



OFFICIAL REPORT

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION (2020-2025) 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

9TH Sitting

Tuesday, 22ND September, 2020

**PARLIAMENT OFFICE
HANSARD DIVISION**

The Assembly convened at 10.21 a.m.

Prayers

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

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Vice-President (1)

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+ Cabinet Member

* Non-Elected Speaker

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Mr. Ronald Cox, M.P.,
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[Virtual Participation]

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Mr. Saeed Umrao,
Audio Technician
Mr. Daison Horsham,
Audio Technician

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PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following papers were laid:

- (1) The Customs (Amendment of First Schedule) Order 2020 – No. 75 of 2020;
- (2) The Customs (Amendment of Second Schedule) Order 2020 – No. 76 of 2020;
- (3) The Income Tax (In Aid of Industry) (Amendment) Order 2020 – No. 77 of 2020;
- (4) The Value-Added Tax (Amendment of Schedules I and II) Order 2020 – 78 of 2020; and
- (5) The Value-Added Tax (Amendment) Regulations 2020 – No. 2 of 2020.

[Minister of Public Works]

- (1) The Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic (Amendment of First Schedule) Regulations 2020 – No. 3 of 2020.

[Minister of Home Affairs]

ORAL QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Ms. Chandan-Edmond: Good morning, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your indulgence. Could the Hon. Minister of Home Affairs state what are the causes, circumstances and conditions that led to the disturbance on 19th September, 2020, which resulted in the death of prisoners at the Lusignan Prison?

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, you can proceed with the other two parts of the question.

Ms. Chandan-Edmond: Could the Hon. Minister of Home Affairs state the number of prisoners who were killed, injured and/or hospitalised, the nature and the extent of their injuries and the cause or causes of their deaths?

Further, several prisoners were tested positive for the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Could the Hon. Minister state what measures are in place for the World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization’s (WHO/PAHO’s) guidelines, requirements and procedures for social distancing, *et cetera*, to be observed at the said prison?

Minister of Home Affairs [Mr. Benn]: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Hon. Member for the genuine interest she has in this matter, like everyone else.

The Assembly may recall that, last Thursday, in my presentation to this honourable House, I referred to the conditions, specifically, at the Lusignan Prison. I identified that there was severe congestion there and that we were, at that very time, working to improve the conditions to allow for better separation between the prisoners.

Hon. Members may also recall two prior issues which had led to congestion at the Lusignan Prison. One of these relates to the fire at the Camp Street Prison, which resulted in a large number of prisoners from Georgetown being transferred to the Lusignan Prison. Then, only this year, I believe that it was in July, there was a fire which destroyed the main building of the Lusignan Prison. This resulted in those prisoners being transferred to what were termed ‘holding bays’, which were constructed, initially, to hold the prisoners from the Camp Street Prison.

The result was that, and I said in this House, there were over 570 prisoners who were lying very close to each other. Three days after I became a Minister I visited that prison. I identified the problems and we set about putting in place plans for immediate facilities to expand the separation between the prisoners and to reduce the congestion.

I also said that we were trying to accelerate the programme in relation to the Guyana Mazaruni Prison, the Camp Street Prison and further plans in relation to the New Amsterdam Prison, which was delayed and was being carried out under the aegis of the former Minister of Public Security. I did say that the resort which was underway, and which we were caught in with respect to those arrangement, was delayed due to COVID-19. Apparently, it was too expensive to get those arrangements put quickly in place.

In any event, on becoming a Minister and on seeing the conditions at the Lusignan Prison, I said that we should get the contractors to immediately restart the works at the Camp Street Prison. In terms of the causes – original, prior and overarching – they obviously relate to the issues which happened at the Camp Street Prison and, more latterly, with the burning at the Lusignan Prison . I may remind you that, in terms of the fire and the results of the occurrence at the Camp Street Prison, 17 prisoners died immediately and then one later.

The immediate circumstances on 19th September, I would say, started on 18th September. On the morning of 18th September, the prisoners at Lusignan Prison refused to take breakfast. We spoke with the prison authorities and we asked that they try to get the prisoners to settle down. We were

happy when they took the midday meal and the subsequent meal. On the following day, again, there was a recurrence of the refusal of meals. It appeared that because there is an admixture, given the circumstances, in which remand and hardcore prisoners and petty offenders are all intermixed in the several different bays and there are issues with gangs and so on, on Friday morning, missiles were thrown. On Saturday, we thought that by midday they would have taken their meals and conditions would have settled. They were asking to see the Minister, but I delayed this until after 1.00 p.m., hoping that they would have taken lunch, which they had not done.

In the meantime, in discussions with the Hon. Minister, Dr. Frank Anthony, we understood then that some 40 prisoners were infected with COVID-19. I indicated, in my discussion here, on Thursday, that we had the risk of the pandemic at that prison. The Hon. Minister, Dr. Frank Anthony, along with the then prison authorities, decided to accompany me to try to placate and get the prisoners to settle.

We were cheered and welcomed upon entering the prison compound. We spoke with the prisoners in bay two and had a good engagement with them. The discussions in bay two revolved around the overarching issues of the prisoners, such as delays in court hearings and all those other issues. At bay one, it degenerated into individualistic issues. Persons said things like, ‘I cuffed a man, he dropped down dead and I have been charged for murder’; or ‘me and a man had a fight, I chop him, he died and I am in prison for murder’; and ‘my case is not being heard, and I am waiting three months or five years on remand’. So, bay one was fairly agitated. While we were there at bay one, a few of the prisoners at the back, in the other bays, three and four particularly, started to pelt sandcrete blocks. They got very unruly and we exited the prison.

On exiting the prison, they continued to pelt blocks, both inside and outside of prison. So, we decided to leave at that point in time because the missiles were being thrown over the prison gate and people had to *duck for cover*.

In any event, upon leaving, we were aware that the prison guards in the restricted part of the prison compound had to rush out of the compound and slam shut the main gates. There were bricks and other stuff being thrown at them at the gate and outside of it. I meant no disrespect to this honourable House by not making a statement on the matter even yesterday. It was because I was waiting on some

additional information from the prison directorate. I had intended to give a statement tomorrow.

My understanding is that the prison guards went in and occupied the towers too. The prisoners had broken down the tents and, in an effort to restore order while being under attack, shots were fired. The result was that seven prisoners were injured and two died in the compound. The three persons who were injured were retained at the Lusignan Prison and two were taken to the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC). The loss of life is, in any event, regrettable and sad.

10.36 a.m.

However, I would have to say that my understanding was that the final perimeter of the prison was under attack and was being besieged along with the Prison Wardens. They took the measures necessary to make sure that we did not have a resumption of problems we have had in the past in relation to the outbreaks of prison. We have to pay attention to the fact that, amongst these prisoners, and I said they were intermixed, there are persons who have nothing to lose. When they are intermixed with other low-level prisoners, the low-level prisoners are forced to follow the pattern – do the things which the leader of the gang or whoever is encouraging or having them do.

In relation to the issues of the failure of administration at all levels, I think we could speak to that at a later date when we have had a proper review at the appropriate level in respect of this incident. I would just say that the precursors which led to this event did not start two or three days ago. When we have our proper review, I will be happy to lay it in this House or make a further statement on this matter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister, I think the third part of the question dealt with the COVID-19 issues.

Mr. Benn: Yes, thank you. Sorry, Mr. Speaker and Hon. Members.

At the moment, the total number of prisoners who are infected with COVID-19 is 140. We have moved 80 of them to the Madewini location with the appropriate security from the police, the prison and the army. At the very time that the incident happened at Lusignan, we were expanding an area to the east of the Lusignan Prison to put up tents, put in place cots and new beds for further social distancing in relation to those who were left behind. That work was parenterally

stopped as a result of the events on Saturday. It was resumed yesterday morning and it is underway. I anticipate, by tomorrow, we will be in a better position to move some of those prisoners, who are in the holding bays, over to that area and, perhaps, bring back the infected ones to Lusignan.

Ms. Chandan-Edmond: Hon. Minister, question two was very specific. Could you state the nature and the extent of the injuries of the prisoners and their cause or causes of death?

Mr. Benn: I did state the number of prisoners who were killed – those were two in number and five were injured. The nature and extent would be determined based on the autopsy reports. I do not have those as yet. The reports from the prison authorities will detail the nature and extent of those injuries.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, Ms. Geeta Chandan-Edmond...

Ms. Chandan-Edmond: Mr. Speaker, I will yield to my Colleague, the Hon. Dr. Henry.

Dr. Henry: I listened to the response given by the Minister and I am standing here in relation to question three, which was very specific and asked: what measures were implemented in keeping with the WHO/PAHO’s guidance for COVID-19 as it relates to persons who are in detention and prison facilities? The Minister has acknowledged the severe risk of COVID-19 in prisons and detention settings, with some 140 prisoners being infected at one facility. Could the Minister confirm that preventative efforts are being taken at other facilities across this country? Could he say how the response would incorporate at least four of the minimum requirements, the first one being reduction of overcrowding and, second, ensuring the health, safety and human dignity, not only of the prisoners, but the staff at the prison?

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Dr. Henry, I just want to bring your attention to the question itself, that is the issue at the said prison.

Dr. Henry: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: Here, we are dealing with the Lusignan Prison. I think the Minister did answer about some of the others. So, let us give him a chance to answer. Under Standing Order 18, Hon. Members, I am allowing the two supplemental questions. This is the final one.

Dr. Henry: I wish to conclude. I ask that the Minister please provide, specifically, what recommendations from the World Health Organization and Pan American Health Organization

are being implemented at the Lusignan Prison, as we speak at this time? Those, I want to say, must address the areas of overcrowding, continued preventative service to those prisoners who have pre-existing medical conditions and the human dignity and wellbeing, not only of the prisoners, but the prison officers and other staff at that facility.

Mr. Benn: I want to thank the Hon. Member for any genuine interest she has in the issue being discussed. In respect of the first line measures being practiced in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, I had asked for and we had also received and provided masks, washing materials, fluids and all other things for all prisons, including the Lusignan Prison. That is the first thing.

Those articles and measures which are in place at Lusignan are also in place at the other prisons. It might have escaped the Hon. Member that I did speak to the issues in relation to the congestion, which we found and which we were actively dealing with at the time that this event took place. I do not want to repeat those again, but I want the Hon. Member to rest assured, based on what I said on Thursday and what I am saying now, that we are taking active measures to create space that is secure and safe, not only for the prisoners but for the public, in respect of this matter.

Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance and Government Chief Whip [Ms. Teixeira]: Mr. Speaker, am I allowed to ask the Minister a question, please?

Mr. Speaker: Please proceed.

Ms. Teixeira: Hon. Minister, could you state the date when the United Nations (UN) body visited the Lusignan Prison and condemned the prison, unless urgent and remedial action were taken to improve the conditions? Do you know what year that was, Sir? Could you please tell this House?

Mr. Benn: Hon. Member, I cannot tell you the date but, I am aware it was condemned. You could, perhaps, help me with the date. [**Ms. Teixeira:** It was 2018.] Also, I could say – and I thought I impressed on the House – that since last Thursday, and it was reported in the press and on social media, a visit was made, and we were taking immediate steps to deal with the issue. Since Thursday, after we had a discussion at the level of the Presidency and the Cabinet, we have already allocated funds and taken steps to deal with the matter, even now and before this incident happened. We intend to have, in the result, a new and modern facility for prisoners at Lusignan.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND FIRST READING

The following Bills were introduced and read the first time:

(1) Auctioneers (Amendment) Bill 2020 – Bill No. 2/2020

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to amend the Auctioneers Act.”

(2) Corporation Tax (Amendment) Bill 2020 – Bill No. 3/2020

A BILL intituled:

“An Act to amend the Corporation Tax Act.”

(3) Hucksters Licensing and Control (Amendment) Bill 2020 – Bill No. 4/2020

A BILL intituled:

“An Act to amend the Hucksters Licensing and Control Act.”

(4) Income Tax (Amendment) Bill 2020 – Bill No. 5/2020

A BILL intituled:

“An Act to amend the Income Tax Act.”

(5) Intoxicating Liquor Licensing (Amendment) BILL 2020 – Bill No. 6/2020

A BILL intituled:

“An Act to amend the Intoxicating Liquor Licensing Act.”

10.51 a.m.

(6) Miscellaneous Licenses (Amendment) Bill 2020 – Bill No 7/2020

A BILL intituled:

“An Act to amend the Miscellaneous Licenses Act.”

(7) Tax (Amendment) Bill 2020 – Bill No. 8/2020

A BILL intituled:

“An Act to amend the Tax Act.”

(8) Value-Added Tax (Amendment) Bill 2020 – Bill No. 9/2020

A BILL intituled:

“An Act to amend the Value-Added Tax Act.”

[Minister of Public Works]

(9) Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill 2020 – Bill No. 10/2020

A BILL intituled:

“An Act to amend the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act.”

[Minister of Home Affairs]

PUBLIC BUSINESS

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Motion

MOTION FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2020

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

AND WHEREAS, the Constitution also provides that when the Estimates of Expenditure have been approved by the Assembly an Appropriation Bill shall be introduced in the Assembly providing for the issue from the Consolidated Fund of the sums necessary to meet that expenditure;

AND WHEREAS, estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of Guyana for the financial year 2020 have been prepared and laid before the Assembly on 20-09-09;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly approves the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 2020 of a total sum of three hundred and six billion, two hundred and seventy-one million, two hundred and eighty-five thousand dollars (\$306, 271,285,000), excluding twenty-three billion, two hundred and seventy

three million, eight hundred and forty six thousand dollars (\$23, 273,846,000) which is chargeable by law, as detailed therein and summarised in the under-mentioned schedule, and agree that it is expedient to amend the law and to make further provision in respect of finance.

[Minister of Public Works on behalf of the Vice-President]

Mr. Speaker: The Assembly will resolve itself into Committee of Supply to continue the consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure for the year 2020.

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we are now in Committee of Supply. We will now proceed in accordance with the Schedule of the Sub-Committee. Hon. Members, it is now 10.54 a.m. and, as we can see, we are 54 minutes into what should have been the timeslot allocated for the consideration of these Estimates. It is ‘IMF’, meaning ‘it is Manzoor’s fault’.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Roysdale Forde, you may have the floor.

Mr. Forde: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for recognising me.

I wish to raise, as a matter of concern and as a query, the issue of the consideration, in the Committee of Supply, in relation to the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance. This issue and the substance of the issue had been considered by the last Speaker in the last session of this Assembly. I wish to point out that, under the Fiscal Management and Accountability Act (FMAA), there is a requirement for the budget agencies to be reflected in a schedule to that Act.

My research and my investigations revealed that the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance has not been so gazetted. In the Official Report, the *Hansard*, of 24th August, 2015, this point was raised and advanced by the very Hon. Ms. Teixeira and Mr. Nandlall, Hon. Member, as he was then. Their objections are recorded at pages 3 and 4 of the *Hansard* of that date and, at page 68, there is the statement of the Speaker in relation to this issue and, I believe, at page 89, also.

I do not believe, Mr. Chairman, having regard not only to the previous ruling but to what is the law, that we could, properly, this morning, proceed to consider the estimates in

relation to the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance, which has not been gazetted.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, we are in Committee of Supply. I am not sure how you are allowing this question. In the *Official Gazette* of 11th September, 2020 it states “Ms. Teixeira, Minister and Member of Cabinet and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance”. Then there is “Matters and Groups of Matters” and under “Ministry/Department”, there is “Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance”, to serve the citizens.

The *Official Gazette* is available. I am sure that the Parliament could provide a few, and the page references are 1607 and 1608.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Hon. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance. Hon. Members, we shall now proceed.

Mr. Forde: Mr. Chairman, I find the response by the Hon. Minister most unacceptable and most misleading.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, the Chairman has ruled that we now proceed to pages 120 and 121.

Agency: 06 Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance

Current Expenditure

Programme: 061 – Policy Development and Administration – \$17,193,000

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I am still trying to remember all the seating assignments in the way you sit, so please forgive me.

Ms. Flu-Bess: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I see there is a total of seven, I would just like to know the designations of these contracted employees and their remunerations.

Ms. Teixeira: The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance has [*inaudible*] right now. The building is being prepared and so we are working from the Office of the President...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, could you speak up a little.

Ms. Teixeira: I beg your pardon?

Mr. Chairman: Could you speak up a bit?

Ms. Teixeira: Could you hear me now?

Mr. Chairman: Now, we are hearing you.

Ms. Teixeira: I am sorry about that. The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance is presently occupying a room in the Office of the President. It will have its building, which is being repaired. It is not a Ministry within the Office of the President. It is a Ministry outside of the Office of the President; it is not a department nor is it within the Office of the Prime Minister, as previously.

Secondly, for contracted workers, we took three or four staff members who were part of the Office of the Prime Minister, to be part of this new Ministry. We have also identified the persons: the Confidential Secretary to the Minister; the Personal Assistant; the technical officers, one of whom will be transferred from the Parliament Office to assist me; and also a Legal Officer who would, probably, come from the Attorney General’s Chambers. With regard to that, the budget was put so as to allow us to start working and for the staff, who are already hired in the Office of the President and who have been working with me since I have taken up the post, to continue to be paid.

Ms. Flu-Bess: A follow-up: I did not hear the designation and the remuneration that they will be receiving.

Ms. Teixeira: They are public servants as far as I am advised. As it is a new Ministry, it has to get an Accounts Clerk. The Confidential Secretary and the Personal Assistant are the two positions that the Minister must have in his/her personal secretariat. There will be a Driver for the Ministry – other than the Driver who works with me – an Office Assistant and a Legal Officer who, as I said, will, probably, be transferred from the Attorney General’s Chambers.

Mr. Mahipaul: A follow-up: Did I hear correctly that the Hon. Minister said that the seven staff will be public servants who will be taken from other Ministries or will the Hon. Minister be advertising for them?

Ms. Teixeira: The ones that are already in the public service will be kept in the public service. The staff who were in the former Office of the Prime Minister within the Office of the President, as well as, hopefully, the one person from the Parliament Office and the staff from the Attorney General’s Chambers... The Confidential Secretary and the Personal Assistant are mine. They are on contract. It is the practice with all Ministers for quite a long time.

Mr. Mahipaul: If I am correct, the seven contracted employees listed here are not really seven contracted employees who will be for the Ministry. They will be public servants, also, who will fall under, I am guessing, line item 6111, which is not reflected.

Ms. Teixeira: Thank you, Mr. Mahipaul, for bringing that out. The persons who I am absorbing from the Office of the Prime Minister are in the public service but are on contract. I found them like that, and I am taking them like that with me. They have positions that are in the Ministry of the Public Service (PSM), but they are contracted. As they are all on contract, they will come with me. That is why they are under contracted workers, although they hold public service positions.

Mr. Mahipaul: I am guided that these workers are Public Service Commission (PSC) workers and that they are to be moved from one Ministry to the other which, in my understanding, is a transfer. My question is, was the right protocol followed, which is, that an application be made to the Permanent Secretary (PS) of the Ministry of the Public Service, the PS then grants that permission and then the staff goes to the new Ministry?

11.06 a.m.

Ms. Teixeira: I found persons in the former Office of the Prime Minister, who were on contract and held public service positions, but were not appointed by the Public Service Commission. These are persons I have worked with for the last few weeks, and I would like to take them with me. That is why they are under contracted employees. There are persons here whose contracts are being sorted out, as well as the quest for a lawyer to come from the Attorney General’s Chambers. I do not know if they will be on contract or Public Service Commission appointees. The person from the Parliament, is a person who will be transferred, of course, with the approval of the PSM. They are on contract, by the way.

Mr. Chairman: If I am understanding correctly, Hon. Minister, you are saying that the positions are officially from the Ministry of the Public Service and that some of the employees who are filling these public service positions are contracted, while some are Public Service Commission appointed. The positions have been cleared, whether they are contracted or PSC appointed; you have found them like that and will continue with them.

Mr. Mahipaul: Could the Hon. Minister give the accurate number, in terms of staffing details, for this Ministry, since it seems as though seven is inaccurate?

Mr. Chairman: Are you asking about the staffing details or about what has been approved for the different positions? Staffing details could mean the current staffing.

Mr. Mahipaul: Mr. Chairman, I am asking from line item 6111, Administrative, to line item 6117, Temporary Employees.

Ms. Teixeira: This is a new Ministry and, therefore, these are the persons we would like to have on staff, and that we can manage, with this programme for the next three months, until we get ourselves fully going. We do not need an enormous staff right now; we just need to set a number of things in train and get ourselves organised. Regrettably, the Governance Unit, which was under the Office of the Prime Minister... There are no files, no records or documents there. Basically, we have to start all over again, so we do have to look for a number of persons and we are [*inaudible*].

Mr. Mahipaul: I am just trying to ascertain the number.

Ms. Teixeira: The box states that there are seven employees, what more can I say? It is seven, unless you include me, and that would be eight.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6284 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister inform the House what this allocation will be used for?

Ms. Teixeira: This caters for, if required, technical consultancies. We have to report on treaties, our treaty obligations and prepare international reports. This is in addition to the staff there because we have found that a number of the treaty reports are not up-to-date and, in order to bring ourselves up-to-date, as quickly as possible, we may have to bring in consultants to work, specifically, on reports that are outstanding right now.

Mr. Mahipaul: I hear the Hon. Member on the Ministry being new and it is trying to set-up and ensure that everything is in order for the three months, before it starts actual hard work or operations from January onwards. I noticed that, under line item 6271, Telephone and Internet Charges, there is a whopping \$1 million. My question is whether that is the amount for the Minister’s cellular phone.

Ms. Teixeira: No, Sir, it is not. My cellular phone, based on the arrangements which were in place under the former

Government, is paid through the normal arrangements with the Parliament Office. A lot of our work will be done through internet connections and connectivity. The building that we are going into does not have all the facilities and telephones required, so we have to get those installed; we have to get Blaze installed, *et cetera*. Part of this cost also involves the cost of setting up the building itself. It is a small building but, nevertheless, we rely on Wireless Fidelity (Wi-Fi) and we will rely on it throughout this period.

Ms. Ferguson: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): I note that the Hon. Member, informed us that this is a new Ministry. Could the Hon. Member explain to us the training that would be needed for the seven staff and whether it will be done locally?

Ms. Teixeira: I was advised that it might be a good idea to include this \$50,000 to cater for any training in Microsoft Office Suite for administrative purposes, so as to upgrade the staff we have and those that we are taking over and, also, if any are brought in, to ensure that they are up-to-date. This money was put in as a small amount and I am sure that if it is not used, it will be returned to the Consolidated Fund.

Ms. Philadelphia: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Member explain to us how this line item will be working?

Ms. Teixeira: Because there was no budget and the building, as you might know, has not been occupied for a while... It was the former residence of then Minister Dr. Rupert Roopnaraine, it then became the COVID-19 secretariat and then Lt. Col. (Ret’d). Harmon... We are just doing some basic work now, with the limited funds, particularly to do with the electricity and wiring of the building to bring us up to standard. This amount requested for 2020 will be in the Budget to allow us to continue some of the maintenance work for which we do not have moneys to do right now. That is, as it says, the replacing of lights and other fixtures, general painting and repairs to a number of surface defects in the compound.

Ms. Philadelphia: Line item 6281 – Security Services: I recognised that the Hon. Member spoke to a new office, but under line item 6281, I recognised that there is zero there. I do not know what system is in place or if it is an oversight or a mistake, but are we taking security guards from other agencies or entities?

Mr. Chairman: If there is a zero, we do not allow a question. One will have to find where there is a number assigned and then raise the question.

Programme: 061 – Policy Development and Administration – \$17,193,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 061 – Policy Development and Administration – \$6,870,000

Mr. Mahipaul: Project code 2407300 – Land and Water Transport: I see in the legend that there is allocation for the purchase of a motorcycle. May I ask what kind of motorcycle are you purchasing for \$370,000 and what is the purpose of the motorcycle?

Ms. Teixeira: This is a motorcycle for the Office Assistant.

Mr. Mahipaul: Mr. Chairman, I did ask the type of motorcycle and if the Hon. Member could provide the cubic capacity (cc).

Ms. Teixeira: Whichever motorcycle is the cheapest and the safest.

Mr. Mahipaul: I can ride motorcycles; I used to ride a motorcycle and I know that the cheapest motorcycle...

Mr. Chairman: Do you want the job as Office Assistant to ride the bike?

Mr. Mahipaul: Pardon me?

Mr. Chairman: Go ahead.

Mr. Mahipaul: I know that 110cc motorcycle is one that can easily manoeuvre itself in Georgetown and is not really one that will entertain speed or any form of danger. It will cost anything around \$160,000 at Jialing Trading Inc., or if you go to Marics Honda, it will cost anywhere around \$170,000. I do not understand how you can consider \$370,000 for a cheap motorcycle, as cheap.

Mr. Chairman: Two observations: With respect to the brand, we do not want anyone to accuse the National Assembly of promoting any particular brand and I think this is the jeopardy which the Hon. Minister may have. Hon. Minister, please, I think he is looking at capacity.

Ms. Teixeira: I really do not know what to say. It is an allocation for a motorcycle. We will use the procurement

process to purchase one that is user-friendly, does not give off too much emissions and that is safe for the person riding it. I do not have a clue about motorcycles and I will be advised by my people about what type of motorcycle to purchase. Obviously, if you are going out of town, you will have to use a vehicle that could be used to take anything urgent out of town. It is mainly to move around Georgetown. If we are going into the Rupununi, I may buy one of those big fancy ones, which goes into the savannahs, but I do not need that in Georgetown.

Mr. Chairman: Just for the Hon. Member, the environmentalists say that two-stroke engines are the worse pollutants that we have, so we have to be very careful.

Ms. Philadelphia: Project code 2512200 – Furniture and Equipment: Could the Hon. Member list what will be purchased under this line item?

Mr. Chairman: Before you answer, Hon. Minister, I would just like to ask Hon. Members if they can consult the other volume with respect to the Capital Expenditure. I think that there are a lot of details there which can be referred to.

Ms. Teixeira: There is furniture in the building that we will use, but we do need additional furniture. The \$6.5 million that is listed here caters for five desktop computers, which includes a desktop computer for me, the Confidential Secretary, the Personal Assistant, the Legal Officer and the Accounts Clerk.

11.21 a.m.

We also have one laptop for the Legal Officer, one photocopier for the work centre, which includes a coloured printer, totalling around \$2.2 million. We have one small laser-jet printer, two L-shaped desks, four office desks, five ergonomic chairs for the Minister, Legal Officer, Accounts Clerk, Confidential Secretary and Personal Assistant. We have about five guest chairs for persons who will visit the Ministry, and we need two external hard drives, fireproof cabinets for the Ministry’s documents, filing cabinets and bookshelves. Those are the items that are required.

Programme: 061 – Policy Development and Administration – \$6,870,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 062 – Parliamentary Affairs – \$1,510,000

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I see in the staffing details that there is one contracted employee at the sum of \$1,165,000. I am assuming that money is for the three-month period at a cost of roughly \$390,000 per month. May I ask the designation of this contracted employee?

Ms. Teixeira: This is the person who would lend support in parliamentary support work. It is a Parliamentary Support Officer and his salary would be approximately \$270,000 per month plus a non-taxable duty allowance. These numbers were suggested, and we were advised to include them, since we may need additional support for the parliamentary person. You are correct. The sum is for three months and, therefore, the money would be certainly more than what is required, and I accept that.

Programme: 062 – Parliamentary Affairs – \$1,510,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 062 – Parliamentary Affairs – \$1,000,000

Mr. Mahipaul: I see project code 2512200, Furniture and Equipment, to the tune of \$1 million and I did recognise that, when we were considering the current expenditure, the amount is for one staff. Are we purchasing \$1 million in furniture and equipment for one staff?

Ms. Teixeira: I am a rather modest person when it comes to decorating my office and buying furniture *et cetera*. So, this money is to be used for the setting up of the parliamentary support section within the Ministry. As of now, we need a desktop computer, desks, chairs, a filing cabinet, a bookshelf and things like that. These are basic items that are required. If the Ministry could get them at a cheaper price then, better yet. But these are very simple and basic things required for a staff member to be able to function.

As I said in the first capital allocation, the amount was for the entire office; the printers and copiers will be used by the entire office. But this is for the staff who will work on parliamentary work.

Mr. Mahipaul: A follow-up: Is it a fair conclusion to say that the Ministry will be usurping the authority and function of the Parliament Office?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Mahipaul, could you please identify the project code?

Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister [Mr. McCoy]: It is a circus now!

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. McCoy, we have a certain decorum. I understand shouting might not comply with that decorum.

Mr. Mahipaul: I have a follow-up question from the same project code, in terms of the Minister’s answer. She said that the equipment and furniture are basically for parliamentary affairs work. I am enquiring if it is a fair conclusion that this department will be usurping the work of the Parliament Office.

Ms. Teixeira: I find it a great stretch of your imagination, Mr. Mahipaul, to think that I would dare, or I could dare or dream to try to undermine the independence of the Parliament Office. It is stated and if you read Volume 2 of the Estimates on page 77, you would see that it gives the explanation of the Ministry and what the different programmes will do as well as its objectives. It talks about being able to do Government business and parliamentary matters with regard to the whole issue of what comes to Parliament. If there are Bills that need consultations, it is either the sectoral Ministers who would do it, or if it is a comprehensive issue that requires many sectors, then that is what we would do as a Ministry. We are trying to uphold article 13 of the Constitution regarding inclusion and, therefore, the issue of law-making does not happen in the Parliament only. The process to reach to the Parliament takes time and I would certainly not accept that kind of accusation that I am trying to override or take over the Parliament Office of this country.

Mr. Mahipaul: A follow-up: Am I to assume that the Office of the Leader of the Opposition would also have access to this office?

Ms. Teixeira: Sir, that is not a problem for me, personally, nor is it a problem for this Government. If the Opposition needs assistance from the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance, within our competency, we will give it. If the Opposition comes and protests and *bruk up* the place then I would not help at all.

Programme: 062 – Parliamentary Affairs – \$1,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 063 – Governance – \$29,040,000

Mr. Ramsaroop: Under line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister state the designation of these two individuals and say what they would be doing?

Ms. Teixeira: This relates to a Research Officer and other technical staff for the Ministry. I would like to setup data systems and ways of storing our research information in a modern way. We need assistance and will bring officers to help in this area, but the first officer would be the Research Officer.

Mr. Jordan: I have a follow-up question under line item 6116. Could the Hon. Minister please state the salaries and other benefits for these officers?

Ms. Teixeira: The salary for the Research Officer is \$324,587 per month, \$10,000 non-taxable duty allowance, \$10,000 non-taxable travelling allowance and \$5,000 non-taxable telephone allowance.

Ms. Fernandes: Under line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, could the Hon. Minister please give us a breakdown of how the \$25,074,000 would be spent?

Ms. Teixeira: This is for the Integrity Commission that falls under the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance and, of course, it is separate, but its budget is \$25,074,000. This is the only body that falls under that line item and this sum caters for that body for the three months remaining in the year, as it has received part of the subvention prior to this from under the Office of the Prime Minister. The Integrity Commission received \$43 million so far, and it would be receiving the balance of \$25,074,000 in the period of October to December.

Mr. Mahipaul: I would not like to draw the wrong conclusion. Line item 6284 – Other: There is a sum of \$500,000. Could the Hon. Minister please break down that amount?

Ms. Teixeira: Sir, the \$500,000 is to start some of the virtual consultations on the *Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana* and the electoral reforms. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have not budgeted for physical *in situ* consultations with stakeholders, but we have budgeted for virtual conferences and meetings, over the next three months, so as to kick-start the work on the constitutional and electoral reforms. Of course, the Attorney General’s Chambers and the Ministry of Legal Affairs would lead on this, but my role in this, as the Minister of Parliamentary

Affairs and Governance, is to assist with the coordination and the consultation process in order to make sure that the largest body of people are involved. We are starting to set up this work and to setup a framework. We have included \$500,000 for virtual conferences in the short period ahead.

11.36 a.m.

Mr. Holder: In the previous programme we saw \$1 million for telephone charges. Line item 6271 – Telephone and Internet Charges: I notice another \$100,000 allocated here again. My question, is this allocation for the cellular phones of these two staff?

Ms. Teixeira: I am advised that this is for the three months ahead of us and will cover telephone charges because, remember, some of the persons who are contracted receive a telephone allowance as well. I believe this would cater for some of these issues. It is for three months and, therefore, it should do.

Mr. Holder: So, is it that the Hon. Minister is confirming that these are for the cellular phones for the two staff? We had \$1 million in telephone charges already for the building and so forth. Are these for cell phones?

Ms. Teixeira: These are for the phones, both landline and cellular phones. Remember, we can buy the phone cards that could also be used by staff members. In that sense, it could lead to some level of control but also to ensure that the staff, which is a small staff in this case, is easily accessible and does not have any reason to not be able to answer the telephone because the staff does not have any data or connection.

Programme: 063 – Governance – \$29,040,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 063 – Governance – \$3,000,000

Programme: 063 – Governance – \$3,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: The Committee thanks the Hon. Minister and her staff for guiding us through these Estimates. Thank you very much, Hon. Minister and staff.

Hon. Members, it is a good time to make an observation on dress codes. I think the dress codes are well stated in the Standing Orders along with the Speaker’s Rulings, and,

shortly, I will make a ruling with respect to displays in the House. We are forming some conventions. Thank you.

Agency: 17 Ministry of Indigenous Peoples’ Affairs

Current Expenditure

Programme: 171 – Policy Development and Administration – \$538,343,000

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Mr. Chairman, I would like to draw your attention to line item 6264, Vehicle Spares and Service, that will cost to the tune of \$12 million. Could the Hon. Minister tell this House how many vehicles are in the fleet presently and the type of vehicles? Are we at page 168, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Chairman: We are on page 168 and 169 and that particular programme is covered under these two pages.

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Sorry, that question is for page 172.

Mr. Chairman: The Hon. Member withdraws the question.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6111 – Administrative: We have seen an increase of over \$6 million. Could the Hon. Minister inform the House what this money will be used for?

Minister of Amerindian Affairs [Ms. Campbell-Sukhai]: I am told that the increase was caused by the removal of staff from the contractual system to the permanent establishment system.

Mr. Charlie: Line item 6291 – National and Other Events: Could the Hon. Minister disaggregate to the honourable House the incurred expenditure as it relates to this line item? Also, could the Hon. Minister say if the refreshments for the very important person (VIP) was catered and paid for under this line item? If yes, what was the amount disbursed under this line item?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: The amount that was used catered for the Mashramani observances and the hosting of observances for the National Toshaos Council (NTC). With respect to the question of what these sums were used for: it speaks to the purchasing of drugs and medical supplies for incidents that may occur during the events; the supply of 40 female polo shirts; and the provision of meals for participants. I believe here is where the Hon. Member wants to enquire into meals for the VIP, *et cetera*; it was a total of \$481,250.

The Hon. Member wants me to go through the remaining expenditure: it is the rental of tents and portable toilets for usage by the Ministry of Indigenous People’s Affairs’ (MOIPA) Mashramani event; the purchase of flags and buntings; the procurement of disposal items for the Mashramani celebration; the purchase of beverages; supply of full costumes for the small bands category; costume for the Mashramani king and queen; with respect to the small band costume groups, again, it includes the costumes for the band in the small category; the inclusion of the king and queen costumes; payment to five primary school dancers to perform at the Mashramani celebrations; the supply of beverages to the facilitate the hosting of the retreat for participants on Mashramani events; the transportation of participants to return to St. Cuthbert’s Mission following the Mashramani events; supply of snacks for the hosting of participants retreat by the MOIPA Mashramani activities; design of the production of individual costumes for MOIPA Mashramani events; the hiring of a bus for the transportation of St. Cuthbert’s Mission participants and the community of Swan after the celebration; the rental of items and portable toilets for the usage at the Mashramani celebration events; the payment of individuals for their participation in the Mashramani events; the hire of a sound system and the truck for the Mashramani events and providing sweet meats in recognition of the national holiday.

This has to do with Emancipation Day: the supply of lunches for the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs (MOAA) staff members in the celebration; provision of transportation for persons from Loo Creek, Linden Highway, to Georgetown after the inaugural activities.

In respect of the hinterland scholarship students participation in Mashramani: the production of a video of the scholarship students participating in the children’s costume parade; purchase of beverages for scholarship students; the hiring of a music system for the students activities; the payment for the design and supply of the hinterland scholarship students; costume for Mashramani float parade; the payment for the designer with respect to designing the scholarship students’ costumes for the Mashramani and float parade; the provision of transportation for hinterland scholarship students to participate in the Mashramani costume parade; and, of course, there is also an expenditure payment for the provision of the photographers to ensure that they capture the activities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker [Mr. Shuman]: I see that line item 6265, Other Transport, Travel and Postage, has a quantum of \$56,783 for travel expenses. Would the Hon. Minister be so

kind to enlighten this Committee as to who utilises those travel expenses and if there is a possible breakdown of the time period for that expenditure?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: The expenditure caters for hinterland travel by land, water and air; management development officers; community development officers; welfare officers who monitor villages; and ministerial team outreaches. Additionally, it caters for the postage of capital items and the return of patients to their respective villages. With respect to the details, if the Hon. Member would like to have the details, I am willing to provide that to the Committee.

11.51 a.m.

Mr. Chairman, \$176,000 was spent in air transportation for outboard engines into the Bemichi Airstrip for Region 1 villagers; the reimbursement of funds for the visit made by the Minister’s Personal Assistant to St. Denny, Tapakuma; the reimbursement for expenses incurred by the Vice-President and his team to Kabakuburi and Kariwab; the provision of air transport for transporting capital items; the air transport for the Minister and team to attend the opening of the Bina Hill’s Green Enterprise at Annai that cost \$822,375; air transportation for the Minister and team to Mahdia and Paramakatoi to conduct ministerial outreaches in February, 2020 that cost \$382,420. The additional air transportation for the Minister and team to attend the opening of the Bina Hill’s Green Enterprise – this is an additional expense incurred of \$145,126; the payment of air transportation to Port Kaituma – \$68,000; reimbursement of funds for staff airfare from Paramakatoi to Georgetown during the month of July; the reimbursement of funds for airfare, for staff during the month of August; the airfare for senior social worker during the month of May; the airfare for patients during the month of January; the airfare for nine patients for the month of January – I could give the totals, Mr. Chairman, if they so desire – the airfare for 16 patients returning to Mabaruma, Kamarang, *et cetera*, in the month of January; and the transportation of patients from Georgetown to their respective villages. The list goes on as it relates to transportation of patients. These are not the only expenses, but the majority of the amount was used to return patients.

Mr. Shuman: I heard the Hon. Minister’s presentation on the numbers. Could the Hon. Minister be so kind to enlighten this Committee as to how much of the more than \$56 million were used for the so-called ministerial outreaches, post 2nd March?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Mr. Chairman, for the Vice-President and team, \$1,966,000. Would he like me to give him the figures for the other expenses as a summary or subtotal? I am willing to do that.

Mr. Shuman: If the Hon. Minister would be so kind to lay it over, I would appreciate that.

Mr. Chairman, as I look at line item 6248 – Other: I see there is a quantum there of \$18,514,000. Would the Hon. Minister be so kind to enlighten this Committee as to what the components of Other constitutes?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Line item 6284 – Other: It consists of expenses to support families and patients with difficult circumstances, burials and medical treatments. For example, computed tomography (CT) scans, ultrasound, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and cancer treatments. The estimate also caters for repairs to office furniture, photocopying, binding of documents and advertisements. It also caters for four paid staff retained as skeleton staff, since 2019.

Dr. Smith: With respect to line item 6117 – Temporary Employees: Could the Hon. Minister tell this honourable Committee what constitutes temporary employees and if those employed are for 2020 alone?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: The temporary employees, according to the explanation from my advisor, are those who were brought onboard late in 2019 into 2020. They were placed into the various regions of the country and are retained on a month-to-month contract.

Mr. Shuman: I would like to draw the Hon. Minister’s attention to line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: There is, in that line, \$52,370,000. Would the Hon. Minister be so kind to enlighten this Committee as to what that entails Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations? Maybe we could understand what are those local organisations.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: The contribution under line item 6321 is provided for expenses by Bina Hill’s Green Enterprise. So far, in the nine months, Bina Hill’s Green Enterprise has received \$26,228,683. The Kanuku Mountain Community Representative Group has received, for the nine months, \$3,001,336. The National Toshaos Council for the nine months, January to current, has received \$12,326,687.

Mr. Sears: With reference to line item 6131 – Other Direct Labour Costs: We have seen an increase from last year by

almost 400%. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister if some explanation could be given. Then I have one other follow-up.

Mr. Chairman: If you have a follow-up, do you want to state both questions?

Mr. Sears: Yes, sure. In reference to line item 6255, Maintenance of Other Infrastructure, I see a decrease there. Could I get an explanation as well? Is this a testimony of the good infrastructural work?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: With respect to line item 6131, the increase, I am advised, was for the acting allowances for three staff.

Ms. Pearson-Fredericks: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): Could the Hon. Minister say to the Committee, what training took place for the year 2020 and who are the beneficiaries of these scholarships? Thank you.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: The Estimates cater for 600 hinterland scholarship students per year, which the Ministry passed in its response. It includes pocket allowances, uniform allowances, garden allowances and dormitory allowances. For the sake of the Committee, the scholarship programme has been a continuous one since 1992.

Mr. Charlie: Line item 6261 – Local Travel and Subsistence: I saw a whopping \$36 million was expended under this line item in 2019. In 2020, January to July, \$9.5 million was already expended. Could the Hon. Minister explain to this Committee what the traveling was for and if the Vice-President expended this allocation? Why I am saying this, Mr. Chairman, is because Parliament was dissolved. Over to the Minister.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Local travel and subsistence takes care of the Management and Development Officer, the ministerial outreaches, the Welfare Officer, *et cetera*. I would provide the details, as he was interested, with respect to the Minister’s travel. The Minister expended \$3,175,490 during the period January, 2020 to 22nd April, 2020.

Mr. Shuman: The last question for the Hon. Minister. Hon. Minister, there is a marked increase of 12 additional staff from 2019 to 2020. Would the Hon. Minister enlighten this Committee as to the staff and their portfolio?

12.06 p.m.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Is the Hon. Member asking about the staffing details or is he asking a question on a particular line item? I just want to clear that up before I answer.

Mr. Shuman: For the Hon. Minister, it is as in the staffing details. Thank you.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: At line item 6117, Temporary Employees, there is an increase of 12 officers. Those were the officers I referred to, who were contracted on a month-to-month basis as temporary employees. They were contracted from within the region for the period running up to 2019 and 2020.

Programme: 171 – Policy Development and Administration – \$538,343,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 171 – Policy Development and Administration – \$14,018,000

Mr. Charlie: Project code 1214500 – Buildings: I see here in the details, clearly stated, “Payment of retention.” This pertains to a rollover project. Could the Hon. Minister explain why, in 2020, we have to pay retention, when under the Coalition Government there was always an early budget presented in the House for the incoming fiscal year? Could the Hon. Minister explain this? We are in the ninth month, so what was the project and as it relates to the building, what does it entail?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: The first amount of \$7,480,000, is a retention payment for BK International Incorporated, which was the contracting company that constructed the student dormitory at Liliendaal. With respect to the payment of \$6,538,000, that is also retention which catered for JR Ranch Incorporated for the construction of the green energy development centre at Bina Hill. For the purpose of the Committee and the Hon. Member, a total of \$186,390,048 was attached to the student dormitory at Liliendaal. For the construction of the green energy development centre at Bina Hill, \$130,254,230 was attached.

Indeed, I noted that with respect to Capital Expenditure, for the nine months, the contractors were provided for while there was no provision for the villages.

Programme: 171 – Policy Development and Administration – \$14,018,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, this is a good time to say thanks to the Hon. Minister and staff of the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs for guiding us through this particular agency. Thank you very much, Hon. Minister and staff. As the Minister and staff get themselves together, let the Assembly resume.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, this is a good time to take the Suspension. We shall return at 1.00 p.m. to continue with the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs.

Sitting suspended at 12.13 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 1.14 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: We shall resume the Committee of Supply.

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

Agency 16: Ministry of Amerindian Affairs

Current Expenditure

Programme: 161 – Policy Development and Administration – \$212,708,000

Ms. Hastings-Williams: I think I can now re-ask my question. Line item 6264, Vehicle Spares and Service, which is costed to the tune of \$12 million. Could the Hon. Minister tell this Committee how many vehicles are in the fleet and the types of vehicles? Thank you.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: The budgeted provision caters for 47 vehicles that are located at the head office and in the regions. There are 17 all-terrain vehicles (ATV), 11 motorcycles, four cars, three minibuses, one Toyota Coaster bus, two jeeps, one canter and eight pick-ups. Under the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, these vehicles are assigned to the Amerindian residents, the Community Development Officers (CDOs) and the day-to-day operations of the Ministry.

Mr. Henry: If I heard correctly this morning, this amount is used for special interventions, including patients, and whenever there is a serious problem in Indigenous communities. My question is: Has any of this money being allocated to Baramita which has a high suicide rate? As a matter of fact, two days ago, a child committed suicide. The total is now at 86 suicides. Is there any help for Baramita?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Under line item 6284, Other, the estimate caters for repairs to office furniture, photocopying

machines, the binding of documents and advertisements. It also caters for four paid staff, that is the skeleton staff that remains with pay.

Mr. Henry: Could the Hon. Minister state under which line item we can find that assistance to communities and patients *et cetera*? I refer that to the question which I asked.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Just for the clarity of the Member, the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs has two programmes now – Programmes 161, Policy Development and Administration and 162, Community Development and Empowerment. Assistance to patients and people in critical circumstances will now fall under Programme 162, Community Development and Empowerment.

Mr. Henry: It is Programme 162, Community Development and Empowerment.

Mr. Cox: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: The Estimates of Expenditure reflect a whopping 86% of what was spent during the preceding nine months. Could the Hon. Minister explain this to the honourable Committee?

1.21 p.m.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: this caters for the routine work on buildings that are owned by the Ministry such as plumbing, electrical issues to the head office, student dormitories, tertiary dormitories including the Amerindian Village and the Amerindian residence at Princess Street.

It would appear as though there is a reduction, but what has occurred is that from January to September, the Opposition spent \$18.5 million, which is the majority, that is almost nine months of the year. This Budget caters for only three months. The Hon. Member would have noticed that there is a vast decrease. We are coming down to the end of the year and we do not envisage much more than as estimated here.

Mr. Cox: Line item 6115 – Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled: This item represents a drastic decrease of 22 staff. Could the Hon. Minister explain this drastic decrease?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Under line item 6115, under Policy Development and Administration, for the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, the Ministry has eight staff, because we have two programmes now. If the Hon. Member turns his attention to page 175, under staffing details he would notice that at line item 6115 the additional 22 staff are catered for under that.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Member provide an explanation for this large number of contracted employees? Additionally, could the Hon. Minister provide us with the employee who is garnering the most monetary reward as well as the least? What are their portfolios?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Under programme one we have 36 contracted employees which is a rollover of the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples’ Affairs. At line item 6116, we have 48 employees; 36 employees from 48 employees will remain 12 employees. In programme one there are 36 contracted employees, in programme two there are 12 contracted employees. It brings balance back to 48 contracted staff who were retained under the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, which was brought over from the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples’ Affairs. I can give him the names of those contracted staff. These staff who have been so far retained, namely, Principal Regional Development Officer, Personal Assistant and Management Development Officer. Do you not need the salaries?

Mr. Figueira: Yes, Minister. If I may, I asked for the emoluments of the highest paid contracted worker and the least paid contracted worker.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: The Principal Regional Development Officer’s gross salary is \$234,398, the Management Development Officer – \$196,764 and the Accountant – \$153,069.

Mr. Figueira: A follow-up: Could the Hon. Minister indicate if these contracted workers would be placed into fixed pensionable establishment? If so, how soon?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: I understand that while we were not in Office there had been a circular sent to all the ministries stating that there is a certain cut off point for staff who have been moved from ‘Contracted Employees’ to the Fixed/Pensionable Establishment and, therefore, if that circular still is in force, obviously, I will encourage that they be put on the Fixed/Pensionable Establishment.

Ms. Fernandes: Line item 6291 – National and Other Events: As we would recall, the Hon. Minister was so kind to give us a very in-depth breakdown of that line item when it was \$25 million. I see it here as \$74 million for a three-month period. Could the Hon. Minister be so kind once again to give us such a detailed breakdown of that?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: The provision caters for the National Toshaos Council meeting. We expect that if Coronavirus disease pans out, we will be holding the National Toshaos Council meeting and, therefore, the National Toshaos Council usually sets the agenda for that.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Ms. Fernandes, do you have a follow-up?

Ms. Fernandes: Yes, Mr. Chairman. If I am to understand correctly, just for some clarity, are we saying that the \$74 million is only for the National Toshaos Council that is being pre-empted and no other event will be covered under that amount?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: There is no other event at this point in time since we have already catered for the virtual heritage and that is the other national event which the Ministry would usually support.

Mr. Cox: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister explain what constitutes ‘other infrastructure’? The Hon. Minister mentioned maintenance to central office and other areas including the dormitory, *et cetera*.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: This estimate caters for the weeding and cleaning of the compounds, drains, the regular desilting of the drainage system around the Amerindian Village, Sophia, and the Amerindian Hostel at Princess Street.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6282 – Equipment Maintenance: Could the Hon. Minister indicate what this allocation is going to be used for with regard to the set of equipment? What is the set of equipment?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: This provision caters for routine maintenance and repair of equipment within various sections of the Ministry. For example, air condition units both at the head office, the Amerindian Hostel and the Hinterland Tertiary Dormitory. It also caters for repairs to desktop computers at the head office, at the Amerindian Hostel and the Hinterland Scholarship Dormitory. It also caters for any issues with gas stove at the Amerindian Hostel, Hinterland Scholarship Dormitory, *et cetera*. It also caters for any problems with photocopiers at all three locations, fax machines, refrigerators, *et cetera*.

Opposition Chief Whip [Mr. Jones]: Line item 6291– National and Other Events: The Hon. Minister indicated that the \$74 million is being given to the National Toshaos Council. Could the Hon. Minister explain what are some of

the events or other activities that will be undertaken by the Council?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: That will cater for transport of Toshaos, their daily subsistence, stationary, rental of conference hall, rental for accommodation, dietary for the upkeep of Toshaos, *et cetera*.

Mr. Henry: Just for a clarification, line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Does that include Community Development Officers or do we have to wait on programme two for that?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Line item 6116, in programme one, we catered for 36 staff and in programme two 12 staff. The sum of 36 and 12 is 48. There is no removal or increase.

Mr. Jones: Line item 6291– National and Other Events: The Hon. Minister indicated that the moneys will be used to transport the Toshaos, accommodate dietaries, *et cetera*. The questions which are still lingering are: Transport them to where and from where, and to accommodate them for what? What is the event that the money is being spent for? This line item states, “National and Other Events”.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: I will just repeat for the benefit of the Committee. The question was asked before and I mentioned we will be holding, as we have committed, the National Toshaos Conference, in the event that COVID-19 pans out.

1.36 p.m.

In the event that we may not be holding it, then, obviously, the moneys are there already. We are anticipating that we will have it. Every year, it is the responsibility of the Ministry to ensure that we collaborate, partner and consult with leaders in the A Partnership for National Unity/Alliance for Change (APNU/AFC).

Ms. Philadelphia: Line item 6281 – Security Services: Could the Hon. Member please give us a breakdown of this line item?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: This estimate caters for security services provided by Radar Security Services. The service was inherited by the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs and will be providing security services to six locations: the head office, the Amerindian Hostel, the Permanent Secretary’s residence, the Amerindian Village at Sophia and two student dormitories.

Mr. Shuman: Line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants: the sum of \$14,303,000 spanned the first nine months. Under the current Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, I see that there is an allocation of \$5,000,000. Could the Hon. Minister be so kind as to enlighten the Committee as to why there is such a massive change from \$14,303,000 to \$5,000,000 for the remainder of the year?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: From January to September, as recorded here in the Estimates, \$14,303,000, I would be pleased to provide the details of that to the Committee in a moment. With respect to the fuel and lubricants, which amounts to \$5,000,000 is the fuel that will be allocated for the balance of the year for 54 vehicles. This includes 17 all-terrain vehicles, motorcycles, boat and engine used in the fields by the CDOs, three cars at the head office and three minibuses for the patients who are bused. For those that were spent from January to September, similarly, it was a nine-month sum for the fuel and lubricants for those vehicles that are used by the Ministry, with respect to ministerial, permanent secretary, administrative work, including those vehicles used to transport patients and those used by the CDOs. That is the complement.

To add, from January to August, we understand that there was the COVID-19 pandemic and the reduction of activities took place but, indeed, it appears as though it is a pretty high sum to be used in that period when much activities were not taking place. I would like to layover, if I could be provided with the details, with respect to what caused the previous dispensation to use such a large sum in an environment when there were no activities and when the Government was not properly constituted.

Mr. Cox: Line item 6261 – Local Travel and Subsistence: Could the Hon. Minister tell this honourable Committee how many villages are on the card to be visited between now and December, 2020, and the nature of those visits?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Within the three months there are a number of activities that will take place. Therefore, we expect to travel for inception workshops. We intend to travel to areas to speak to the Toshaos with respect to the 2021 Budget. Therefore, we can expect that we may not be able to cater for all 217 communities, villages, satellites and settlements. We will be able to arrange an alternative way to receive information.

Mr. Holder: A follow-up: Based on the last question, it is my understanding that the \$10,942,000 covers a host of travels. Then, again, under line item 6265, Other Transport, Travel

and Service, there is a further \$26,700,000. Could the Minister explain or give some details on that transport?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Line item 6265 will cater for the transportation of patients back to their villages.

Mr. Henry: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I wish to ask, does this sum cover the CDOs and their contracts? I will carry through the question, because I did not get an answer at first. If so, do the CDOs’ contracts include, apart from their wages and other conditions, field materials and supplies for them, annually, such as personal protective equipment (PPE) for COVID-19 prevention, bearing in mind that one CDO died a few days ago? I will not say why. If not, what plan is there to provide for the CDOs in the future?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Again, I would want to say to the Hon. Member that line item 6116 makes provisions for the salaries of the contracted employees of which CDOs are included. With respect to the other half of the question, those materials and field supplies will be catered for under line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies. I have noticed over the last four years, when the budgets were being discussed, that the previous Administration did not cater for much of the field supplies to the CDOs.

Programme: 161 – Policy Development and Administration – \$212,708,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 161 – Policy Development and Administration – \$20,564,000

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Project code 2406700 – Land and Water Transport: Hon. Minister, could you please inform this Committee as to how many boats, engines and ATVs are intended to be purchased? Which communities or organisations are going to benefit from these?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Under project code 2406700, capital, we intend to buy one ATV for Region 8’s CDO. With respect to the outboard engine, it will be two outboard engines: a 15 horse power (hp) and a 40hp for the Community Development Officers for Region 7. With respect to the boat, one will be procured for the Community Development Officer in Region 7. It is an estimate of \$5,250,000.

Mr. Mahipaul: Project code 1214500 – Buildings: The legend states:

- “1. Construction of guard hut, fence and storeroom.
- 2. Upgrading of compound.
- 3. Purchase and installation of canopies.”

Could the Hon. Minister say which building and where all of these constructions will take place?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: The guard hut will be constructed at the Amerindian Hostel in Princess Street. The fence, also, will be constructed, because there is no fence at the moment. The upgrading of the compound will also take place at the Amerindian residence.

1.51 p.m.

The installation of the canopy is for the tertiary dormitories. This installation became necessary, since the contractor’s design was faulty and every time it rained, the entire bottom flat would flood. We have installed a canopy. Unfortunately, the liabilities for this project have been paid and, therefore, the Ministry now has to take the expenditures for these matters. The installation of a second canopy: there are four windows I think to the southern side of the dormitories. However, the mist from the rains would get into the rooms, so we have to put a canopy there. The construction of a wooden storeroom will be done at the Amerindian Hostel.

Mr. Mahipaul: May I ask, what methodology would be used in terms of the procurement for these projects? Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to layover what she has just outlined in writing to the honourable Committee?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: The methodology will be open tender and quotation. I am willing to layover each.

Mr. Mahipaul: Project code 2508300 – Office Furniture and Equipment – \$7,500,000. Could the Hon. Minister tell this Committee, what furniture and equipment will be purchased and for where? Could the Hon. Member be kind enough to layover that in writing?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: The furniture and equipment to be purchased are six computers and these computers will be assigned: one for the students at a Hinterland Scholarship Students’ Dormitory; one for the Welfare Department; one for the Projects Department; one for the Government’s department; one for the Hinterland Tertiary Students’ Dormitory; and one for the Minister’s Secretariat.

There are six gas stoves to be purchased: two table model stoves for the dormitory parents’ quarters; replacement of two

six-burner gas stoves for the Hinterland Scholarship Students’ Dormitory; replacement of one six-burner gas stove for the Amerindian Hostel; and one gas stove for the Hinterland Tertiary Students’ Dormitory’s kitchen.

An air conditioner will be purchased or procured for the Welfare Department. In terms of freezer, we have procured one freezer that will be placed at the tertiary dormitory’s kitchen. We will procure 12 visitor’s chairs: 10 for the Welfare Department and the Amerindian Residence and two for the Project Department. Ten semi executive chairs will be purchased: one for the scholarship dormitory, three for the Welfare Department, one for the craft shop and five for the Project Department. We will procure office desks: one for the Permanent Secretary’s Secretariat, one for the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, five for the Projects department and one for the craft shop.

A provision of 12 dining sets will be purchased and provided: ten for the tertiary dormitory students and two for the Hinterland Scholarship Students’ Dormitory. There will be 14 standing fans procured: eight for the Hinterland Scholarship Students’ Dormitory, two for the Welfare Department and four for the new wing of the Amerindian Hostel. One office desk will be procured for the student welfare at the Hinterland Scholarship Students’ Dormitory. Three water pitchers will be procured for the Hinterland Scholarship Students’ Dormitory; one for the male section and two for the female section. Nine filing cabinets will be procured: two for the Hinterland Scholarship Students’ Dormitory, two for the Welfare Department, one for the PS Secretariat, one for the Procurement Department, one for the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, one for the tertiary dormitory and one for the Minister’s Secretariat.

Four water dispensers will be procured: two at the Amerindian Hostel for the male and female section; and two for the Administrative Office. One electrical kettle will be purchased for the replacement in the Minister’s Secretariat because there is none at the moment. Three laser jet printers will be procured: one for the Chief Accountant’s office, one for the Officer of the Hinterland Scholarship Students’ Dormitory and one for the PS Secretariat. One food processor will be procured, for the Hinterland Scholarship Students’ Dormitory. Eight wooden double bunk beds frames will be procured for the Amerindian Hostel. Food warmers will be procured for the kitchen of the Amerindian Hostel. A food mixer will be procured for the Amerindian Hostel’s kitchen. Four nightstands will be procured for the new wing of the Amerindian Hostel. A dining set will be procured for the

new wing at the Amerindian Hostel. We are going to procure a dining set for the new wing in the Amerindian Hostel. One laptop and two water pumps will be procured for the head office.

Programme: 161 – Policy Development and Administration – \$20,564,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 162 – Community Development and Empowerment – \$216,221,000

Ms. Fernandes: Line item 6291 – National and Other Events: Could the Hon. Minister kindly give a breakdown for the excess of \$16,181,000 as the budgetary allocation?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: This line item 6291, National and Other Events, is what I had explained earlier, which is for the virtual heritage celebration.

Ms. Fernandes: Line item 6265 – Other Transport, Travel and Postage: Could the Hon. Minister please give a breakdown of the excess of \$14,520,000 being the budgetary allocation?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: I had answered this in an earlier question. I said that this estimate is for \$14,520,000 and it is for the return of patients to their respective regions. The question was asked prior under a wrong head during a comparison and I had given the answer.

Ms. Fernandes: A follow-up: Programme: 171 – Policy Development and Administration, is for the first nine months of the year. The amount there is \$58,736,000. However, between Programme: 161 – Policy Development and Administration and Programme: 162 – Community Development and Empowerment a total in excess of \$41 million is for a three-month period. Could the Hon. Minister kindly give an explanation to the honourable Committee as to why there is such a vast increase in the budgetary allocation for that specific line item?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: One would recognise that COVID-19 infected all the patients who are accompanied by their supporting family. Therefore, what happened is that most of them will be taken back during this three-month period. Included in that, we anticipate that we are not shutting down the support to incoming patients envisaged for the next three months.

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Line item 6294 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister give us details or explain to us what is under this head?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Line item 6294 – Other: This caters for the purchasing of kitchen utensils, curtains, pillows, bed sheets, door mats, materials for COVID-19 and bathroom mats for the Amerindian Hostel, the student dormitory and the tertiary dormitory.

Mr. Mahipaul: By no fault of mine, this 21-day document has a lot of missing pages. I would like the Hon. Minister to please give us a breakdown of line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations. I do not have the pages in my 21-day old document.

Mr. Chairman: The line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, is contained in the Estimates. Let us consult the appendix. Are you saying line item 6321?

Mr. Mahipaul: Yes, line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, \$28,133,000. I do not have the pages, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Could we provide the page for you?

Mr. Mahipaul: No problem, but I would like to hear from the Hon. Minister, please.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we started this head at 1.15 p.m. Just bear in mind that we have to stay on track.

2.06 p.m.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: The sum of \$28,133,000 being allocated under the head 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, is for the remaining tranche for three organisations: the National Toshias Council – \$5,185,000 from October to December; Bina Hill Institute for Research, Training and Development – \$21,821,561; and for the Kanuku Mountain Community Representative Group (KMCRG) – \$1,125,497, This will be for the remaining three months.

Mr. Cox: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): Could the Hon. Minister detail to this honourable Committee, aspects of these scholarships and programmes undertaken, given that schools are not likely to reopen anytime soon? Thank you.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: The provision allocated under line item 6302, are estimates for the hinterland scholarship

students and all associated support that we provide for them in anticipation that schools will be reopened.

Unfortunately, if schools are not reopened, obviously, the moneys set aside here will not be used. We do not want to be caught in a situation where the COVID-19 pandemic may pan out or level out, and schools are reopened in the final months of the year. So, we have to be prepared.

Mr. Figueira: Hon. Minister, on the same line item, could you indicate what type of training will be offered? Additionally, are the scholarships all local and do they entail any online courses being offered?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Line item 6302 is described as Training, but in brackets it states ‘including Scholarships’, so, this line item here and the provision made thereunder, caters for the 600 hinterland scholarship students who, on an annual basis, are catered for by the Ministry.

Some of the moneys may very well be used, Mr. Cox, because we have to pay for examinations for the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) and Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) students out of this money too, but there is no training. It is the hinterland scholarship students, Mr. Figueira.

Mr. Figueira: Hon. Minister, with regard to the said scholarships, I am asking, is it catering for virtual classes, as regard the current COVID-19 situation?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: No, Mr. Chairman, but in the Budget debate of the Budget speech, it was very clear that the Minister of Education is going to cater for print materials to go to the hinterland areas. I said that in the budget debate of the Budget speech. I understand that the Ministry of Education will be preparing print material to be sent to the schools. To remind the Hon. Member, the Information Communications Technology (ICT) hubs project was abandoned by the previous Government. Therefore, ICT online support for this period is not an alternative that is being used for many of the hinterland villages.

Mr. Figueira: With regard to the Hon. Minister’s comments regarding the abandonment of the ICT hubs project, I believe you would agree with me that it was a good initiative. Will you continue the initiative knowing that the hinterland scholarship students would be denied as a result of the COVID-19 environment that we are in? Would you invest some of this said allocation to ensure that the hinterland

students are afforded with the means to have access online to these said scholarships?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: I am sorry, if I misled the Hon. Member, but the abandonment of the ICT hubs project was not by the People’s Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C), but by the APNU/AFC.

Mr. Chairman: I have just about four minutes remaining for all of the remaining sections of this head.

Mr. Figueira: Thank you, Hon. Chairman.

Hon. Minister, your assumption that the project was abandoned, I am of the view...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Figueira, I think you might be going into a speech now, and you mentioned assumption. The Hon. Minister said...

Mr. Figueira: Sir, I am crafting the question.

Mr. Chairman: Go ahead, let us hear the question.

Mr. Figueira: I am saying, I am of the view that the ICT hubs are important and I believe you share the view. Would that be a project, since you are claiming that it was abandoned? Will you continue with such a programme, as a means to ensure that our hinterland students are afforded the opportunity to continue their studies *via* internet access, Hon. Minister?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: The PPP/C Government has made a commitment to the hinterland population and villages that we are going to reintroduce the abandoned ICT Hubs project. If the Hon. Member will have some patience, we will begin an initial phase in this three months with 26 such villages.

Ms. Ferguson: If I am to take us back to line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships), the question to the Hon. Member: Could you say which regions are expected to benefit from the training and scholarships?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: I am advised and I know all of the regions.

Mr. Figueira: Under the line item, Hon. Minister, you have indicated that 26 villages will benefit in the initial state. Region 10 has 16 Indigenous settlements, will any of the 26 mentioned come from Region 10?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: I have asked for the Hon. Member to have some patience because this question is related to the capital project under this programme.

Mr. Figueira: Hon. Minister, I had indicated, with regard to the said programme, line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships), you indicated to the Committee that 26 of the villages will benefit from the initial programme. My question remains, out of the 16 Indigenous settlements in Region 10, would any of those settlements benefit from the first stint of the 26 allocation?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, you can answer that and I will put the two remaining heads. Thank you.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Again, I am sorry if the Hon. Member was misled in the previous answer, but I had said, if he has patience, the PPP/C Government’s commitment to the reintroduction of the ICT Hubs project, will take place in 26 villages, and that will be under the capital, not under line item 6302.

Programme: 162 – Community Development and Empowerment – \$216,221,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, it is now one hour since we have started this head. The resolution of the Committee of Supply did agree to one hour for this head. I have no choice but to put the remaining part of this head.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 162 – Community Development and Empowerment – \$825,200,000

Mr. Mahipaul: Mr. Chairman, I call for a division.

Mr. Chairman: Division.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: You are voting against the Capital; voting against the Indigenous peoples.

Division

Assembly divided: Ayes 32, Noes 25, Abstained 2, as follows:

Noes

Ms. McDonald

Ms. Ferguson

Ms. Chandan-Edmond

Ms. Sarabo-Halley

Dr. Cummings

Dr. Henry

Ms. Hastings-Williams

Mr. Trotman

Mr. Sears

Mr. Figueira

Mr. Sinclair

Mr. Jaiprashad

Mr. Jordan

Mr. Ramsaroop

Ms. Philadelphia

Ms. Flue-Bess

Mr. Mahipaul

Mr. Holder

Mr. Cox

Mr. Henry

Ms. Fernandes

Mr. Duncan

Ms. Singh-Lewis

Ms. Walton-Desir

Mr. Rajkumar

25

Ayes

Mr. Shuman

Ms. Veerasammy

Mr. Williams

Dr. Smith

Mr. Jaffarally

Dr. Westford

Dr. Ramsaran

Ms. Pearson-Fredericks

Mr. Narine

Mr. Datadin

Dr. Mahadeo

Mr. Charlie

Mr. Seeraj

Ms. Rodrigues

Mr. Persaud

Mr. Indar

Mr. McCoy

Ms. Parag

Mr. Ramson

Dr. Persaud

Mr. Croal

Mr. Dharamlall

Mr. Bharrat

Mr. Hamilton

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai

Mr. Mustapha

Dr. Anthony

Bishop Edghill

Mr. Todd

Mr. Nandlall

Mr. Jagdeo

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips

32

Abstained

Mr. Ramjattan

Mr. Patterson

2

2.21 p.m.

Motion carried.

Programme: 162 – Community Development and Empowerment – \$825,200,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Mr. Chairman: Let me take this opportunity to thank the Hon. Minister and her staff for taking us through these heads.

Mr. Mahipaul: Mr. Chairman, thank you for acknowledging me on my feet. I would like to put on record...

Mr. Chairman: I would like to hear the Standing Order. I do not know what you are putting on record.

Hon. Member, could we prepare for the Ministry of Agriculture? We are starting at 2.30 p.m.

Mr. Mahipaul: Mr. Chairman ...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, please take your seat. Thank you.

Hon. Members let us have some order. We have two hours allocated for the Ministry of Agriculture and we are starting at 2.30 p.m.

Agency 21: Ministry of Agriculture

Current Expenditure

Programme: 211 – Ministry Administration – \$905,602,000

Mr. Ramjattan: Could I, through you, ask the Minister, there being 26 more staff members under the staffing details, to give me the designations of two of the highest paid and two of the lowest paid in relation to these 248 employees?

Minister of Agriculture [Mr. Mustapha]: The additional staff are 23 Extension Assistants who were appointed during November, 2019. They are as follows: one Head of Financial Administration, one Environmental Health Officer and one Biologist. These employees were added to the payroll in 2020. The highest paid salary in this category is \$737,734 – Chief Technical Officer and the lowest paid is \$60,000.

Mr. Ramsaroop: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Under line item 6111 – Administrative: There is an increase of staff by three. Could the Hon. Minister state the designations and emoluments of the three staff?

Mr. Mustapha: The three additional staff are: one Environmental Officer, one Technical Officer and one Systems Development Officer.

Mr. Jordan: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister kindly explain this?

Mr. Mustapha: This line item caters for maintenance of infrastructure within the compound of the Ministry of Agriculture at Regent Street and Vlissengen Road.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Jordan has a follow-up.

2.36 p.m.

Mr. Jordan: It is not a follow-up, Sir.

Line item 6261 – Local Travel and Subsistence: Could the Hon. Minister kindly explain the travelling at this time?

Mr. Mustapha: Mr. Chairman, we have a reduction in this line item because of COVID-19. It has significantly affected fieldwork for the second and third quarters and planned activities were postponed; hence, the reduction in this expenditure.

Mr. Figueira: The Hon. Minister, in his earlier comment, indicated that the lowest paid employee is getting \$60,000. The Government’s minimum wage is \$70,000. Will a correction be made to this?

Mr. Mustapha: Mr. Chairman, that is correct. The lowest paid employee is receiving \$60,000 because she is a relief cleaner; she does not work every day of the week.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6291 – National and Other Events: There is an allocation of \$8 million. Could the Hon. Minister indicate what these funds will be used for?

Mr. Mustapha: Mr. Chairman, this line item caters for Agriculture Month activities. Next month will be Agriculture Month and a number of activities have been planned virtually around the country. Also, virtual workshops with farmers around the country are planned. We will be doing a lot of educational activities and reaching out to farmers, so that they can reap the benefits of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Government of Guyana.

Mr. Shuman: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I noticed that, in 2019, the allocation was \$412.275 million and, in 2020, it stands at \$447.116 million. I would like the Hon. Minister to inform this Committee, how much of that money was spent in the Indigenous communities?

Mr. Mustapha: I think I made an explanation earlier but, for the benefit of the Hon. Member, we have an additional 23 extension officers under this.

Mr. Ramsaroop: Line item 6113 – Other Technical and Craft Skilled: There is a reduction from 11 to nine. Could the Hon. Minister state what happened to these two staff?

Mr. Mustapha: This reduction has come about because of the two persons who have retired as Crop Reporters. We had five and it has gone to three because of retirement.

Mr. Jordan: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister state which of the buildings are due to be maintained in the next three months?

Mr. Mustapha: This line item caters for the undertaking of maintenance of all the buildings as follows: routine maintenance work, which includes buildings in the compound of the Ministry of Agriculture – \$5.6 million; rewiring work, phase 1; and reconnection of cable at the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) building at La Bonne Intention (LBI) – \$4 million. That is the reason.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Jordan, do you have a follow-up?

Mr. Jordan: No, Sir.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: There has been an increase in contracted employees. Could the Hon. Minister indicate if these said contracted employees will be placed on the fixed establishment and, if so, how soon will that be done?

Mr. Mustapha: Mr. Chairman, could the Member please repeat the question?

Mr. Figueira: Certainly, Hon. Minister.

Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: There has been an increase. My question is, will efforts be made to ensure that these contracted employees are placed on the fixed establishment and, if so, how soon?

Mr. Mustapha: These are bonded staff. When they come off from scholarships, they normally go on contract for three years, the Government pays and then they go to the permanent establishment.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister indicate which of these said buildings will be maintained?

Mr. Mustapha: I just mentioned it. One of their Colleagues asked the question. Again, if the Member could pay attention to the answers, I said they are as follows: routine maintenance work includes three buildings in the compound of the Ministry of Agriculture; and rewiring the FAO building at LBI. Those were the buildings I mentioned earlier when the question was asked.

Mr. Figueira: Reiterating your said answer, it was more pellucid.

Line item 6112 – Senior Technical: Could the Minister indicate what is the skill set of the technical staff?

Mr. Mustapha: This area consists of five staff: three Civil Engineers, one Agricultural Engineer, and one Engineer.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6133 – Benefits & Allowances: Could the Hon. Member provide some clearer understanding for this said line item?

Mr. Mustapha: This line item caters for increase in vacation allowances for those staff who were transferred from line item 6116 and they were paid acting allowances.

Mr. Jordan: Line Item 6294 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister detail what will take place under Other?

Mr. Mustapha: This line item caters for initiatives under the Ministry of Agriculture’s purview: the Rice Assessment Committee; the Agricultural Disaster Risk Management Plan; the Food and Nutrition Security Strategy; and the Hinterland Development Guyana Food Safety Authority. The funding for those will be coming from line item ‘Other’.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6284 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister be so kind to provide us with the details for this allocation?

Mr. Mustapha: This line item caters for the payment of stipend and the operation for the National Cane Farming Committee (NCFC) – \$3.1 million, and payment for the Department of Public Information (DPI) media services.

Mr. Sinclair: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: What does that entail?

Mr. Mustapha: This is the third time I am repeating this answer. These are buildings in the compound of the Ministry of Agriculture to do repairs.

Ms. Philadelphia: Line item 6322 – Subsidies and Contributions to Intl. Organisations: Could the Hon. Member give us a breakdown as to the entities expected to benefit from this line item?

Mr. Mustapha: This line item will cater for the payment of subscriptions to international organisations such as: the FAO, the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and office of the International Agriculture Associations.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Could the Hon. Minister tell us about line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships)? Does this cover ongoing training and scholarships or new ones? And, if it is ongoing, what are some of the ongoing training?

Mr. Mustapha: Yes, Mr. Chairman. This line item covers local training within the Ministry of Agriculture.

Ms. Singh-Lewis: Just a follow-up on Ms. Flue-Bess’ question. Could the Hon. Minister list the training and which department it will be for?

Mr. Mustapha: This line item caters for training workshops, computer training for programme one, conflict resolution, and the monitoring and evaluation unit and department, also.

Programme: 211 – Ministry Administration – \$905,602,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 211 – Ministry Administration – \$835,642,000

Mr. Ramjattan: On page 641, I just want to know if I am reading it clearly or if it is a mistake. Reverse Linkage Programme – Rice Improvement, in that capital, is that accurate?

Mr. Mustapha: Yes.

Mr. Ramjattan: For forward linkage rather than reverse, what does that involve?

Mr. Mustapha: The Hon. Member is right; Reverse Linkage Programme – Rice Improvement. We have three new varieties of this: introduction to high yielding, aromatic and salt tolerance rice varieties and some Malaysian.

I could layout the benefits: establishing a unified seed production system, development of rice value chain, capacity building in certified seed production, breeding methodology and protocol.

Mr. Ramjattan: Just a follow-up, when will the varieties be ready?

2.51 p.m.

Mr. Mustapha: Mr. Chairman, this is an ongoing process with ongoing works. I was told by the Guyana Rice Development Board (GRDB) that, very shortly, a very good high yield variety may come out. They are now in the process of testing it and, very shortly, we should have those varieties completed.

Mr. Ramsaroop: Under project code 1302300 – Drainage and Irrigation – Pumps: Could the Hon. Minister say when the pumps at [*inaudible*] will be commissioned?

Mr. Mustapha: The cost of those pumps will be \$555,047,957.

Mr. Ramsaroop: Hon. Minister, I just asked when the pumps are going to be commissioned?

Mr. Mustapha: Right now, we are awaiting the technicians to arrive from India. We have already received the green light from the Ministry of Health and have made contact with those technicians. Hopefully, by the end of next month, they should be in the country.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Project code 4404100 – Technical Assistance – Support to Agriculture Sector: Could the Hon. Minster tell this Committee what is involved in the technical assistance and if it is given to all of the regions?

Mr. Mustapha: This caters for the development of a framework for the prioritisation of crop and climate smart agriculture investment in Guyana and the integrated crop modelling of six priority crops such as: pineapples, mangoes, coconuts, watermelons, plantains and peppers.

Ms. Flue-Bess: A follow-up: I am not too clear with the answer that was just given. Does this project cover all the administrative regions?

Mr. Mustapha: This is Technical Assistance – Support to the agriculture sector. It is a Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) grant and we will be providing support, based on the needs around the country, while we do these monitoring.

Mr. Ramjattan: Does technical support include the education of the farmers as to which crops they should prioritise?

Mr. Mustapha: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Jordan: Project code 2100700 – Flood Risk Management Project: Could the Hon. Minister state which areas are likely to benefit from the Flood Risk Management Project?

Mr. Mustapha: This is for rehabilitation work on the North Eastern Dam of the East Demerara Water Conservancy (EDWC). This will provide protection and improve drainage and irrigation to reduce flooding for over 300,000 residents on the East Coast.

Programme: 211 – Ministry Administration – \$835,642,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Current Expenditure

Programme: 212 – Agriculture Development and Support Services – \$8,458,191,000

Mr. Ramjattan: Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: I noticed that for the Guyana School of Agriculture (GSA), there has been an almost \$60 million reduction for the school in 2020. Could the Minister explain the reduction?

Mr. Mustapha: The Hon. Member is correct. Presently, the school is closed and most of the classes are being done virtually. The dormitories are empty because there are no students on campus and there is no provision for meals. That is the reason for the decrease.

Mr. Ramjattan: I noticed that there is a \$60 million increase for the Mahaica/Mahaicony/Abary-Agriculture Development Authority (MMA/ADA). The increase is from \$220 million to \$280 million. Is the increase in view of the fact that the Government has taken away the drainage and irrigation increases?

Mr. Mustapha: I spoke extensively on the MMA/ADA in my Budget presentation. I would like to reiterate the point that the MMA/ADA has 620 miles of canals and drains which were neglected and in a very poor state. Farmers were unable to pay their rent and, as a result of that, only about 40% of the farmers were paying. I went to a number of areas, as the Minister of Agriculture, and the farmers asked and pleaded for some infrastructural works. As result of that, we were able to look at the state of the MMA/ADA and budget this amount. This is because capital, infrastructural and canal works were neglected badly for the last five years in that scheme.

Mr. Ramjattan: Is this similarly the case with the Hope Coconut Industries Limited (HCIL), that the Government will put in another \$14 million subvention to the estate, rather than take it out of rentals from farmers? It is the same line item because it is \$8 billion but it is referable to what we call local organisations. There is where I am seeing all these increases, where the Government is putting more money in Hope Coconut Industries Limited, MMA/ADA and so on.

Mr. Mustapha: Again, I would like to say that our Government always invests in people and the HCIL. As I mentioned, in my budget presentation, we have two additional nurseries: one in Kairuni on the East Bank and one in Charity on the Essequibo. We are hoping to do a lot of sensitisation campaigns around the country because coconut has become a very important crop and could bring in much needed revenue because most of the agriculture sector was neglected by the previous Government.

Mr. Jordan: Line item 6321 – Subventions and Contributions to Local Organisations: The agency is the National Drainage and Irrigation Authority (NDIA). Could the Hon. Minister say how much has been budgeted by the Ministry of Agriculture for drainage and irrigation for the farmers in the Mahaica/Berbice region and, more so, for the continued drainage that the former Administration assured the residents of the Mahaica/Berbice region within the housing areas?

Mr. Mustapha: If I could have some clarity from the Hon. Member, is the line item that he is referring to line item 6321?

Mr. Jordan: Yes, line item 6321.

Mr. Mustapha: A total of \$28.7 million is for the maintenance of that infrastructure.

Mr. Jordan: I also asked for the areas likely to benefit from this subvention.

Mr. Mustapha: This falls under the NDIA and, as I mentioned in my Budget speech, a number of areas in almost the entire country, including Linden and the interior locations like— Regions 8 and 9.

Mr. Jordan: Mr. Chairman, I was being specific to the Mahaica/Berbice region.

Mr. Mustapha: I mentioned that it is the entire Mahaica/Mahaicony/Abary-Agriculture Development scheme.

Programme: 212 – Agriculture Development and Support Services – \$8,458,191 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 212 – Agriculture Development and Support Services – \$4,559,420

Mr. Ramjattan: Project code 4503200 – Contribution to Local Corporation – GUYSUCO: I noticed a capital contribution of \$3 billion for the rest of the year. Surprisingly, I did not see a capital project profile in Volume 3 of the *Estimates of the Public Sector*. Could the Minister indicate to the Committee what is it that this \$3 billion is going to be spent on for the rest of the year?

Mr. Mustapha: I mentioned that we will be using part of the \$3 billion subvention for the reopening of the Rose Hall, Skeldon and Enmore Sugar Estates. Also, part of that money will be used for the recapitalisation of the three other estates that are presently grinding sugar. The Guyana Sugar Corporation (GuySuCo) has informed me that it has requested moneys to do capital works in these three estates and that the National Industrial and Commercial Investments Limited (NICIL) had collected a \$30 billion loan for GuySuCo and did not give GuySuCo any money to do the capital works. As a result of that, the Government found the money and, as this Government has said, it will revitalise

sugar and will reemploy the Guyanese people who were dismissed by the previous Government.

Mr. Ramjattan: Mr. Chairman, we do not do budget estimates like that. Whenever there is a capital expenditure of this massive sum, one must have what is called a ‘project profile’ – reopening three estates. Could the Minister say, how much capital of this \$3 billion will be going to the Skeldon or Rose Hall Sugar Estates or whatever he is opening? One just does not put a blanket \$3 billion like that with no project profile. This is against the Financial Management and Accountability Act (FMAA).

Mr. Mustapha: As I said, we have technical teams on the estates right now looking at the needs of these estates, to see what could be done to get them reopened as early as possible.

3.06 p.m.

We will have to do a lot of work because a number of equipment and other assets from the estates were sold at a cheap price to friends and families of the Rose Hall Sugar Estate.

I want to inform the Hon. Member that at the Enmore Sugar Estate there is an estimated cost, so far, of \$778 million; at Rose Hall Sugar Estate – \$710 million; and at the Skeldon Sugar Estate – \$711 million, giving a total of \$2.2 billion. The balance will be going towards the other estates to take care of the needs there because those estates are grinding between 40% to 60% capacity right now, because of the neglect over the last five years.

Mr. Ramjattan: Has there been any study done to prove how much moneys it will cost to reopen those estates and factories as the Hon. Member wants done?

Mr. Mustapha: As I said, we have done studies and there are a number of studies that were done by economic organisations and trade unions; even though I do not want to call the name of an international organisation that did a study, not so long ago. The feasibility study and the results of those studies that we have is to ensure that we put between \$3 billion to \$5 billion, at least, to start up these estates.

Mr. Ramjattan: From those studies, what amount was revealed to reopen the estates, if you had studies done?

Mr. Mustapha: I think the Hon. Member is saying that I should give him a specific amount. We are now doing the technical aspect.

As I mentioned, the needs are there presently; I mentioned the amounts that are needed; and, as the time goes by, more money... In the Budget presentation, the Hon. Member said that \$3 billion, immediately, will be budgeted for these estates and there are another two recapitalisations to start later in the season.

Mr. Ramjattan: What is the earliest date for the reopening of these estates?

Mr. Mustapha: The damage that was done on the estates by the APNU/AFC was about to destroy the entire estates. What it did with the Wales Sugar Estate, it was trying to do with the Rose Hall, Enmore and Skeldon Sugar Estates, but the elections were held earlier, and we won. Now we will reopen those estates. I cannot give the Member a specific date. The cultivation was destroyed. Sugar cane is not something one can get over night, one has to plant the cane and know about cane. I am hoping that, by the first or second crop next year, we should have sugar coming out of these factories.

Mr. Ramjattan: It is *ad hoc* here but let us move on. Project code 1301600 – National Drainage and Irrigation Authority

An Hon. Member: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. Ramjattan: You all will open it. There is \$1.16 billion for the completion of certain pump stations and so on. I notice in the project profile, unlike the previous one from India, where will the pumps go? We do not know where the pumps here will go. Could the Minister help me, please?

Mr. Mustapha: Mr. Chairman, if I could inform the Hon. Member, these pumps will be placed at Devonshire Castle, Hampton Court, Den Amstel, Nooten Zuil, Hope, Mora Point and Rose Hall Town. Those are fixed pumps; the mobile pumps will go at South Ruimveldt, the Sussex Street sluice and the Third Street sluice.

Mr. Ramjattan: There is a capital project 94, in the profile and it is simply stating, “Completion of pumping structures and pump stations”. The other ones you just stated at Nooten Zuil, Mora Point, Den Amstel and all of that, are under project 88 in the profile, please get it right. Where is project 94?

Mr. Mustapha: Mr. Chairman, I am saying that pump stations will be built at Devonshire Castle, Hampton Court, Den Amstel, Nooten Zuil, Hope, Mora Point and Rose Hall Town. The stations to house the pumps will be built there.

Ms. Ferguson: If I am to go back to project code 4503200, Contribution to Local Corporation, GUYSUCO: it speaks to \$3 billion for the recapitalisation of the Guyana Sugar Corporation. If I am to turn our attention to the actual Budget speech, on page 82 of 85:

“v. Allocation of \$3 billion for the recapitalisation of GuySuCo and an Additional \$2 billion as Required.”

If I am correct, during the presentation last week, or even before the Budget presentation, the entire nation was told that \$5 billion would be allocated to GuySuCo. When we look at what the Budget speech speaks to and compare it with what is in the actual Estimates, I notice that there is a shortfall of \$2 billion. So, my question to the Hon. Member is, could an explanation be given as to the amount of money that will actually be utilised for either the recapitalisation of GuySuCo or whatever else is to be done?

Mr. Mustapha: I already give that explanation. I said \$3 billion, initially, we will put into these estates to reopen them and, if they require more, we will be looking at the \$2 billion that was mentioned in the Budget speech by the Hon. Member, to see how we will use those moneys.

Mr. Jordan: Project code 1302400 – Mahaica/Mahaicony/Abary: Could the Hon. Minister state the name of the dams that are to be upgraded and the equipment that will be upgraded during the next three months?

Mr. Mustapha: If the Hon. Member wishes, I could layover the number of dams because they are about 9,336 metres around the area. Sorry, Mr. Chairman, this is five miles of conservancy dam to heighten the dam. It is an ongoing activity to stop overtopping and to ensure that we have strong dams to prevent flooding.

Mr. Jordan: I would still like to have that in detail, so that I could understand where exactly the works will take place.

Mr. Chairman: The Minister had asked if you would like him to lay it over.

Mr. Jordan: Yes, sure.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much.

Mr. Figueira: Project code 4503200 – Contribution to Local Corporation – GUYSUCO: Could the Hon. Minister state what is the cost in United States (US) dollars for GuySuCo to produce one tonne of sugar, compared to its selling price?

Mr. Mustapha: Could the Hon. Member lead me to the project code? This project code is stating what the capital cost is to reopen the sugar estates and recapitalise on the estates that are grinding sugar, presently.

Mr. Figueira: If I could rephrase, the allocation towards GuySuCo is towards its resuscitation. The objective of GuySuCo is to produce sugar, so the prudent thing to do is to know if the production cost will equate to the selling price. I am asking the Hon. Minister, could he provide the Committee with what is the production cost in US dollars for the production of one tonne of sugar, as well as what will be the selling price on the World Market for that said tonne of sugar?

Mr. Mustapha: I do not think that is in the Estimates, but the main objective of this Government is to ensure that we come at a breakeven point, we reemploy people and, at the same time, we make a profit when we are there.

Mr. Figueira: Hon. Minister, could you inform the Committee whether GuySuCo is a Government business or a benevolent fund?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, everyone knows what GuySuCo is. Reports on GuySuCo have been tabled annually in this House. Hon. Member Mr. Figueira, please continue.

Mr. Figueira: Cde. Chairman, the question is a valid question because Government also provides benevolent funds to commercial societies. The question is, and I support the Hon. Minister...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Figueira, I have made a ruling and you are still persisting that the Chairman...

Mr. Figueira: What is the ruling?

Mr. Chairman: The ruling is that everyone knows what GuySuCo is.

Mr. Figueira: Sir, that is an assumption.

Mr. Chairman: It is not an assumption. The annual reports have been tabled for a going concern in this House.

Mr. Figueira: Sir, we are here to provide answers to the Guyanese population and not the Hon. Members in this Committee.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Hon. Member. If you do not have a further question, I will put the question.

Mr. Figueira: I do have a further question.

Mr. Chairman: Please, proceed with the question.

Mr. Figueira: My question still remains. The sum of \$3 billion has been allocated to GuySuCo. Could the Hon. Minister tell us what is the production cost for GuySuCo to produce one tonne of sugar in US dollars? The public needs to know; we need to know. You are selling it on the World Market; we need to have a comparative price.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Figueira, I think that you are crossing the line now.

Mr. Mustapha: I do not think that is a fair question. We are now considering a Budget estimate. We have \$3 billion that was budgeted to reopen the GuySuCo estates that were closed and to recapitalise on those present estates. If the Member wants to know the answers, he could table those questions in the National Assembly and I could provide him with the answers.

Mr. Figueira: We are here to approve these Estimates, \$3 billion is being awarded to GuySuCo which does the production of sugar in this country. It is the entity that produces sugar. I believe that the question is a fair question. If we are going to allocate \$3 billion of Guyanese taxpayers’ money, we need to know if this agency is profitable. *[Interruption]*

3.21 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Figueira, I put, finally, the question to the Hon. Minister.

Mr. Mustapha: I am willing to answer that question if the Member could ask a formal question, but we are considering Budget estimates. I am prepared to answer any question on the project code.

For the Member’s information, there was a commission of inquiry (COI) that was set up by the APNU/AFC Government. The COI report stated that no sugar estate must be closed, and that Government must fund the sugar industry so that it could break even. We are doing that. Although we did not set up the COI, we are putting much needed funds in the sugar industry to reopen the estates and revitalise the entire sugar industry. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Figueira, before you proceed, the question which the Hon. Member, Mr. Figueira, has asked has been submitted by him as a formal question.

That matter is going to be shortly circulated on a Notice Paper. Sorry, in fact, I am being told by the staff that Notice Paper No. 4 has been circulated and the question is contained therein. We will have an opportunity to answer, comprehensively, many of the issues which have been raised with respect to GuySuCo by the Hon. Member.

Mr. Figueira: Hon. Minister, I am in support of GuySuCo receiving funds. I believe the funds should be one that is appropriate towards the resuscitation.

My question to the Hon. Minister is, could the Hon. Minister say, unambiguously, when GuySuCo sells its sugar, is it below the production cost for sugar on the international market? Is it profitably when we sell this sugar compared to the production cost for one tonne of sugar?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Figueira, this was one of the questions which you had submitted in the list of questions and, when read against the Standing Order, we did not include it, which is the prerogative of this side of the Committee. I will ask the Hon. Minister to make a comment, if he so wishes.

Mr. Mustapha: Mr. Chairman, as you rightly said, the question was submitted and I will be submitting answer on 5th October, 2020.

Mr. Chairman: The 5th October is slated as the date for the submission of answers. Hon. Mr. Figueira, why I particularly disallowed that part of the question...

Mr. Figueira: Are you disallowing it?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, it states in the Standing Orders 20 (j):

“a Question shall not be asked for the purpose of obtaining an expression of opinion, the solution of an abstract legal case or the answer to a hypothetical proposition;”

Thank you very much.

Mr. Figueira: I have another question that is not in relation to that. With regard to the allocation to GuySuCo under the said project code, could the Hon. Minister equally inform this Committee, what is GuySuCo’s total indebtedness as of 31st August? That is to ascertain, Cde. Chairman, if the allocation is sufficient.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I think that is one of the sub-questions that is coming up for an answer on 5th October.

Mr. Jordan: Project code 1701600 – National Agricultural Research and Extension Institute: Could the Hon. Minister state what equipment will be purchased for the National Agriculture Research and Extension Institute (NAREI)?

Mr. Mustapha: Mr. Chairman, this \$15.7 million here, I believe, is budgeted to purchase shade house materials for farmers. The NAREI will be selling it to the farmers at the cost price and create a revolving fund so that it will continuously help the farmers to get shade houses around the country.

Mr. Holder: I would like to go back to project code 1301600, National Drainage and Irrigation Authority. There is a sum there for \$1.1 billion. If I heard correctly, the Minister mentioned these sums were to construct pump stations, *et cetera*. If I heard correctly, the Devonshire Castle pump station was mentioned. I know that this is actually a rollover project, and it is an ongoing project that was started under the APNU/AFC. My question is, could the Minister give a project update, specifically, on the Devonshire Castle pump station. Given the position of that project now, what is completed, what remains and when do you expect to commission that project?

Mr. Mustapha: I would like to inform the Hon. Member that, we are waiting to place the pump. We are awaiting the technicians from India to arrive in the country. As I said, hopefully, by the end of next month they may be here and that pump and all the other pumps across the country will be fixed.

Mr. Holder: Thank you, Minister. I understand that you are awaiting the technicians. What I asked is, when do you expect to commission this pump? Let us put it this way. When do you expect to commission this pump?

Mr. Mustapha: Mr. Chairman, for me to commission the pump is not the important thing; the important thing is the operation of the pump. As soon as the pump is placed, we will have it in operation so that we could avoid flooding in the area. Later on, we could do the *pomp and ceremony* because we do not want to commission something that is not fixed properly, like the East Coast Road Project.

Mr. Holder: Thank you, Minister. However, that answer is not acceptable. I still was not given a timeline, but I will move on. I believe that the Minister probably does not know.

On the same project code 1301600, National Drainage and Irrigation Authority, I would like to ask the Minister if any

provision is there for drainage in the Pomeroon such as Friendship, Hackney and the canals in those areas under this project code or if it comes under another project code—Pomeroon areas?

Mr. Mustapha: I would like to inform the Hon. Member, Mr. Chairman, yes, we have Aberdeen, Friendship, Nunes in the Pomeroon, Siriki Creek and other areas.

Programme: 212 – Agriculture Development and Support Services – \$4,559,420,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 213 – Fisheries – \$201,323,000

Mr. Ramjattan: There seems to be about 20 or more employees under staffing details. Could the Hon. Minister indicate, of these 19 or 20 staff, what are the designations of the two highest paid and the lowest?

Mr. Mustapha: The Hon. Member is correct. There are 19 persons, two in the Senior Technical and 17 in the semi-skilled. The highest salary is \$370,000, which is the Chief Fisheries Officer, and the lowest is \$70,000.

Mr. Ramsaroop: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister state what happened to the two employees because there is the reduction?

Mr. Mustapha: The two were transferred to the pensionable establishment.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6284 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister provide this Committee with the details for this allocation?

Mr. Mustapha: Mr. Chairman, these funds will offset expenditure on advertisement for projects and notices for licensing in the various regions. The increase caters for services rendered on the marine vessel.

Mr. Figueira: Could the Hon. Minister be so kind as to provide us with the information for line item 6294, Other, as well.

Mr. Mustapha: These are stipends for the Fisheries Advisory Committee members from July to December. Also, under this line item, the purchasing of materials such as mats, towels, curtains and miscellaneous items for marine vessels and the COVID-19.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6112 – Senior Technical: This line item has been increased by 10. Could the Hon. Member state what are the job titles of these 10 senior technical officers and provide us with the highest paid salary, lowest paid salary along with the benefits for those skill set employees?

3.36 p.m.

Mr. Mustapha: We have 10 Fisheries Officers. The highest paid, as I mentioned earlier, is \$370,000 and the lowest paid is \$70,000, which is a Cleaner. Yes, that is it.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6115 – Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled: Could the Hon. Minister provide us with the salaries for the highest and the lowest paid employees?

Mr. Mustapha: The highest paid salary in this category is \$83,311 and the lowest paid is \$70,000.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister identify which building would be the beneficiary of this allocation?

Mr. Mustapha: Under this line item, various repairs were completed in 2019 and, as such, the conditions of the buildings are fair. Hence, the reduction in this line item.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6282 – Equipment Maintenance: Could the Hon. Minister identify which equipment will be maintained with this allocation?

Mr. Mustapha: This allocation will be to repair office equipment, such as computers, and other things within the office.

Mr. Jordan: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Member state what are the designations, salaries and other benefits for the four remaining contracted employees?

Mr. Mustapha: The four employees are a Fisheries Inspector, who is paid \$124,000; an Administrative Assistant; a Cleaner and a Turtle Excluder Device (TED) Inspector. The lowest paid is \$70,000.

Mr. Jordan: I did not get the four designations clear, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Mustapha: The four, again, are a Fisheries Inspector, who is paid \$124,852; a TED Inspector; an Administrative Assistant; and a Cleaner.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6291 – National and Other Events: Under this Programme: 213 – Fisheries, could the Hon.

Minister indicate what national or other events will be catered for with this allocation?

Mr. Mustapha: These are funds that will be expended during Agriculture Month. We have planned a number of activities in the fisheries sector, especially since the United States of America (USA) Secretary of State came to Guyana and said that he will be looking at the catfish ban. We will be going around to talk to stakeholders to see how we can improve our production in catfish so that we can export more to the United States of America.

Mr. Figueira: On the same line item, would this stakeholder discussion be on a national...*[Interruption]*

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, please.

Mr. Figueira: Hon. Minister, on the said line item, you mentioned that there is going to be a national stakeholder consultation. Would this be a national stakeholder conversation, or would it be specific to Georgetown or where fishing, in particular, happens on a larger scale when compared to other regions, for example Region 10, Upper Demerara/Berbice?

Mr. Mustapha: As I said, we will not be having a national stakeholder consultation. We will be having a sensitisation consultation around the country, in all 10 regions, where there are fisher folks and fishermen so that we can consult with them, educate them and tell them about the improvements that we will be making in the fisheries sector.

Mr. Figueira: Thank you, Hon. Member. You have indicated to the Committee that you will be going around. Have you factored in the COVID-19 environment? Would it not be better if you were to consider virtual communication with these different bodies to communicate the same message to make it safer for the participants?

Mr. Mustapha: We will be doing it on a limited scale physically, but more will be done virtually around the country.

Mr. Figueira: Thank you for that. Would the line of communication be made public? If it is on *Zoom*, would that information be provided on a national platform so all interested bodies could tune in?

Mr. Mustapha: Yes.

Ms. Ferguson: Let me take our attention to line item 6254, Vehicles Spares and Service. I noticed that for the three

months budget, we have an increase of \$1,350,000. Could the Hon. Member say to this Committee what is the fleet of vehicles within the system and, also, what caused the increase in this figure?

Mr. Mustapha: Could I clarify from the Hon. Member to which line item she is referring?

Ms. Ferguson: I am referring to line item 6254, Vehicles Spares and Service.

Mr. Mustapha: There is no line item 6254 here.

Ms. Ferguson: Pardon me?

Mr. Mustapha: There is no line item 6254 in this programme. It is line item 6264, Vehicles Spares and Service.

Ms. Ferguson: Is it line item 6264, Vehicles Spares and Service?

Mr. Mustapha: Yes.

Ms. Ferguson: I am seeing line item 6254. Are we not on pages 184 and 185, respectively?

Mr. Mustapha: We have 6264, Vehicles Spares and Service. The increase caters for the servicing of marine vessels.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Ms. Ferguson, what does your book have?

Ms. Ferguson: On page 185, Sir, at the very top of that page, there is line item 6264, Vehicles Spares and Service.

Mr. Chairman: I know, sometimes I confuse my sixes with fives.

Ms. Ferguson: It looks like a five to me.

Mr. Mustapha: It is line item 6264, Vehicles Spares and Service and not line item 6254.

Ms. Ferguson: It is a five. It is line item 6254.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, we have to excuse the fogging of our glasses. It is line item 6264, Vehicles Spares and Service. Hon. Minister, proceed.

Mr. Mustapha: It caters for repairs to marine vessels.

Ms. Ferguson: I was saying to you, Hon. Member, under that particular line item 6264, Vehicles Spares and Service, there is an increase in excess of \$1,350,000 as against what was actually budgeted and spent in 2019. The answers I am trying

to get from you are for the questions: What could have occasioned the increase and what is the number of vehicles within the fleet?

Mr. Mustapha: We have six vehicles in the fleet and also a new marine vessel. When I spoke at the Budget presentation, I said that we were in a \$40 million deficit in this sector. We have to pay out the \$40 million, plus we have to get money to service the marine vessels.

Mr. Jordan: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): Could the Hon. Minister provide us with information as to the details of training that will take place in the next three months and say if any scholarships will be awarded? Thank you.

Mr. Mustapha: Those will be internal training. There are no scholarships. Those are for the marine vessel training and training in patrolling the rivers, oceans and things of that sort.

Programme: 213 – Fisheries – \$201,323,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 213 – Fisheries – \$42,000,000

Programme: 213 – Fisheries – \$42,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 214 – Hydrometeorological Services – \$481,739,000

Mr. Ramjattan: I noticed a \$73,289,000 reduction on this Programme: 214 – Hydrometeorological Services. Could the Minister explain why it has decreased from \$555,037,000 last year to \$481,739,000 this year?

Mr. Mustapha: Due to COVID-19, we were unable to complete field works and send staff overseas for scholarship and training.

Mr. Ramjattan: Did that also affect line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships)? This was reduced from \$30,000,000 in 2019 to \$3,050,000 only this year. That is a \$26,950,000 reduction. Could the scholarships for training not continue?

Mr. Mustapha: Yes, that is so because scholarships and training are done overseas. Due to the closure of the airports

and the facilities, we have been unable to send people overseas.

Mr. Ramsaroop: This is just a follow-up to the questions asked by my Colleagues about the decline in the total budgeted allocation. When I looked from line items 6111 to 6117, overall, there is an increase in staff. There is a decline in the finance and an increase in the staff. I do not really see how that adds up. Could the Minister give some clarification here? Thanks.

Mr. Mustapha: Is that line item 6117, Temporary Employees? It is nil.

Mr. Ramsaroop: I would just reference the first question the Hon. Member, Mr. Ramjattan, asked. There was a decline overall from \$555,037,000 to \$481,739,000. I was just asking for some clarification on how there was an increase of staff and a decline in money.

Mr. Mustapha: This line item 6111, Administrative, increased from three staff in 2019 to eight in 2020. There is one Telecommunications Technician, one Chemist and one Hydrology Chemist.

3.51 p.m.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6282 – Equipment Maintenance: There was an allocation of more than \$56 million. Could the Hon. Minister identify the equipment that would benefit from this allocation?

Mr. Mustapha: We will transition from a manual network to an automatic weather station.

Mr. Figueira: Cde. Minister, I did not hear the latter part of your comment.

Mr. Mustapha: As I just mentioned, we will be transitioning from a manual network to an automatic network weather station where our weather forecast will be more on the spot.

Mr. Figueira: Could the Hon. Minister explain what is being maintained if the Ministry is transitioning? Does that not require new equipment?

Mr. Mustapha: The parts – sensor and the components for these things – are expensive and that is why they costs so much.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6284 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister give some guidance with respect to this allocation?

Mr. Mustapha: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Hydrometeorological Service saw a decrease in spending in this line item, as planned activities, such as upgrade to internet network, development of a hydrometeorological application, animated video and daily weather broadcast on television, were postponed.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6112 – Senior Technical: There is an increase by three staff. Could the Hon. Minister inform this Committee what are the positions of those technical officers, their salaries and benefits?

Mr. Mustapha: The three are: one Meteorologist, who was appointed to the pensionable establishment in July, 2020; one Public Relations Officer (PRO); and one Specialist Hydrologist, who was transferred from line item 6116 to line item 6117.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister indicate where these infrastructural works will be done?

Mr. Mustapha: These are structures associated with the automatic weather station that we will be putting across the country.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6113 – Other Technical and Craft Skilled: There has been a significant increase in the employ of these said officers. Could the Hon. Minister provide a reason for such?

Mr. Mustapha: The Hydrometeorological Service had to take up these slots because they were provided by Guyana Sugar Corporation when we had those estates in operation. As a result of that, we had to employ seven Hydro Tech Assistants who were appointed after 2019.

Mr. Figueira: Would those said officers be placed on the fixed establishment? There seems to be a need for them.

Mr. Mustapha: We will be working with the circular that comes out to give us guidance.

Mr. Figueira: I do not know if you had mentioned it or if I had missed it, but I made a request for the salaries of those said officers.

Mr. Mustapha: These are in the \$70,000 category.

Programme: 214 – Hydrometeorological Service – \$481,739,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme 214: Hydrometeorological Service – \$50,036,000

Mr. Ramjattan: Mr. Chairman, *via* you, could I ask the Minister to please disaggregate this \$50 million? How much is going to complete the living quarters and how much is going to buy hydrometeorology equipment?

Mr. Mustapha: The first part of this project is a rollover. The construction of living quarters in Annai, North Rupununi, \$5.2 million; direct red out ground station, Hydrometeorological Service, \$39,668,000 million; biological safety and cabinet accessories, \$4.4 million; and laboratory freezers water quality lab, \$729,000.

Mr. Figueira: Project code 1405500 – Provision for Agricultural Infrastructure and Support to Farmers: There is a \$48 million allocation. Could the Hon. Minister indicate if any infrastructural work will be done on the Millie’s Hideout Road, which will connect the farmers from Linden to the Berbice River?

Mr. Mustapha: Could the Hon. Member mention the project code again?

Mr. Figueira: It is project code 1405500. We have a number of farmers in that area, but the road is not passable. It needs infrastructural works to be done.

Mr. Mustapha: We are at programme 214 and he has gone backward. This is our last programme, programme 214; the Hon. Member went back. That programme was already adopted.

Mr. Figueira: I am at page 642.

Mr. Mustapha: What project code?

Mr. Chairman: Minister, would you still care to indicate?

Mr. Mustapha: If the Hon Member can just give the project code...

Mr. Chairman: I know that we have passed the head, it was approved and now forms part of the Estimates. Hon. Member Mr. Figueira, the point being made is that we are at Hydrometeorological Services, Programme 214.

Mr. Figueira: Sir, I am guided by your guidance. You indicated 642 as the page number and I am so guided. Thank you, Sir.

Programme: 214 – Hydrometeorological Service – \$50,036,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Let the Assembly resume.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, let me thank the Hon. Minister and the staff for guiding us through those heads. We would now take the Clerk of the National Assembly with an observation.

Correction to the Division of the House

The Clerk: Mr. Speaker, I wish to apologise for an error I made earlier during the division. I did not count the vote of the Deputy Speaker, Mr. Lenox Shuman. So, for the sake of the record, I will like to repeat the division.

Mr. Speaker: Please, Sir.

The Clerk: Mr. Speaker, 33 Members voted for the motion, 25 voted against and two Members declined to vote.

Assembly divided: Ayes 33, Noes 25, Abstained 2.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much.

Hon. Members, before we rise, a good secret was kept for the past three quarters of the day. Let us – on behalf of you and on my own behalf – give our best prayers and good wishes to the Hon. Member, Mr. Faizal Jaffarally, who is celebrating his birthday today. Food and drink are on him. Thank you. This is a good time to take the suspension.

Sitting suspended at 4.02 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 5.05 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, we shall resume as the Committee of Supply.

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

Agency: 25 Ministry of Business

Current Expenditure

Programme: 251 – Policy Development and Administration – \$160,974,000

Programme: 251 – Policy Development and Administration – \$160,974,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 251– Policy Development and Administration – \$12,149,000

Programme: 251 – Policy Development and Administration – \$12,149,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

5.08 p.m.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 252 – Business Development, Support and Promotion – \$691,919,000

Programme: 252 – Business Development, Support and Promotion – \$691,919,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 252 – Business Development, Support and Promotion – \$145,027,000

Programme: 252 – Business Development, Support and Promotion – \$145,027,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 253 – Consumer Protection – \$83,272,000

Programme: 253 – Consumer Protection – \$83,272,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 254 – Tourism Development and Promotion – \$286,909,000

Ms. Fernandes: Referring to line item 6291, National and Other Events, there is a budgetary allocation of \$5,564,000. Could the Hon. Minister be so kind to give the honourable Committee a breakdown of that line item?

Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce [Ms. Walrond]: Is the Hon. Member asking for the breakdown of the activities?

Ms. Fernandes: That is correct, Hon. Minister.

Ms. Walrond: I am advised that it is for outreaches, training and COVID-19 related recovery activities.

Ms. Fernandes: A follow-up: Could the Hon. Minister give an indication as to where these activities will be? Is it specific to any particular region?

Ms. Walrond: I am advised that it is in all the regions.

Mr. Ramsaroop: Under line item 6112, Senior Technical, there is an increase of an additional staff. Could the Hon. Minister state to the honourable Committee the job description of this person, what he/she will be doing and the emoluments?

Ms. Walrond: I apologise. I did not get the line item.

Mr. Chairman: It is line item 6112.

Ms. Walrond: Could the Hon. Member repeat the question?

Mr. Ramsaroop: In 2019, there were seven staff and in 2020 there are eight. I am asking for the designation of that person, the emoluments and when the person was hired.

Ms. Walrond: There is one Economist, who is on no-pay leave and one Liaison Officer, who has resigned. That is the reason for the decrease.

Programme: 254 – Tourism Development and Promotion – \$286,909,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 23 Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce

Current Expenditure

Programme: 231 – Policy Development and Administration – \$163,388,000

Mr. Rajkumar: Line item 6284 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister give us a breakdown on the...

Mr. Chairman: Is it line item 6284?

Mr. Rajkumar: Line item 6284 – Other: There is an allocation of \$10,002,000. Could the Hon. Member give us a breakdown of the sum under this head?

Ms. Walrond: This increase caters for furniture maintenance, cleaning of curtains, removing of chairs, *et cetera*, for the Arthur Chung Conference Centre (ACCC).

Mr. Rajkumar: Line item 6291 – National and Other Events: Could the Hon. Minister give a breakdown on how \$8,500,000 is going to be spent between October to December?

Ms. Walrond: I am advised that it is for the Guyana Trade and Investment Exhibition (GuyTIE) that is going to occur virtually.

Mr. Rajkumar: I beg your pardon; I was unable to hear clearly.

Ms. Walrond: This is for the Guyana Trade and Investment Exhibition programme that is going to occur virtually.

Mr. Rajkumar: A follow-up: Could the Hon. Minister inform the Committee as to when we will have this virtual meeting of GuyTIE?

5.23 p.m.

Ms. Walrond: I am advised that it is the second quarter of next year but, right now, the infrastructure is being put in place to have the virtual setting done successfully. So, no, it is the preparation for the virtual meeting that will happen in the second quarter of next year.

Mr. Rajkumar: Am I to understand that the preparation, in 2020, for this meeting, will cost \$8.5 million?

Ms. Walrond: Yes, they are looking at the recruitment of buyers and the expenses for the virtual platform.

Ms. Fernandes: I refer you to line item 6291, National and Other Events: As I had asked, previously, under Programme 254 where there is a budgetary allocation in excess of \$5.5 million for the first nine months... I was told by the Hon. Minister that these activities were done in all 10 regions but, now, we are being told that the \$8.5 million is for a virtual set up. My question to the Hon. Minister is, what mechanisms are being put in place for regions and communities that cannot participate, virtually, in this activity?

Ms. Walrond: I am advised that the Hon. Member’s question is in relation to a different programme.

Mr. Sinclair: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister provide us with some more details with regard to the employees and their emoluments?

Ms. Walrond: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Member please repeat the question?

Mr. Sinclair: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister provide us with some details with regards to the status and the emoluments of these contracted workers?

Ms. Walrond: This caters for 11 employees – one Personal Assistant... Does the Hon. Member wish me to say what their emoluments are?

Mr. Sinclair: Yes, thank you.

Ms. Walrond: There is one Personal Assistant – \$484,000; one Administrator – \$474,000; one Electrician – \$133,000; one General Foreman – \$108,000; one Machine Operator – \$104,000; two Labourers – \$83,000; and four Cleaners – \$77,000.

Ms. Philadelphia: I recognise that, under the same line item 6116, there is a need for these employees and so I am asking, is there is any arrangement being made to put them on the pay scheme?

Ms. Walrond: I am advised that the Cleaners and Labourers are retirees, the Personal Assistant is personal to the Minister so that person does not go on the fixed establishment and there is a plan to have the Administrator placed on the fixed establishment.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6112 – Senior Technical: Could the Hon. Minister inform the Committee about the status of these Technical Officers, what skill set they bring to the Ministry and their emoluments, salaries and benefits?

Ms. Walrond: This caters for an Economist, who is no-pay study leave and a Liaison Officer, who resigned in January, 2020.

Mr. Figueira: Could you please inform the Committee about their salaries, emoluments and benefits?

Ms. Walrond: The Economist is being paid \$145,148 and the Special Project Officer is being paid \$223,270.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Since I am seeing that line item 6242 is already dealing with maintenance of buildings, what does ‘Other Infrastructure’ include?

Ms. Walrond: This is the installation of 36 feet (ft) to 45 ft wallaba posts, repairs to the gates of the National Exhibition Centre’s compound and rehabilitation and painting of the security hut at the southern and main entrance of that compound.

Ms. Philadelphia: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): Could the Hon. Member inform this House of the training or scholarships that are under this line item?

Ms. Walrond: Could the Hon. Member repeat the line item, please?

Ms. Philadelphia: It is line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships).

Ms. Walrond: I am advised that this is training for staff on the new COVID-19 protocol.

Mr. Figueira: Hon. Minister, under the same line item, could you specify what that training would entail?

Ms. Walrond: I am advised that these include occupational safety and health, team building and leadership courses.

Programme: 231 – Policy Development and Administration – \$163,388,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 231 – Policy Development and Administration – \$67,000,000

Programme: 231 – Policy Development and Administration – \$67,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 232 – Business Development, Support & Promotion – \$207,972,000

Mr. Rajkumar: Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: I see the sum of \$172,058,000 is allocated. Could the Hon. Minister say whether any of that sum will be going towards assisting small and micro businesses during this time of COVID-19?

Ms. Walrond: The answer is yes.

5.38 pm

Mr. Rajkumar: Could the Hon. Minister say what percentage or how much will be spent in this area?

Ms. Walrond: I am advised that it will be about 30%.

Mr. Rajkumar: Could the Hon. Minister give us a breakdown on the spending of the other 70%?

Ms. Walrond: The 70% is going to training, coaching, mentoring and grants to assist in the setting up of small businesses.

Mr. Rajkumar: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): There is an allocation of \$2,530,000. Could the Hon. Minister give us a breakdown of training, since training is also included in the line item?

Ms. Walrond: I am advised that it would cater for training for the Ministry’s staff and not the Small Business Bureau.

Mr. Shuman: Minister, in relation to the same line item 6321, we know that, historically, Indigenous communities had difficulty accessing support to support tourism. Within the confines of the finances allocated under the \$171,000,000, could you please inform this Committee as to how much of that would be provided to support Indigenous communities accessing this financing? How much of that will be spent in or to support Indigenous communities?

Ms. Walrond: The Ministry always supports and has several programmes to aid Indigenous communities but, for this particular line item, 40% goes toward the Indigenous communities.

Mr. Shuman: Could the Hon. Minister be so kind to identify the areas that will receive the most benefits and the communities that will also benefit from this programme?

Ms. Walrond: I am advised that Regions 1, 7, 8 and 9 are currently receiving that support.

Mr. Shuman: I think the Hon. Minister might not have heard my question. I asked the Hon. Minister which communities will be benefiting from the programme and, if possible, the quantum per community.

Ms. Walrond: I am advised that, in Region 1, there is Matthews Ridge, Port Kaituma, Arakaka, Moruca; in Region 7 there is mainly Bartica; in Region 8 there is Mahdia, Kato and Paramakatoi; and in Region 9 there is Nappi and Parishara.

Mr. Shuman: I thank the Hon. Minister for her answers and for informing the Committee. I would be keen to inform the Hon. Minister that Mahdia and Bartica are not Indigenous communities. I would also ask the Hon. Minister that, if possible and in the interest of time, could she lay it over? I would be grateful.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, the Hon Deputy Speaker is asking if you can layover the document that you are reading from.

Ms. Walrond: Yes, we will layover the document.

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I see in the staffing details that there are 13 employees. Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to layover to this Committee, in writing, the designations, salaries and other benefits for the 13 employees?

Ms. Walrond: We will layover.

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6241 – Rental of Buildings: I see a sum of \$2,100,000. I am assuming that this is for the three-month period. May I ask which building is this or if they is more than one?

Ms. Walrond: This is the rental of space for the Scrap Metal Unit (SMU) at the Guyana National Printers compound.

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6261 – Local Travel and Subsistence: I see \$2,517,000 for the three- month period. Could the Hon. Minister give a breakdown of this line item, please?

Ms. Walrond: I am advised that this is for staff who would be visiting the industrial estates and the call centres in the outer regions.

Mr. Mahipaul: I heard the Hon. Minister loud and clear. I wonder, considering these trips, for line item 6221, if \$15,000 is sufficient for drugs and medical supplies in this COVID-19 period.

Ms. Walrond: This is what was budgeted.

Mr. Mahipaul: Let me confirm that the Minister is saying to us that \$15,000 for three months is sufficient for the travelling of staff to the tune of \$2,517,000.

With reference to line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings, which buildings are we speaking about? Is it the same building that was being rented at line item 6241?

Ms. Walrond: The maintenance is for the ACCC.

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6281 – Security Services: Which security services are we using?

Ms. Walrond: It is the Sentinel and Kalibur Security services.

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6265 – Other Transport, Travel and Postage: I see the sum of \$1,177,000. I also took note of line item 6261, which the Hon. Minister just answered. Could we have a detailed breakdown of line item 6265?

5.53 p.m.

Ms. Walrond: I am advised that this is for further out-of-town activities, including travel by air to Region 9.

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6261— Local Travel and Subsistence: Is the Hon. Minister saying to this honourable Committee that travel within Georgetown will cost \$2,517,000, whilst travel out of Georgetown and by air will cost us \$1,177,000?

Ms. Walrond: I think I was misrepresented by the Hon. Member. I did not say travel exclusively in Georgetown. It includes out-of-town travel as well.

Programme: 232 – Business Development, Support & Promotion – \$207,972,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 232 – Business Development, Support and Promotion – \$436,653,000

Mr. Rajkumar: Project code 4404200 – Small Business Development Fund: Could the Hon. Minister disclose whether the allocation of \$100 million will be used to guarantee loans and as grants to small businesses?

Ms. Walrond: The answer is yes.

Mr. Rajkumar: Are we to have funding from two sources under line item 6321 and project code 4404200?

Ms. Walrond: The grants are all coming from the Fund. I am sure that answers the Hon. Member’s question.

Mr. Rajkumar: Project code 4700500 – Bureau of Standards: There is an allocation of \$113,239,000 for the purchase of vehicles and equipment. Could the Hon. Minister say what would be the cost of the vehicles and the types of vehicles?

Ms. Walrond: Two vehicles will be purchased at \$9,318,000 each, giving a total of \$18 million.

Mr. Mahipaul: The same project code 4700500: The Minister was kind enough to indicate that two vehicles will be purchased at the cost of over \$18 million. We are seeing \$113,239,000 budgeted.

Mr. Chairman: That is the question that he asked.

Mr. Mahipaul: Could the Hon. Minister say what the remainder will be used for after the \$18 million is subtracted? Is it going to the National Television Network (NTN)?

Ms. Walrond: There is also one retrofitted vehicle for over \$17 million. This vehicle is retrofitted to conduct mobile testing and calibration by the officers in far-flung regions.

Mr. Mahipaul: Over \$17 million plus \$18 million still would not give us a total of \$113 million. We are asking for a breakdown of the \$113 million minus the \$18 million and the \$17 million.

Ms. Walrond: There are two new Hiluxes at over \$9 million, one new Toyota Corolla at over \$7 million and the retrofitted vehicle at over \$17 million. There is a retrofitted location container for \$14 million and 10 tonnes of cast iron test masting for \$17 million. I could provide the list, please.

Mr. Mahipaul: It is clear that, after a series of questions, we are now hearing that the \$113 million is allocated for a lot of vehicles. My question is whether the Hon. Minister could say to this honourable Committee how many vehicles, in total, will be purchased with this \$113,239,000 and for what purpose will they be used?

Ms. Walrond: I understood that the Hon. Member was asking about vehicles. The other equipment is related to test benching for rice, oil and gas, and the container for laboratory testing off-site to conduct specific calibrations. There are also the 10 tonnes cast iron testing weights to expand the capacity of the Guyana National Bureau of Standards (GNBS).

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, I think, what he meant is, because a number of other vehicles were mentioned, apart from the two that you first mentioned, he wanted to get an idea of what is the total amount of vehicles being purchased under this project code.

Mr. Mahipaul: Mr. Chairman, in the interest of time, and I can clearly see that the Hon. Minister is confused...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I think you may need to be careful.

Mr. Mahipaul: I am saying that I can see that the Hon. Minister seems to be confused about the project code, so I would appreciate if she could lay it over for us.

Ms. Walrond: There is absolutely no confusion here as to what I have in my hand. The question is about how many vehicles. There are three vehicles.

Mr. Mahipaul: Mr. Chairman, there is project code 4700500, and I will go it over again for the benefit of the Hon. Minister. When the question was first put concerning

vehicles, we heard about two. A further enquiry revealed two more and, then, a further inquiry revealed three. We heard about seven vehicles. I clearly asked the Hon. Minister for the total number of vehicles. I am still not getting an answer. I am saying to you, Mr. Chairman, that I am prepared to accept from the Minister – given that she is new to the portfolio – the layover to this Committee of a detailed breakdown of the \$113,239,000 for this project code, which the Minister seems not to know about.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, the Hon. Member is asking for a layover of the breakdown.

Ms. Walrond: I appreciate it. There is one electricity test bench at a 10 metre limit for \$22,453,000; two viscosity bags, at \$4 million each, to access flow behaviour for the oil and gas; two new Hilux vehicles at \$9 million each, a total of \$18,636,000; one new Toyota Corolla Fielder at \$7,443,000; one 2019 Transit 350 base high-roof exit cargo, which is a retrofitted vehicle for \$17,643,000; one Hiab H112 duo-manual control hoist at \$12,776,000; 10 tonnes of cast iron test masting at \$17 million; and one retrofitted location container at \$13,195,000. This gives a total of \$113,239,000.

Mr. Mahipaul: In light of this project code that is presenting so much difficulty, I would appreciate if the Hon. Minister could layover the document that breaks down the spending of \$113,239,000.

Ms. Walrond: I have it available here. There is no problem to lay it over.

Mr. Mahipaul: Thank you, Minister.

Programme: 232 – Business Development, Support and Promotion – \$436,653,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

6.08 p.m.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 233 – Consumer Protection – \$40,573,000

Mr. Rajkumar: Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Could the Hon. Minister give us a breakdown as to how \$45,800,000 will be spent between now and December?

Ms. Walrond: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that it is the Guyana Competition and Consumer Affairs Commission’s (CCAC’s) training – \$108 million. Under the Guyana

Competition and Consumer Affairs Commission is advocacy and investigation.

Mr. Rajkumar: I beg your pardon, Mr. Chairman, I have not heard the Hon. Minister’s answer.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, he is asking if you could repeat with more volume.

Ms. Walrond: For the Guyana Competition and Consumer Affairs Commission, this is for advocacy training, and to pay the persons who do the investigations; that is, employment cost. The Department of Consumer Affairs does advocacy as well.

Mr. Rajkumar: Line item 6261 – Local Travel and Subsistence: There is a sum of \$350,000 to be spent under the said line item. Could the Hon. Minister enlighten us about these travels, please?

Ms. Walrond: Mr. Chairman, on the Guyana Competition and Consumer Affairs Commission, I am advised that this is for training outside of Georgetown and for the Department of Consumer Affairs’ training and investigations.

Mr. Mahipaul: On the same line item 6261, Local Travel and Subsistence, I heard the Hon. Minister saying that this is to facilitate travelling for training. Could the Hon. Minister say how many vehicles are allocated for this programme that will assist in transporting these persons for training?

Ms. Walrond: The Department of Consumer Affairs uses the Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce’s vehicle and the CCAC has two vehicles, so that is three.

Mr. Mahipaul: A follow-up: Hon. Minister, are you confirming that there are three vehicles under this programme?

Ms. Walrond: Mr. Chairman, I believe the Hon. Member misunderstood me. Three vehicles are not assigned to this programme. The two from the Guyana Competition and Consumer Affairs Commission are assigned and the Department of Consumer Affairs would use from the pool of vehicles from the Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce.

Ms. Philadelphia: Line item 6261 – Local Travel and Subsistence: The Hon. Minister spoke of travel for training, but then I look at line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships), and I am seeing training there at a cost of \$80,000. Could the Minister so guide?

Ms. Walrond: For the Department of Consumer Affairs, there is an occupational safety and health training as well as the leadership training.

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6284 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to give a breakdown of this line item? At the same time, could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to breakdown line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations since, by no fault of mine, the pages are missing from my document?

Mr. Chairman: Could we have someone provide the Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul, with the list of local and foreign organisations that get subsidies? I think that is the page he has missing.

Ms. Walrond: Line item 6284 – Other: This is for the launching of a web-based portal for the Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce to get online complaints and the creation of a minibus code of conduct act.

Mr. Mahipaul: Mr. Chairman, I did also ask for line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations.

Ms. Walrond: This is a contribution to the Consumer Advisory Bureau.

Programme: 233 – Consumer Protection – \$40,573,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 233 – Consumer Protection – \$2,250,000

Programme: 233 – Consumer Protection – \$2,250,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 234 – Tourism Development and Promotion – \$169,869,000

Mr. Rajkumar: Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Could the Hon. Minister say whether those tourism and hospitality organisations, which suffered losses during this period of COVID-19, will be benefitting from the \$94 million budgeted under this line item?

6.23 p.m.

Ms. Walrond: This allocation is going to the Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA).

Ms. Flue-Bess: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Under the staffing details, I have noticed there is one contracted employee listed and the money allotted is \$9,752,000. Could the Hon. Minister please explain this to the Committee?

Ms. Walrond: I am advised that the increase caters for one Director General at the ACCC and the department of Tourism.

Mr. Shuman: Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Could the Hon. Minister be so kind to enlighten the Committee as to what quantity of the \$94,112,000 would go to the Indigenous communities for development?

Ms. Walrond: There is \$21.8 million allocated to the Indigenous communities of more than \$94 million.

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I heard the Hon. Minister respond by saying that it caters for a Director General at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre. Is the Minister confirming that this individual will be paid \$3,250,667 per month?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I think I heard the Hon. Minister mention two positions under this line item.

Mr. Mahipaul: Mr. Chairman, I did not hear that, but I am guided by you.

Mr. Chairman: We will let the Hon. Minister answer.

Ms. Walrond: I am advised that it is one Director General, but also included in that figure are 10 contracted employees at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre.

Mr. Mahipaul: I am not sure if the Budget document or what the Hon. Minister is presenting to this Committee is accurate. According to what is in this 21-day old Budget document, under line item 6116, it states that it is one contracted employee with a sum of \$9,752,000 allocated. I am not sure if it is the Hon. Minister who is correct, or the document that I have before me.

Ms. Walrond: I am advised that it is an error.

Mr. Chairman: It is an error and we will seek a correction later.

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6114 – Clerical and Office Staff: There is one employee stated under clerical and office support. May I ask the designation of this employee?

Ms. Walrond: Under this line item it caters for two clerks and two office assistants.

Mr. Mahipaul: Am I to assume that the Committee is being misguided by the Budget document that we have in front of us, because it clearly states one staff for 2020. I believe it is clear that the Budget document was hurriedly put together. It is a *fraud-get*.

Ms. Walrond: Is the Hon. Member going back to the typographical error that we had previously highlighted?

Mr. Chairman: No. It is another one.

Ms. Walrond: Was there a question that I missed?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Mahipaul, the Hon. Minister would like you to clarify the question that was just asked.

Mr. Mahipaul: Mr. Chairman, could you check your Budget document to verify if it is all the Budget books or just the one that I have? Under line item 6114, there is clerical and office support with one staff. I am asking, what is the designation of that one staff?

Ms. Walrond: There seems to be an error and I will provide that information.

Mr. Mahipaul: Clearly, under the line item 6114, the Hon. Minister is not aware of her staffing details. I do see a sum of \$906,000 under that same line item. I am asking, could the Hon. Minister break down the \$906,000 under this line item?

Ms. Walrond: This includes two Clerks at \$76,000 and \$77,000 each, and for the two Office Assistants from the Arthur Chung Conference Centre, \$72,000 and \$70,000 each. This is for the three months.

Mr. Chairman: I would like to bring to the Hon. Members’ attention that we started at 5.06 p.m., and this is one hour and a half for this head. We now have three minutes remaining to complete this Ministry.

Mr. Mahipaul: Mr. Chairman, I crave your indulgence.

Mr. Chairman: I cannot indulge much because we have a resolution of the business.

Mr. Mahipaul: One question, Sir. In all fairness to the Hon. Minister, there seems to be a problem with the line items 6111 to 6117. Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to sort

out the issue and lay it over to the Committee in writing, so that we could have the accurate information?

Ms. Walrond: The provisions are zero for both line items and so I am not sure what the Hon. Member is asking.

Mr. Chairman: He was speaking about line item 6114. Am I correct, Mr. Mahipaul?

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, with all due respect, I am asking for line items 6111 to 6117, so that it will bring some clarity.

Ms. Walrond: This will be provided.

Ms. Ferguson: Mr. Chairman, I have been waiting for a very long time.

Mr. Chairman: We are going to have the capital expenditure in one minute.

Ms. Ferguson: Are not going to allow me to ask my question?

Mr. Chairman: I am going to allow you, but I am bringing your attention to the fact that we have two minutes remaining.

Ms. Ferguson: Line item 6291 – National and Other Events: I noted that for the three months there is \$16 million plus to spend. The question to the Hon. Member is, would the moneys be spent in the three-month period and could the Opposition have a layout of the national events for the three-month period?

Ms. Walrond: Under line item 6291, it is moneys for the Tourism Awareness Month activities in all 10 regions – cultural heritage, environmental awareness and magazine distribution. It is also for the Agri-Tourism week. We would be having workshops, farm tours and product exhibitions in all 10 regions.

Programme: 234 – Tourism Development and Promotion – \$169,869,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 234 – Tourism Development and Promotion – \$6,500,000

Mr. Mahipaul: Project code 1208300 – Arthur Chung Conference Centre: There is a sum of \$4,500,000 for the purchase of furniture and equipment for the Arthur Chung Conference Centre. Could the Hon. Minister say which part

of the Arthur Chung Conference Centre requires new furniture and equipment?

Ms. Walrond: That would be for a registration desk and a conference desk. The registration desk is to be stationed in the main lobby for all events and the conference desk is to replace the desk that has previously deteriorated.

Mr. Mahipaul: A follow-up, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: We are now over by two minutes, Sir.

Mr. Mahipaul: It is one follow-up, Sir. Is the Hon. Minister confirming that two desks will cost us \$4.5 million?

6.38 p.m.

Ms. Walrond: In addition to the furniture, there are other equipment as well, which are projectors, fire extinguishers, water dispensers, cableless microphones and OptiClean air scrubbers.

Programme: 234 – Tourism Development and Promotion – \$6,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: On the Hon. Members’ behalf, I want to say thanks to the Hon. Minister and her staff for taking us through this agency.

We now invite the Hon. Minister of Natural Resources, the Hon. Vickram Bharrat, and his team.

Agency 26: Ministry of Natural Resources

Current Expenditure

Programme: 261 – Policy Development and Administration – \$ 323,974,000

Ms. Flue-Bess: Line item 6112 – Senior Technical: I observe there were two staff added to this area. The question is, what will be the designations and emoluments of the two technical staff added?

Minister of Natural Resources [Mr. Bharrat]: Thank you, Hon. Member for the question. This would account for two staff who were on contracts. They have been placed on the fixed establishment now. They are two technical officers and their emoluments are \$300,437 and \$137,575. Thank you.

Ms. Flue-Bess: I am not sure if the Hon. Minister heard me correctly. I was asking for the designations for the two technical staff.

Mr. Bharrat: One is an Environmental Advisor and the other person is a Policy Officer. Thank you.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Under line item 6114, Clerical and Office Support, I see there is an additional five clerical staff. The question is, which office or offices will they serve?

Mr. Bharrat: Thank you, Hon. Member for the question. I am happy to report that under line 6114, Clerical and Office Support, the Ministry employed five new staff who were trained at the Bertram Collins College of Public Service and they are placed in the public service (PS) secretariat.

Mr. Shuman: I would like to ask the Hon. Minister under line item 6116, Contracted Employees, are there any allocations within that \$161,985,000 for the enforcement or the development of compliance for the Minamata Convention?

Mr. Bharrat: To the Hon. Member, no. That is catered for in another programme. This sum is the salaries for the contracted employees.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Holder, did you have your microphone on earlier?

Mr. Holder: Yes, Mr. Chairman, thank you. Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I notice that there is an increase for just about \$40 million and an equivalent increase in staffing from 23 to 32. Were any new staff employed after 2nd August, and could you give their designations and emoluments?

Mr. Bharrat: The first question is whether any staff under this head was employed after 2nd August. The answer is no, no staff was employed after 2nd August under this head. The other part of the question is whether there are new staff members. Yes, there are nine. I am told that they were called the Regional Coordinators in the natural resources sector. Their designations are Regional Coordinators – there are four persons – two Drivers and one Accounts Clerk.

You have mentioned emoluments as well. To the Regional Coordinator I – \$217,000; Regional Coordinator II – \$217,000; Regional Coordinator III – \$217,000; Regional Coordinator IV - \$164,226; Regional Coordinator V – \$200,000; the two Drivers receive \$70,000 each; and the Accounts Clerk – \$70,281.

Mr. Holder: Line item 6241 – Rental of Buildings: I see a total there of \$26,541,000. Could the Hon. Minister state which building is being rented?

Mr. Bharrat: This building is the Main Street building which houses the Compliance Department of the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Patterson.

Mr. Patterson: I cede to Mr. Figueira.

Mr. Chairman: The convention is the person who first catches the eyes of the Chairman and you did catch my eyes after Mr. Holder but you have declined. Hon. Member Mr. Figueira.

Mr. Figueira: I am thankful that your eyes caught my attention. Line item 6112 – Senior Technical: Could the Hon. Minister indicate the skill set of these senior technical staff and, more so, what are their benefits as well as their emoluments?

Mr. Bharrat: I think part of this question was already answered. In terms of the emoluments, one is \$300,437 and the other three are \$137,578 each. I am advised that the Environmental Advisor is a university graduate who advises on environmental issues and the government-bonded scholar is the other person.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6284 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister state what this \$14,416,000 will satisfy?

Mr. Bharrat: Line item 6284 – Other: There was a reduction from \$59,605,000 to \$14,416,000 and this will cater for payment of advertisement, television airtime, commercials, design and printing of brochures, creation of green space, legal opinions, technical assistance and overseas workshops. However, what was omitted from this line item 6284, Other, for the year 2020, is the youths in natural resources – the Youth Apprenticeship programme. This was not catered for in 2020 due to the elections, the delay after that and the COVID-19 pandemic as well.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6282 – Equipment Maintenance: Could the Hon. Minister indicate what equipment has to be maintained?

Mr. Bharrat: Line item 6282 – Equipment Maintenance: This would cater for maintenance, that is, repairs to air conditioning (AC) units, generators, photocopy machines, computers and other office equipment.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6223 – Office Materials and Supplies: There is an allocation of \$5 million. Could the Hon.

Member indicate to us what are some of the office materials and supplies that will be purchased?

Mr. Bharrat: Line item 6223 – Office Materials and Supplies: This caters for the purchasing of stationery such as paper, pens, folders, *et cetera* and office supplies such as mats, mops, *et cetera*, for the entire Ministry. Thank you.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): Could the Hon. Minister say if there is any ongoing training currently, and is there a plan for any new ones to be introduced before the end of the year?

Mr. Bharrat: The training programmes that the Hon. Member is enquiring about is the Project Management Leadership Workshop and the Public Management Sensitisation Awareness of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) policy and planning. Most of the staff, I am told, are currently enrolled in these training programmes and they should be completing sometime soon. Thank you.

Mr. Sears: I would like to find out, with regard to line item 6281, Security Services, could we have an idea as to who the contractor is?

6.53 *p.m.*

Mr. Bharrat: The companies providing security services are GEB Security Service, Target Security and Superior Security Service.

Mr. Ramsaroop: I would be guided. I am looking under the local organs, Guyana Forestry Commission. I just would like the Hon. Minister to clarify, under current revenue from operations, what constitutes the fees, fines, rents, royalties and the recurrent revenues?

Mr. Bharrat: I am sorry; I did not get the line item.

Mr. Ramsaroop: Under the Guyana Forestry Commission, the statutory body, under the current revenue, for the rest that comes under local organ, I will be so guided.

Mr. Chairman: Minister, do you want to know which line item?

Mr. Bharrat: Mr. Chairman, apparently it is not in this programme. I think the Hon. Member is asking a question outside.

Mr. Ramsaroop: If I am so guided, I see there is a zero here for that line item. I am wondering, where will that come up? Is it an error or a mistake?

Mr. Chairman: Once there is a zero, we do not ask nor allow a question on that. The question you are asking is, where would that come up if there is anything under such a heading?

Mr. Bharrat: Mr. Chairman, no. It is the statutory commission that is not funded by the Ministry of Natural Resources. It is under Appendix T. The Hon. Member could be so guided.

Programme: 261 – Policy Development and Administration – \$323,974,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 261 – Policy Development and Administration – \$64,410,000

Mr. Holder: Project code 3402600 – Forest Carbon Partnership Project: This was a project that was initiated by the APNU/AFC Government and the total project cost is \$798 million. The sum that was previously spent is \$682.5 million which leaves \$115 million remaining to complete this project. I see the project duration was from 2014 and should have been completed at the end of this year.

I see that this Government is budgeting \$64.4 million and that still leaves \$51 million remaining. My question to the Minister is, why not spend the \$115 million altogether and complete the project as per schedule?

Mr. Bharrat: For the record, I would like to say that this project started in 2014 under the People’s Progressive Party/Civic Administration. To inform the Hon. Member too, this project ended in February 2020 and the financial closure was made on 7th May, 2020.

Mr. Ramjattan: I want to get it clarified that, under line items 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations and 6262, Overseas Conferences and Official Visits, there is zero. When we go to page 850, Guyana Forestry Commission is given a contribution of \$350 million under this same programme 262. I want to know if this is an error again. If one is to read the contributions, one will get the impression that it is zero. The Guyana Forestry Commission, which is the local organisation, gets \$350 million under the same Programme: 262 – Natural Resources Management.

That is why my Colleague wanted to find out, but he was under Programme 261. The correct programme is Programme 261. How do we get zero when indeed a programme gets \$350 million? Is this an error?

Mr. Bharrat: To clarify for the Hon. Member, the Guyana Forestry Commission will receive no money from the Ministry of Natural Resources for 2020. I think what the Hon. Member is referring to is the Forest Inventory Programme that was done in the previous year. However, no budgetary allocation was made for it in 2020 due to the elections, of course, and the pandemic. We are hoping that in 2021 we could move to phase two of the Forest Inventory Programme.

Mr. Ramjattan: At page 850, Subsidies and Contributions from Central Government, Contribution, \$350 million is in the very first line. Is the Guyana Forestry Commission, in 2020, not being given \$350 million as a bailout or some such other contribution? That is what is it has here.

Mr. Bharrat: Mr. Chairman, I clarified that already. As I mentioned, it is the Forest Inventory Programme.

Programme: 261 – Policy Development and Administration – \$64,410,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 262 – Natural Resource Management – \$346,051,000

Mr. Shuman: In the Amerindian Act of 2006 under article 53, there is something called the Amerindian Development Fund. It is my understanding that Fund has not been contributed to for close to 10 years.

Mr. Chairman: What is the line item?

Mr. Shuman: Line items 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations and 6322 – Subsidies and Contributions to International Organisations: I see nothing along that line that contributes to the Amerindian Development Fund. I would like the Hon. Minister to enlighten this Committee and the public as to the status of that Fund, the contributions and, potentially, if it is not contained herein, as to where one might be able to find it?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Deputy Speaker, the two heads you quoted both have zero allocations. The information that you are trying to find could have best been addressed earlier or could come in the form of a written question.

Mr. Shuman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be so guided. Could the Hon. Minister be so kind to direct the Committee as to where we could find that component of the Amerindian Development Fund?

Mr. Chairman: We might be able to seek that information from the appropriate Minister. Hon. Member, the Hon. Minister would like to answer.

Mr. Bharrat: I could respond to the Hon. Member. The Amerindian Development Fund is catered for by the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC) that is why it would not be a budgetary allocation by the Ministry of Natural Resources. We would recall that, in 2012, the PPP/C Administration deposited \$1 billion into GGMC’s account to cater for the Amerindian Development Fund; which is still being funded by GGMC.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the issue I want to repeat is that if there is zero allocation, if Members do not find it, let us try and seek the information bilaterally.

Mr. Sears: Line item 6291 – National and Other Events: I see an increase here of \$1.842 million. Hon. Minister, could you explain or breakdown some of those national or other events that this money will be allocated to?

Mr. Bharrat: This line item caters for national events such as Mashramani, Independence, Mining Week and *[inaudible]*.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I observe on the staffing details there has been a sharp increase in the number of contracted employees. Could the Hon. Minister say what are the designation these new staff members would be afforded?

Mr. Bharrat: This programme deals specifically with the Corps of Wardens, that is the Compliance Department. The increase on the contracted employees have been as a result of the increase in salary for 2019 as well as the previous Administration employing an additional 20 Corps of Wardens in September, 2019.

Mr. Sears: A follow-up: On what I asked earlier about line item 6291 – National and Other Events; I should have been a bit more specific with regard to the remaining of the year – the activities. Does this reflect the end of year staff party or something of that nature? I have one last question, Sir.

Mr. Bharrat: The end of year activities is not the Christmas party as was hinted by the Hon. Member, but end of the year workshops.

7.08 p.m.

Mr. Sears: Thanks for the clarity. Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): Could the Hon. Minister breakdown what are some of the training or scholarships programmes being offered?

Mr. Bharrat: As mentioned before, this line item caters for the Corps of Wardens. The training that they will undergo includes police training in the use of firearm; mining, that is field training in the mining sectors, map reading and navigation; forestry, protected areas, wildlife and fish identification; search and rescue, self-defence, unarmed combat, jungle, amphibious, basic first-aid, trafficking in persons and drone operations.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Line item 6264 – Vehicle Spares and Service: I see there has been an allotted sum of \$8,840,000. Could the Hon. Minister say how many vehicles are there at the Ministry of Natural Resources for servicing and spare parts?

Mr. Bharrat: Line item 6264 – Vehicle Spares and Service: In 2019, the allocation was \$8,400,000 and, in 2020, it is \$8,840,000. This would cater for vehicles in the fleet. There are 18 vehicles which include all-terrain vehicles, boats, bikes and pick-ups as well.

Programme: 262 – Natural Resource Management – \$346,051,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 262 – Natural Resource Management – \$30,205,000

[Mr. Chairman left the Chair.]

[Mr. Seeraj, Presiding Member, assumed the Chair.]

Programme: 262 – Natural Resource Management – \$30,205,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 264 – Petroleum Management – \$303,611,000

Mr. Patterson: Congratulations on your elevation to the Deputy or substitute speakership of Chairmanship.

Presiding Member: Thank you very much.

Mr. Patterson: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Just for clarity Hon. Minister, this line item would be under the Department of Energy. My question is, has there been any new employment from 1st August and onwards? If so, what are the designations and emoluments of those individuals?

Mr. Bharrat: I am pleased to inform the Hon. Member in the Committee that there were and are 30 employees at the Department of Energy before and after 2nd August. To date, the same employees are there. There were no new employees added to the agency.

Mr. Figueira: Thank you, Hon. Proxy Chairman. Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister state...

Mr. Shuman: Mr. Chairman, I stand on a Point of Order.

Presiding Member: Hon. Mr. Figueira, there is a Point of Order.

Mr. Figueira: What is the Point of Order?

Mr. Shuman: It is Standing Order 45(2). The Hon. Member should have respect for every Member in this Committee, especially the person who occupies the Chairman’s Chair.

Presiding Member: The Point of Order is noted, Sir. Hon. Member, what do you have to say to that?

Mr. Figueira: I would ask the Hon. Member who is the Deputy Speaker, why is he not where you are?

Presiding Member: Hon. Member, the Point of Order is well taken. The Chairman has asked to be excused.

Mr. Figueira: I withdraw, Sir.

Presiding Member: You should apologise also.

Mr. Figueira: My apologies.

Ms. Teixeira: That is unacceptable. Where is your Chief Whip? Is your Chief Whip allowing this indiscipline?

Mr. Figueira: The question to the Hon. Minister is on line item 6116, Contracted Employees. Could the Hon. Minister state if these contracted employees would be placed on the fixed pensionable establishment?

Mr. Bharrat: I wish to inform that we inherited the 30 contracted employees from the previous Administration. We will be guided by the PSC on the way forward as to whether they would go on the fixed establishment and how soon.

Ms. Ferguson: Line item 6294 – Other: I recognise the actual amount we had in 2018 was \$5,000,000 and for *Budget 2020*, we are seeing \$210,100,000. Could the Hon. Member detail what constitutes “Other” and what would allow for this rapid increase just for a three-month period?

[*Mr. Chairman assumed the Chair.*]

Mr. Bharrat: Mr. Chairman, it is not a rapid increase *per se*; it is a new sector. Previously, the petroleum sector was under the then Ministry of the Presidency and not the Ministry of Natural Resources. It is now being placed under the Ministry of Natural Resources. However, this allocation would cater for the demurrage expenses, the third-party inspector, the quantity and quality claims and expenses.

For the interest of all the Members in the National Assembly, let me say that demurrage expense relates to the waiting time for tankers that are receiving fuel or are coming to uplift crude from the Floating Production Storage and Offloading (FPSO), if there is any downtime. Especially now with the COVID-19 period, it is required for vessels to be in the water 14 days before the day of the lift. If for any reason there is a delay in the transfer of crude from the FPSO to that tanker, then it incurs a demurrage expense which is in the Crude Lifting Agreement (CLA) signed by the previous Administration. The Agreement is to share the expense with the Esso Exploration and Production Guyana Limited (EEPGL) as well.

The other part which is the third-party inspector rate, under the previous Administration also, Infotech Caribbean Limited, a company from the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, was contracted to provide an Onsite Inspector to witness the transfer of fuel from the FPSO onto the tanker. However, for the previous lift, which is the third one, due to COVID-19, the company was unable to place someone on the FPSO to witness that lift. We are now allocating US\$10,000 to cover for the third-party inspector rate. We have already been billed with US\$4,408 for the previous lifts.

The third expense under this line item 6294, Other, is the quantity and quality claims expense. This would cater for the point five average of crude that would leave the FPSO with the tanker. In most cases, when it offloads, wherever the destination is, there would be a slight reduction in the amount that was loaded from the FPSO. For that, there is a budgetary allocation of US\$270,000. Members will realise that these expenses are incidental; they are not fixed. If the amount that we budgeted for is not incurred, then it goes back to the Consolidated Fund.

7.23 p.m.

Ms. Philadelphia: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): Could the Hon. Member inform us as to the number of persons catered for and the specific training to be offered under this line item?

Mr. Bharrat: We have three training programmes: one is the Petroleum Project Economics and this caters for five persons: the Graphic Information System Data Base which caters for 10 persons; and regular staff upgrades, participation in capacity building and that will cater for 10 persons who are mostly administrative staff.

Ms. Philadelphia: A follow up: Could the Hon. Member inform us on the duration of training and of course if we can get a break down by region for the participants?

Mr. Bharrat: Let me clarify with the Hon. Member that this training caters for staff of the Department of Energy. The training that I believe that the Hon. Member is referring to is done by the Petroleum Department in GGMC and not the Department of Energy.

Ms. Philadelphia: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Member inform us of the buildings that will be rented?

Mr. Bharrat: I think the Hon. Member made a mistake. It is the maintenance of buildings and not rental of buildings. Rental of buildings is zero. The maintenance of building, I can answer to that. The maintenance of building will cover the replacement of defective roof sheets on the building, it would also raise the concrete floor and maintenance of the timber louver window shutters.

Mr. Figueira: The Hon. Minister indicated that training will be for staff at the Ministry. Could the Hon. Minister indicate if the training will be done virtually? Before he persists, I must state that the denotative meaning for the word proxy is “the authority to represent someone else”. I meant no disrespect to my Hon. Member. It is to be deputised.

Mr. Bharrat: The training is mostly online training.

Mr. Sears: Line item 6271 – Telephone and Internet Charges: We see the sum of \$766,000. Could the Hon. Minister please break down who this will be covering in terms of office personnel?

Mr. Bharrat: This small allocation caters for the telephone services in the building that is housing the Department of Energy on Brickdam.

Programme: 264 – Petroleum Management – \$303,611,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 264 – Petroleum Management – \$158,000,000

Mr. Patterson: I must say that during your temporary absence, the Committee was under good stead.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Hon. Member.

Mr. Patterson: Minister Bharrat, let me be quite frank, I must commend you on the clarity of your responses. It is a breath of fresh air. Project Code 4404600 – Oil and Gas Sector Development Programme: Sir, if you go to the profile three, the first item is the completion of the gas to power study. I have few questions on that but let us start with that one. Could the Hon. Minister elaborate on the completion of the gas to energy study?

Mr. Bharrat: Part of the allocation, we cater for the completion of gas-to-energy study. There was a study that was done previously. The Hon. Member, Mr. Patterson, would know because the study was done by the then Ministry of Public Infrastructure at the cost of US\$70,000. However, as we announced under our Administration, a task force would be established very soon to look at the previous studies and to see how it fits into our policies and programmes to bring gas-to-shore and to have power generation materialised from this project, as early as possible, so that we can have a cheaper and more efficient power supply.

Mr. Patterson: I am glad that you acknowledged that it was done. Did I hear you correctly? Under this project code here, International Development Association (IDA) funding, is that where the funding for the task force will be sourced from? Is the Ministry brining it under this head here? You just said that.

Mr. Bharrat: Yes, Hon. Member. The IDA will be funded or is funded by the World Bank.

Mr. Patterson: I just complimented you on the clarity of your responses. You have acknowledged that a study has been done and completed, but you went on to say that the Ministry of Natural Resources will be forming a working

group to look into the study to move the process forward. I am asking, would that working group be funded from this programme or funded elsewhere?

Mr. Bharrat: I am advised that the answer is, yes. It will be funded by the World Bank.

Mr. Patterson: If that is the answer, could I ask the Hon. Minister, to disaggregate the \$150 million for the six items of 2020? I did not want to go there.

Mr. Bharrat: This is the \$150 allocation that will be divided into different components. If I can breakdown the components: the component one, deals with enhancement of legal framework and stakeholder framework where we have budgeted US\$640,068; component two, caters for capacity building of key institutions and there is an allocation of US\$101,234; the component three, caters for project management and the allocation for this will be US\$133,818.

Mr. Patterson: Minister, you called three components to be funded in 2020, but your previous response was that you are going to fund the working group out of this \$150 million; you had the legal, the capacity and the project management.

Mr. Bharrat: I am being advised that it will be covered in component one and the allocation for component one is US\$133,818.

Mr. Patterson: I was not going to press, but if the Hon. Minister’s advisers will say that it will be covered under component one and it is going to be completed between now and December, I really would like to know, what procurement process the Ministry is going to undertake to advertise, retain, and to engage the working group and to pay? Obviously, the terms of reference would have to be there and you are paying on some sort of delivery programme.

Mr. Bharrat: The local task force is selected to complete the study of the gas-to-energy force.

Mr. Patterson: Finally, if it is the local task force, could the Hon. Minister say how the task force members were selected, what remuneration they will be paid and what are the terms of reference? Would the Hon. Member be willing to share the terms of reference with this Committee?

Mr. Bharrat: I was advised that the local task force members, who are already in the system, will be drawn from different agencies. The expenses that we incur by the task force are basic logistics expenses, expenses for meetings,

snacks, refreshments and other expenses relating to meetings and now remuneration for the members of the task force.

Mr. Patterson: This is my final question on this particular one here because I wanted to ask a quick question on the...

Mr. Chairman: We have time.

Mr. Patterson: I do not want to press, Sir. This is a foreign loan. I applaud the Minister’s and the Ministry’s drive to set up a task force. However, you are saying that you are going to fund a local component or a local team out of this international loan and the only money you are going to be tapping out from this international loan is food, drinks, *et cetera*. Is that your response to the Committee? Is that what you are going to be doing? Is it that you will take that fund that you will be taking out of this loan? I just want to confirm that because that is highly unusual. I was not going to press.

7.38 p.m.

Mr. Bharrat: Once again, the task force will be drawn from members who are already in the system. For example, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission and other agencies. They will not be paid a salary. The expenses will basically be for logistics, project management, movement of the people, consultations, and meetings, but not remuneration.

Mr. Patterson: The third component under the project profile, reference 125 of Volume 3 of the Estimates, “Capacity building for Ministries of Natural Resources and Public Works, Environmental Protection Agency, Guyana Geology and Mines Commission”, *et cetera*. Could the Hon. Minister state what capacity building activities will be conducted under this head?

Mr. Bharrat: Some of those would include petroleum development management, gas negotiations, petroleum economics and fiscal modelling, commercial accounting, crude marketing, production sharing contract (PSC) cost auditing, field development plan, the Petroleum Commission of Guyana, needs specialist, individual consultancies and strategic gas advisory services. These are some of the items that will be catered for under this component.

Mr. Patterson: Reference 125, Volume 3 of the Estimates, the fifth component: “Support for the public relations for oil and gas sector”. Could the Hon. Minister say if the company has been retained for support? If not, what is the process the Ministry will be undertaking to retain this company?

Mr. Bharrat: I am advised that there is a relaunching for a public relations (PR) company, since the initial company did not meet the expectations of the Department of Energy.

Mr. Patterson: Is the Minister undertaking to do a public relaunching for the replacement of the PR firm?

Mr. Bharrat: It was a competitive process in the past and it will remain as a competitive process.

Mr. Patterson: It is quite a night and not one to be rushed. Project management, which is the sixth component under the profile, reference 125. I am very well aware of the entire details for this. I am asking about the budgeted sum of \$150 million. Are you going to do any of the project management components this year? If so, what are the components and what will it amount to?

Mr. Bharrat: Under project management, which is component D of the same allocation and for the remainder of the year, we will be catering for consultancy and project management, financial management, procurement, and monitoring and evaluation.

Mr. Patterson: The sum of US\$101,000 is catered to be expended under this project for the rest of the year. Are you going to advertise? Will you be advertising locally or internationally, as well? Are you going to get an evaluation and submit it to the National Procurement and Tender Administration Board (NPTAB), with no objection from the International Development Association/Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), for the disbursement of US\$101,000 in the remaining six weeks of the procurement cycle or has this process already started?

Mr. Bharrat: I am pleased to inform the Hon. Member that this process has started a long while now. These persons were given a no objection or were approved by the World Bank. They are in place and are working. The correct figure is US\$101,234, which we paid for salaries for these individuals.

Mr. Patterson: Just a follow-up, if they are in place and are working, could the Hon. Minister say how long they have been in place and how long they have been working?

Mr. Bharrat: I am advised that these positions were occupied since September, 2018.

Programme: 264 – Petroleum Management – \$158,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Speaker: Let me extend thanks to the Hon. Minister of Natural Resources and his staff for guiding us through the Estimates.

CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

Hon. Members, I have a correspondence from the Hon. Prime Minister which I wish to read. It pertains to yesterday’s Estimates, which the Prime Minister had to answer for. I will read the contents:

“Dear Mr. Speaker,

Consideration of the 2020 estimates for revenue and expenditure under Agency 02 Office of the Prime Minister

I refer to the yesterday’s (Monday afternoon September 21, 2020) consideration of the 2020 estimates of revenue and expenditure under Agency 02– Office of the Prime Minister.

In responding to a request for clarification from line 2404000 – Land Transport, I inadvertently explained that the figure eighteen million eight hundred and eighty-two thousand dollars (\$18,882,000) was a typographical error not reflecting the appropriated sum.

I have since been advised that the figure as stated stands and represents eighteen million dollars (\$18,000,000) for an off-road vehicle for the Prime Minister and eight hundred and eighty-two thousand dollars (\$882,000), being the final payment for a vehicle bought in 2019 for Office of the Prime Minister.

Regrets are tendered for proffering this misinformation.

Your sincerely,

Signed by Brigadier (Rtd.) Mark Phillips, MSS, M.Sc., MP

Hon. Prime Minister of Guyana”

Thank you very much, Hon. Prime Minister.

Hon. Members, this brings us to the end of our business for today. I want to thank all of you for cooperating to get us through today’s work on time.

ADJOURNMENT

BE IT RESOLVED:

“I move the adjournment of the Assembly to 9.30 a.m. on Wednesday, 23rd September, 2020.”

Brigadier (Ret’d) Phillips: I move the adjournment of the Assembly to 9.30 a.m. on Wednesday, 23rd September, 2020.

Motion put and agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the Assembly now stands adjourned to 9.30 a.m., Wednesday, 23rd September, 2020.

Adjourned accordingly at 7.48 p.m.