \$6,000,000

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Project code 1207300 – Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister state what building is being rehabilitated under this project code?

Ms. Parag: The building that will be rehabilitated is at the training division located at Vlissengen Road. It will be rehabilitated for a smart classroom, in keeping with the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) environment and moving online. That is, for training within the public service. Also, with our promise to include the disabled community, we are constructing a ramp for disabled persons at the training division. This will enable persons who are in the employ of the public sector to be able to gain from those programmes that are free.

Programme: 142 – Human Resource Development – \$6,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 143 – Human Resource Management – \$46,707,000

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Line item 6111 – Administrative: The sum is \$14,274,000. The question I have comes from Volume 2, which is in relation to that same line item but gives certain indicators for the human resource management. In that particular volume it is stated that the proportion of advertised

vacancies that were filled in 2020 was 874. The target for 2021 is 250. My question to the Hon. Minister is whether or not the public service... why is there a big reduction in the number of vacancies to be filled in the public service during this year?

Ms. Parag: I am advised that no circular was issued since 2019. As a matter of fact, the staff in the human resource management and the personnel departments are the same there, except for a Chief Personnel Officer to be added.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Mr. Chairman, to follow-up on that question: As far as I am aware, the vacancies filled by the Ministry of the Public Service is not done in the human resource department of the Ministry of Public Service, but at the Public Service Commission (PSC). Could the Hon. Minister give me some clarity as to why this deduction in the vacancies to be filled this year?

Ms. Parag: Mr. Chairman, here I will have to respectfully disagree with the Hon. Member. The Ministry of the Public Service has the remit of also employing under contract, which has absolutely nothing to do with the Public Service Commission. If the Ministry so wishes, as the Government is reverting to the pre-2015 position, the Ministry could employ within its personnel department, contracted employees.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Mr. Chairman, is it that the Hon. Minister is saying there is no role for the Public Service Commission in the post-2020 public service?

Ms. Parag: Mr. Chairman, that is absolutely not what I am saying. The Public Service Commission is responsible for putting persons or choosing the persons who have to go in a certain post on a fixed establishment. There is a difference between a contract and the fixed establishment. What I am respectfully saying is that contracted employees, as opposed to fixed establishment, which the PSC deals with, are under the remit of the Ministry of the Public Service.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Is it that the Hon. Minister is stating to us that the 250-target for 2021 is just for contracted employees throughout the public service and not to fill the vacancies of persons who will most likely go on the establishment?

Ms. Parag: Mr. Chairman, the vacancies that exist on the pensionable posts have been there for a very long time. The PPP/C Government has only been in Office for about seven months, so I will respectfully say to the Hon. Member that vacancies will be filled, whether it is by the fixed

establishment or whether it is by contract, as the Government sees it necessary to carry on the efficiency and functioning on a daily basis.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Mr. Chairman, clarity is being sought. In 2020, we saw that 874 vacancies were filled. Is the Hon. Minister saying that those vacancies were filled just by contract or was it a mix between contracts and persons going on the establishment?

Mr. Chairman: Is this in 2020?

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Yes, it is. I am trying to understand the reduction that is happening in 2021. Why is the Ministry’s target so low for 2021? The Hon. Minister is saying to us that the target is low because they...

Mr. Chairman: I will put the question to the Hon. Minister.

Ms. Parag: Mr. Chairman, my position is not that the target is low but that fixed... I do not think that I can twist or turn this in any other way to make the Hon. Member understand. The Government and the Ministry of the Public Service will employ by contract or by fixed establishment, so there may be a higher target in 2021, in 2022, in 2023, in 2024 and for the next five years.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Basically, is the 250-target for 2021, even though it is substantially lower than what was filled in 2020... What is the aim of the Government for 2021 in terms of employment of public servants?

Ms. Parag: Mr. Chairman, in the next budget when we come back, our target will be what we have filled and that will be seen. It will be seen by the entire country. I ask the Hon. Member to exercise some patience (*inaudible*)

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Could the Hon. Minister state at what levels are they hiring on these contracts that are 250? What levels are the contracts going to be on?

Ms. Parag: Mr. Chairman, vacancies are filled based on the needs of the public servants. Some time ago in Parliament, I was asked a certain question in written form as it relates to all contracted employees. I would have laid over to the Hon. Member, persons employed not only in the Ministry of the public service but the wider (*inaudible*)

Programme: 143 – Human Resource Management – \$46,707,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 143 – Human Resource Management – \$3,500,000

Programme: 143 – Human Resource Management – \$3,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

7.32 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: On behalf of the National Assembly, we would like to thank the Minister and her staff for taking us through this agency’s Estimates of Expenditure. Thank you, Hon. Minister and staff.

Ms. Parag: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we have done very well today, the first day of the Estimates. The Assembly will now resume.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, this concludes our business for today. Hon. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance, please proceed.

ADJOURNMENT

BE IT RESOLVED:

“That the Assembly do now adjourn to 10.00 a.m. on the 3rd March, 2021”.

[Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance]

Ms. Teixeira: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to adjourn the sitting until 10.00 a.m. tomorrow morning to continue the examination of the Estimates.

Motion put and agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the Assembly is now adjourned to tomorrow at 10.00 a.m. to continue the consideration of the Estimates.

Assembly adjourned accordingly at 7.33 p.m.