

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORTS

[Volume 8]

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE SECOND SESSION (1981) OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FOURTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA.

11th Sitting

2 p.m.

Thursday, 5th March 1981

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (82)

Speaker (1)

*Cde. Sase Narain, O.R., J.P., M.P.,
Speaker of the National Assembly

Members of the Government – People’s National Congress (69)

Prime Minister (1)

Cde. Dr. P.A. Reid, O.E., M.P.,
Prime Minister

Other Vice-Presidents (4)

Cde. S.S. Naraine, A.A., M.P., (Absent on-leave)
Vice-President, Works and Transport
Cde. H.D. Hoyte, S.C., M.P.,
Vice-President, Economic Planning and Finance
Cde. H. Green, M.P.,
Vice-President, Public Welfare
Cde. B. Ramsaroop, M.P.,
Vice-President, Parliamentary Affairs and Party/State Relations

Senior Ministers (10)

Cde. R. Chandisingh, M.P.,
Minister of Higher Education
Cde. O.E. Clarke, M.P.,
Minister of Regional Development
Cde. R.H.O. Corbin, M.P.,
Minister of National Development
*Cde. F.E. Hope, M.P.,
Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection
*Cde. H.O. Jack, M.P., (Absent)
Minister of Energy and Mines
*Cde. Dr. M. Shahabuddeen, O.R., S.C., M.P.,
Attorney General and Minister of Justice
*Cde. R.E. Jackson, M.P.,
Minister of Foreign Affairs
*Cde. J.A. Tyndall, A.A., M.P.,
Minister of Agriculture
*Cde. S.A. Moore, M.P.,
Minister of Home Affairs
*Cde. J.R. Thomas, M.P., (Absent)
Minister of Education

*Non-elected members

Ministers (13)

- Cde. J.P. Chowritmootoo, J.P., M.P.,
Minister, Environment and Water Supply, in the
Ministry of Public Welfare
- Cde. U. E. Johnson, M.P.,
Minister of Co-operatives
- Cde. J.N. Maitland-Singh, M.P.,
Minister, Consumer Protection, in the
Ministry of Trade and Consumer Protection
- Cde. S. Prashad, M.P.,
Minister, Crops and Livestock, in the
Ministry of Agriculture
- Cde. Sallahuddin, M.P.,
Minister, Finance, in the Ministry of
Economic Planning and Finance
- Cde. R.E. Williams, M.P.,
Minister, Fisheries, in the Ministry of Agriculture
- *Cde. C.A. Nascimento, M.P., (Absent)
Minister, Mechanical Equipment, in the
Ministry of Works and Transport
- *Cde. F.U.A. Campbell, M.P.,
Minister of Information
- *Cde. F.U.A. Carmichael, M.P.,
Minister, Forestry, in the Minister of Agriculture.
- *Cde. Y. V. Harewood-Benn, M.P., (Absent on-leave)
Minister of Public Service
- *Cde. H. Rashid, M.P.,
Minister, in the Office of the President
- *Cde. Van Sluytman, M.P.,
Minister, Drainage and Irrigation in the
Ministry of Agriculture
- *Cde. R.A. Van West-Charles, M.P., (Absent)
Minister, Health, in the Ministry
of Public Welfare

Ministers of State (3)

- Cde. M. Corrica, M.P.,
Minister of State for Culture, in the Ministry of
Education, Social Development and Culture
- Cde. R.C. Fredericks, A.A., M.P.,
Minister of State for Youth Sports,
in the Ministry of National Development
- *Cde. C.E. Wright, M.P., (Absent)
Minister of State for Construction, in the
Ministry of Works and Transport

Parliamentary Secretaries (3)

- Cde. A.W. Bend-Kirton-Holder, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Women's Affairs
and Housing
- Cde. P.A Rayman , M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister
- Cde. E.M. Bynoe, M.P., (Absent on-leave)
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister

*Non-elected Member

Other Members (23)

Cde. D.A.N. Ainsworth, M.P.
Cde. M. Ally, M.P.
Cde. M. Armogan, M.P.
Cde. B. Beniprashad, M.P.
Cde. B. Bhaggan, M.P.
Cde. J.B. Caldeira, M.P.
Cde. A.A. Chin, M.P.
Cde. E. B. Davidson, M.P.
Cde. H. Doobay, M.P.
Cde. A.B. Felix, M.P.
Cde. E.H.A. Fowler, M.P.
Cde. P. Frederick, M.P.
Cde. E.F. Gilbert, M.P.
Cde. J. Gill, M.P.
Cde. A. McRae, M.P.
Cde. J.M. Munroe, J.P., M.P.
Cde. R.N. Primo, M.P.
Cde. C.G. Sharma, J.P., M.P.
Cde. H.L.B. Singh, M.P.
Cde. S.H. Sukhu, M.S., M.P.
Cde. B. Tiwari, M.P.
Cde. C. Vandenburg, M.P.
Cde. H.B. Walcott, J.P., M.P.,
Government Chief Whip

Members from the National Congress of Local Democratic Organs (2)

Cde. R. Bishop, M.S., M.P.
Cde. B. Latchminarayan, M.P.

Members from the Regional Democratic Councils (10)

Cde. K.N. Jones, M.P. (Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini)
Cde. K.V. Jairam, M.P. (Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supenaam)
Cde. C.A. Singh, M.P. (Region No. 3 – Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)
Cde. W. Bipat, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)
Cde. H.I. London, M.S., M.P. (Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice)
Cde. I. Chowritmootoo, M.P. (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne)
Cde. N.R. Charles, M.P. (Region No. 7 – Cuyuni/Mazaruni)
Cde. D. Abraham, M.P. (Region No. 8 – Potaro/Siparuni)
Cde. A. Dorrick, M.P. (Region No. 9 – Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo) (Absent)
Cde. D. Hinds, M.P. (Region No. 10 – Upper Demerara/Berbice)

Members of the Minority (12)

(i) People's Progressive Party (10)

Minority Leader (1)

Cde. Dr. C. Jagan, M.P.

Minority Leader

(Absent on-leave)

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. Ram Karran, M.P.,

Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

Other Members (8)

Cde. J. Jagan M.P.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P., M.P.

Minority Chief Whip

Cde. N. Persaud, M.P.

Cde. C.C. Collymore, M.P.

Cde. S.F. Mohamed, M.P.

Cde. I. Basir, M.P.

Cde. C.C. Belgrave, M.P.

Cde. Dalchand, J.P., M.P.

(ii) United Force (2)

Mr. M.F. Singh, J.P., M.P.

Mr. M.A. Abraham, M.P.

(Absent)

OFFICERS

Clerk of the National Assembly – Cde. F.A. Narain, A.A

Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly – Cde. M.B. Henry

PRAYERS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Leave To Members

The Speaker: Comrades, leave has been granted to Cde. Moore for today and to Cde. Bynoe for today and for tomorrow's sitting.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTIONS

APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE 1981

BUDGET DEBATE

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply to resume consideration of the estimates of expenditure for the financial year 1981.

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: Page 225 to 228

HEAD 91 – MINISTRY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Question proposed that the sum of \$5,561,700 for Head 91, Ministry of Regional Development, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, I wish to speak on subhead, items (26), (28) and (30) on page 225 and on page 227, I wish to speak on item (57), item (66) and item (72).

The Chairman: Cde. Ram Karran.

Cde. Ram Karran (Deputy Speaker): May I speak on subhead 1 (81) on page 227 and on subheads 21 and 32 on page 228

Mr. Abraham: I wish to speak on subhead 15, page 228.

The Chairman: Cde. Ram Karran.

Cde. Ram Karran: I notice that subhead 1 (81) deals with Supervisor, Builders Co-operatives Societies. I wish to ask the hon. Minister to explain how this officer will function. There is a Co-operative Department in which I presume there are supervisors and skilled people. What is the need for a

special supervisor for Builders Co-operative Societies? It is that in each region you will have a similar post? Will this post be eventually removed from this Head or is it a permanent item.

I move to subhead 21, Contribution towards Maintenance of Roads and Streets of Local Authority Areas. I notice that a huge sum of \$670,000 is listed here as a contribution towards maintenance of roads and streets of Local Authority areas. In an omnibus head like this it is customary for Ministries to indicate what sums are required for what local authorities. Is this a guess? Or is the Minister in a position to tell us that in local authority “A” so many many dollars are to be spent and in local authority “B” so many dollars are to be spent and so on? I think this is one of the things that can be abused and I think the Parliament is very jealous of the way it allows money to be spent under omnibus subheads of this kind.

The same thing is applicable to subhead 32 where we ask for \$1,250,000 as the Provision for the Establishment and Development of the Local Democratic Organs. May we have a breakdown as to how this money is to be spent? Some of the regions are very big; some have long distances to traverse and one cannot see that the sum of \$1,250,000 divided into ten is going to give us an idea. I am sure it is not so intended and that some areas and some regions are going to require more.

Here again, I would like to know if it is a guesstimate or if something has been worked out. If it has been worked out it ought to be put in the legend so that legislators may have an opportunity to see whether it is reasonable or not.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subhead 1 (26), Deputy Chief Local Government Officer. Cde. Chairman, on item (26), there is a simple question, but it requires an explanation in that the sum of \$12,610 was spent in 1980 and I see that now \$4,500 is being provided. Why? Subhead 1(28), Regional Development Officer. In 1980, the sum of \$73,320 was spent and in 1981, the same number of people are involved, there is no legend to say anything, but the sum stands reduced to \$25,000. Subhead 1 (30), Assistant Regional Development Officer. The sum of \$70,240 was provided in 1980, the same number of people are involved, but the sum stands reduced to \$45,000. Those are the questions on page 225.

Subhead 1 (57), Supernumerary Constable. I move on the page 227 with your permission and I am dealing with item (57) where in 1980, the provision was \$13,148, but it was revised, obviously supplementary Estimates, to the sum of \$118,630. One wonders, while the same number of constables are involved as is shown clearly in the Estimates, the amount has been reduced to \$30,000. Something is radically wrong with the Estimates and members should have been given a proper explanation for these changes. They are not nominal changes, they are substantial changes, we ought to be able to see what is taking place in the Ministry, bearing in mind that there is a new extension based on the Local Democratic Organs Act with respect to Regional Development. We ought to be able to see the structure because we are being critical by saying it is cumbersome, it is an extension of the bureaucracy and I think the Government then has the burden to convince Parliament and the nation that whatever it is doing, it is doing within the necessary constraints of finances available. And so the dump these figures without telling us what is happening I think, is discourteous to you, disrespectful to you and hence the Assembly, as a whole, Cde. Chairman.

The Chairman: I wonder if all the members would take that as an observation from you that discourtesy to me is discourtesy to the Assembly.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I always recognise, sir, the high and important Office of Speaker, and equally, the importance and the burden placed on a member who has to stand here, for when he speaks he is speaking for the people who support the political party, and hence you can understand the burden.

The Chairman: Item (66): Craft Production and Design Worker.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: There seems to be the same thing here again. There are asterisks to give some explanation at the bottom but you will see that the changes again are substantial for \$115,050 to \$10,000. What we need is to know exactly because this one speaks of, "Craft Production and Design Worker", it looks to me that it is specific. In 1979 there were 37, in 1980 there were 37, then this amount fell and so in 1981 we have 13. I think we would like to know in the Assembly what these people are doing, we would like to know of their creative work, their creative ability.

We know that there are a lot of facilities in this country and if you have got the skills, those skills should be utilised to the optimum advantage, hence we want to ensure that if these people are going to be redeployed, if they are going to be placed to performed in the creative field, we would like to know where they are, where they are performing, why the number is reduced and that kind of thing. But the legend

obviously is not clear on that item like so many others.

Items (72), Chairman. Cde. Chairman, I think that is the pattern right through. I simply wish to cite (72) and ask for further details so that we can know exactly what is taking place, bearing in mind that \$53,740 was spent in 1980 for the item, Chairman, and \$25,000 is being allocated in 1981. We wish to get a clear explanation as to why, and if there are changes, where those changes have occurred, where these Chairmen will function, how they will be paid and that kind of thing.

Subhead 12, Grants to Voluntary Social Welfare Organisations. Will the Minister name the organisations that are receiving the grants and how much each organisation is receiving? Subhead 17, Hinterland Scholarships. We would like to know who are receiving these scholarships, for what purpose, where training will take place, what fields those people trained or given scholarships are likely to fill, how useful they will be at this time in the country's history.

Subhead 21, Contribution towards Maintenance of Roads and Streets of Local Authority Areas. Cde. Chairman, I want to say that nearly every conceivable local authority area has been run down completely, and I am talking specifically with respect to roads. You can cite any one. You can take a near one. You can take Better Hope or you can take Success, those that are nearer to us, or go into any part of this country. Nothing is being done to maintain roads, to build roads, to ensure that the people who live in those areas have proper access to their homes.

Speaking specifically about extra nuclear areas, stretching one's imagination to the Marshall Plan, changes that are taking place in local government, what we have to ensure is that while these changes take place, the residents concerned benefit and are effectively served. What I have found from observation and I can invite the Minister to go and visit, or any member, any one of these areas, to see how terrible most of the roads have become, in fact, impassable and with the scarcity of parts and so many things for one's car, you can imagine the amount of hardship the people living in these areas are suffering.

I think the time has come, Cde. Chairman, for me to call in this Assembly for a committee comprising Members of the Assembly to be appointed immediately to look into the deplorable condition of our roads in the villages throughout Guyana – I cited a few areas – with a view that immediate action can be taken. It has been so for a long time and nothing is being done. I think that the opportunity has presented itself this afternoon and I must be the advocate of the people who have to live under such harsh and miserable conditions. This is specifically dealing with roads.

When they talk about village roads, one must take into account the access roads to agricultural areas, providing the farmers with the type of roads that will make the transportation of farmers' produce easy. These facilities do not exist. Probably, the Minister will take the opportunity to tell us what areas are going to benefit from the grant, how many areas will have their roads repaired, where this sum or a greater sum is anticipated in the future, particularly to provide access roads to all the villages to facilitate farmers with the transportation of their produce.

I move, Cde. Chairman, to subhead 32, Provision for the Establishment and Development of the Local Democratic Organs. That is a very wide provision and undoubtedly that provision is founded in the Constitution and under the Local Democratic Organs Act 1980. The Paper on Local Government was circulated but not debated so the Assembly is not aware exactly how section 4 (1) of the Local Democratic Organs Act will be brought into being where the Minister, and I quote: "May by order divide Guyana as he may deem fit into ten regions, and may in like manner divide a region into sub-regions, a sub-region into districts, a district into communities, a community into neighbourhoods and a neighbourhood into people's co-operative units.

The Minister undoubtedly has a tremendous task and burden under the provision of this section and one assumes that the \$1.2 million provided in the estimates is to bring those new bodies into being. I have already been critical of the whole cumbersome Local Government structure. Will the Minister tell us, since it is clear as they say elections are going to be held for these new bodies: when they are going to be held, under what system they will be held, who will supervised, manage and control these elections, whether these elections will be free and fair, further, if there is a just list, an honest list, a fair list based on the population that exists in all these areas that are going to be affected by this provision and by the Local Democratic Organs Act, if this list has been compiled, who is compiling it, where that list is, when it is going to be made available for scrutiny in the various areas. Because the whole emphasis in the Budget Speech was on democracy and specifically local democracy, and moreso, involvement of the people, I think the Parliament is entitled to know how fairly, freely the people are going to be involved in all these areas. I should like the Minister to tell us also when these elections are going to be held. Further, Cde. Chariman, bearing in mind that Local Government Elections have not been held since 1970, and there were postponements on three occasions, many of the district councils including all the municipalities are indeed an imposition on the people and they no longer enjoy a mandate from the people –

The Chairman: That is not permissible here. You asked all the time about democratic organs. Let us stick to that.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, with all due respect, in the White Paper which I have read and studied, State Paper on Local Government, they say that municipalities are going to be retained within the structure. The only point I make is this, that if they are going to be retained within the structure, the term of office of each Council has expired and it is the responsibility of that Minister to tell us when he will discontinue the imposition. A humble question, but I think the people ought to know. We must know when corrective action is going to be taken, to really democratise the system so that the people can be freely and fairly involved. I do not know what is the position with respect to the District Councils Act, whether that Act has been repealed by this one, or only part of the Act has been repealed.

He might wish to tell us, Cde, Chairman, under which Act the elections are going to be held.

One assumes –

The Chairman: He would not tell you that, he will talk about the Local Democratic Organs, and we will deal with that when we come to the relevant Heads.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: The municipality is part of the Local Democratic Organs. The municipality will be retained within the framework. He can probably tell us when the elections will be held for the municipality and then for the District Councils.

Mr. M. A. Abraham: Mr. Chairman, subhead 15, Amerindian Residence and Hostels – Maintenance, etc. I speak with special reference to the hostels in Corriverton, Charity and at Lethem. Two years ago, I raised the point about the state of dilapidation of those hostels. What I would like to know is whether the hon. Minister envisages any repairs, maintenance or extension to those buildings in the current years.

The Minister of Regional Development (Cde. Clarke): Thank you, Cde. Chairman. On page 225, Cde. Persaud raised some questions on items (26), (28) and (30) as well as on item (57) on page 227.

The answer to all these questions is the same. The allocations made here are only intended to cover the period 1st January to the end of April pending re-organisation of the Ministry of Regional Development. There will be a re-allocation of existing staff to vacancies within the wider Public Service and in the Regions in respect to the establishment of Regional Democratic Councils. Some of the staff will be reallocated to fill existing vacancies in the wider Public Service. That work is going on at the moment and will be concluded in time for these people to be re-allocated before the beginning of May. Provision is only made to the end of April.

I would like to add about item (57), Supernumerary Constable, that this is in respect of the people who used to be performing duties as watchmen in the Ministry of Regional Development. These people will now be absorbed by the National Guard Service and therefore no provision is necessary after the end of April.

With respect to item (66), Craft Production and Design Work, the comrade would have noted that the number of post has been reduced from 37 to 13 and if he peruses the Estimates with respect to the regions he will find that those additional posts are reflected in the regions themselves.

With respect to item (72), Chairman, I would like to mention that the word is not “Chairman” “Chainman”, and that in fact the provision here is in respect of the services of such Chainman as will be required during 1981.

The provision at item (81), 1 Supervisor, Builders Co-operative Societies, should quite properly be made under the Ministry of Co-operatives and I am grateful to the comrade for attracting this to our attention. It really should be made under the Ministry of Co-operatives which Head has already been passed. We will internally make the change.

On subhead 15, Amerindian Residence and Hostels – Maintenance, etc., hon. Member Mr. Abraham wanted to know whether the Amerindian Residences at Corriverton, Charity and Lethem are due for repairs during this year and whether money is provided in this vote for such repairs. My answer is yes.

Subhead 12 refers to Grants to Voluntary Social Welfare Organisations and I think the comrade wanted to know which organisation and how much they each get. I am afraid I do not have that information and if the comrade were to put a Question to the Assembly subsequently, I would be prepared to supply the information for him.

On subhead 17, that is, Hinterland Scholarships, I would like to give the following information. Approximately 200 scholarships at various second schools and other training institutions in the country will be allocated this year to Amerindians students.

Some of the institutions to which the students will be sent are the Government Technical Institute, the Guyana School of Agriculture, Guyana Industrial Training Centre, Carnegie School of Home Economics, and some proportion of this will be spent for training people from our Amerindian Communities in health disciplines. I could not say at this moment how many would be trained at each institution and in what specific fields they will be trained.

On subhead 32, which is the one –

The Chairman: Subhead 21 first.

Cde. Clarke: On subhead 21, Contribution towards Maintenance of Roads and Streets of Local Authority Areas, Cde. Ram Karran wanted to know a lot and so did Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, I think. This grant is intended for the Georgetown Town Council. This entire sum.

The Chairman: The members of the Minority Parties have been saying that if the legend was clear much time would have been saved. They would not have been asking: which road is going to be done? Which village? Which access road? It means saving a little time, and year after year the people who compile these Estimates just copy from one book to the other and not taking any consideration of the observations that are made here. “Chainman” and “Chairman”, do you know how long you wasted time on that? Do you know how long this question was discussed about grants to Institution, to Local Authorities? If that had been sent to Georgetown, the story would have been finished.

Cde. Clarke: Cde. Chairman, I share your concern.

The Chairman: It is not sense you're sharing my concern and year after year it is same thing.

Cde. Clarke: The Contribution at subhead 21 would be to be the Georgetown Town Council.

Subhead 32, Provision for the Establishment and Development of the Local Democratic Organs. I would like to answer the many questions raised by my friend Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud. First of all, Cde. Persaud told us that he read the State Paper on the re-organisation of the Local Government System. If he did, then I think most of the question that he asked here would not have been asked at all because the answers to those questions are to be found in the State Paper and he should read it. He asked, additionally, when election will be held. I do not make that decision and therefore I am no position to tell him when election will be held but I know that elections will be held for the other organs of the system of Local Democratic Organs and it is interested that Cde. Persaud did not know that we had already started in the regions the series of elections for local government. He did not know that the Regional Council Elections have been held. That is part of the system and he did not know that.

Anyhow, Cde. Chairman, the fact of the matter is that the elections for sub-regions, the districts, the communities, the neighbourhood and the people's co-operatives will be held and this provision in the Estimates has been put to facilitate that exercise in addition to the payment of other expenses incurred in the process of ensuring the proper carrying out of the exercise of putting in place the other organs under the local democratic system. That is the answer.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, I am sure that you will permit me just one –

The Chairman: I've got twenty minutes more with all these Heads.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Just this one, please. I did not raise the question of regional elections and I think the answer was unfair. But I want to say this, sir, if the Minister was to read the Act, he has certain obligations which he must not shirk. He has to make Orders. He has to declare the areas. So he is shirking his responsibility.

The Chairman: All right, Cde. Persaud. That those not take us anywhere I will now put the Head with the correction:

<u>Page</u>	<u>Column</u>	
227	Head	Substitution of "Chainman" for "Chairman" against item (72) of subhead 1.

Head 91, Ministry of Regional Development - \$5,561,700 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 229

DIVISION XXXIII – MINISTRY OF
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Question proposed that the sum of \$4,439,000 for Division XXXIII – Ministry of the Regional Development – stand part of the Estimates

The Chairman: Cde. Ram Karran.

Cde. Ram Karran: Subhead 1 – Land Transport. Cde, Chairman, the question I want to ask is whether the hon. Minister thinks that we are assisted by saying the same thing in front and the same thing after. In all these heads we have drawn attention. Maybe this will help the Minister. "Land Transport" – and the legend is: "To provide for purchase of vehicles". How many vehicles, where the vehicles will be used or any other information that is relevant to this Head is absent. The hon. Minister prefers, perhaps, to get up and tell us when the time comes.

Subheads 2 – Water Transportation. The same is applicable to water transport – “To provide for purchase of boats”. If it is water transport you could not buy a Mercedes car. I forgot the name of year, sir.

The Chairman: Lincoln Continental. /Laughter/

Cde. Ram Karran: It had to be for boats. Will the hon. Minister please try to give us this information. We want to know.

Subhead 3 – Purchase of Equipment. Sir, the legend says “To provide for equipment purchases.” The same “nancy” story again.

The Chairman: Cde. Ram Karran, as time as against us, the question you want to ask is, for the details in respect of all these items.

Cde. Ram Karran: Cde. Chairman, these items are capital expenditure and in capital expenditure in particular it is not the regular run of the recurrent. These are new things and this Assembly has a right and this Assembly should be very jealous, and all Parliaments I am aware of are jealous of their responsibilities. The Minister cannot come and ask us for a blank cheque.

Subhead 10 – Grant to Georgetown Mayor and Town Councils. If I may move on to subhead 10, the Minister told us on the other page that the item “Contribution towards Maintenance of Roads and Streets of Local Authority Areas” relates to Georgetown - \$670,000 – and under subhead 10 \$1,350,000 is a Grant to the Georgetown Mayor and Town Council. Those of us who have been in this Assembly for some time – I have been here since I had hair on my head – realise that the Georgetown Town Council gets a statutory grants each year and the Municipality pays a certain amount of money to the Central Government. If that system has been changed some explanation is required of the hon. Minister. I am almost sure, as certain as night follows day, that the explanation he gave to us on the previous page is wrong, but one does not criticize a hon. Member. He is supposed to have “honourable” in front of his name because he speaks the truth all the time. He has not done his work and that amount of money is not going to be given to the Georgetown Municipality. I can swear about it. The hon. Minister cannot come here and mislead this Assembly either by not knowing or being lazy.

Subhead 11 – Expenses in relation to Government’s presence in Jonestown Agricultural Complex. Comrade, what is happening there? What is happening in Jonestown? I understand that all the people are dead and were carried away. They are not even buried. What is happening at Jonestown? Do we have an enquiry there? Has the judge gone there to inquire? To whom is this \$20,000 to be paid? To pay for the expenses in the several enquires into the dead? I do not know. We have been spending money all the time. Will the Minister tell us what is happening at Jonestown? We have the administration of the dead? Maybe they use those people to vote in the elections.

Subhead 12 – Georgetown Sewerage and Water Commissioners Rehabilitation. No money is shown on it.

The Chairman: No discussion that.

Cde. Ram Karran: No, I want to ask a relevant question, whether the \$1.8 million has been expended. I have a reason to ask that question and if you rule me out of order I will rise to a point of order. I want to know if the \$1.8 million has been expended from last year's vote.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister, please reply.

Cde. Clarke: Cde. Chairman, the provision for land and water transport is in respect of such transportation for regions, which details I really do not have with me. I have asked my officers here and they have not provided me with that information.

The Chairman: Cde. Clarke, surely when the officer was putting down \$110,000 he ought to have known what he was putting down. This thing is being asked year after year after year. If they had put down "to but three land rovers" the story would have being finished. But year after year after year the same thing happens.

Cde. Clarke: Cde. Chairman, I have been informed that there are six land rovers to be purchased and five boats and engines for hinterland regions.

The Chairman: If they had done that, do you know how much time would have been saved? Once you keep on doing that, members of the Minority Party will keep on asking this type of question all the time.

Cde. Clarke: With respect to the grant to the Georgetown Town Council –

The Chairman: If I were you, Cde. Clarke, I would not answer another question because the person who asked it hasn't got the courtesy to listen to you.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: The rest of members will.

The Chairman: Which members?

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: We have collective responsibility here.

Cde. Clarke: Cde. Chairman, the grant to the Georgetown Town Council, I think the Conrade who asked the question knows that this is an annual grant. The money in the previous vote was in respect of specific work which it says, and that is, to provide for the roads in Georgetown. These are the roads, Cde. Chairman, the main arterial roads in the Georgetown Town Council Area.

2:50 p.m.

On the question of Jonestown, I would merely like to say that my information is that this sum of \$20,000 is to provide for security services and to maintain the infrastructure which is there.

DIVISION XXXIII, MINISTRY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT - \$4,439,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

The Chairman: Pages 230 and 231.

HEAD 92 – REGION NO. 1

BARIMA/WAINI

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,483,300 for Head 92, Region No.1 – Barima/ Waini, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 92, Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini - \$1,483,300 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 232

DIVISION XXXIII: 1 – REGION NO. 1

Question proposed that the sum of the \$410,000 for Division XXXIII: 1 – Region No. 1 stand parts of the Estimates.

The Chairman: I will now put the Division with the corrections:

<u>Page</u>	<u>Column</u>	
232	Subhead No. -	Insertion of subhead numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 appropriately.
	Code No.	Insertion of code numbers 124,001; 124,002; 124,003; 124,004; 124,005 appropriately.

Division XXXIII: 1 Deletion (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (v). Total in last line to read Total
Division XXXIII: 1.

Division XXXIII:1. Region 1 - \$410,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman Pages 233 to 235.

HEAD 93 REGION NO. 2

POMEROON/ SUPENAAM

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,587,000 for Head 93, Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/ Supenaam, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 93, Region No.2 - Poomeroon/ Supenaam - \$2,587,000- agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

The Chairman: Page 236

DIVISION XXXIII: 2 – REGION 2

Question proposed that the sum of \$910,000 for Division XXXIII:2 - Region 2, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: I will now put the Division with the corrections:

<u>Page</u>	<u>Column</u>	
236	Subhead no.	Insertion of subhead numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 appropriately.
	Code No.	Insertion of code numbers 140,001; 140,002; 140,003; 140,004; 140,005; and 140,006 appropriately.
	Division XXXIII: 2	Deletion of (i), (ii), (iii), (iv), (v) and (vi). Total to read Total Division XXXIII: 2.

Division XXXIII: 2 – Region 2, \$910,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 237 to 239.

HEAD 94 – REGION NO. 3

ESSEQUIBO ISLANDS/WEST DEMERARA

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,293,300 for Head 94, Region No. 3 – Essequibo Islands/West Demerara, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, there is subhead 11 on page 239 Maintenance of Roads. Seeing that these areas have now been regionalised, I think it is opportune for strong advocacy that roads that have been neglected for a number of years be given consideration. I do not want to spend a long time but simply to ask if the Government has any intention of maintaining or possibly building the road leading to Hague back-dam where there is a strong population, a farming population. Is the Minister aware that roads in areas like Philadelphia, Ruby, and Farm, have been completely run down and there is a strong farming community in the Ruby area that has been clamouring for a number of years to be provided with roads. If the rain falls, those people cannot come out of those areas or get into them and their agricultural machinery and other vehicles – -

The Chairman: Cde. Persaud, in your main contribution you said all of that. If you would like to ask a question on the maintenance, if they will maintain those roads, fine.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Will the Minister then say whether these roads, which I am specifically identifying for answers this afternoon, are going to be taken care of and how early.

Cde. Clarke: Cde. Chairman, this provision is to take care of declared public roads within Region No. 3. Specifically, we will be looking at the Leguan road and the Wakenaam road. We will be spending \$420,000 there, and the rest of the money is to be spent in the West Demerara area on declared public roads and not the roads to which Cde. Persaud referred.

The Chairman: I will put the Head with the correction:

<u>Page</u>	<u>Column</u>	
239	Code No.	Changing of Head Code numbers from 099 to 101.

Head 94, Region No. 3 Essequibo Island/West Demerara - \$3,293,300 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 240

DIVISION XXXIII:3 – REGION 3

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,834,000 for Division XXXIII:3, Region 3, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: I will now put the Division with the corrections:

<u>Page</u>	<u>Column</u>	
240	Subhead No.	Insertion of subhead numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 appropriately.
	Code No.	Insertion of code number 141,001; 141,002; 141,003 and 141,004 and 141,005 appropriately.
	Division XXXIII:3	Deletion of (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (v). Total division XIII:3 to read Total Division XXXIII:3.

Division XXXIII: 3 – Region 3, \$2,834,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 241 to 243

HEAD 95 – REGION NO. 4

DEMERARA/MAHAICA

Question proposed that the sum of \$5,457,600 for Head 95, Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman page 234, subhead 12, Operational Expenditure for Soesdyke/Linden Land Development Scheme. This Assembly was never given the opportunity of knowing what this scheme is; what is taking place; what is the total input; what the Government expects to achieve; what the output is likely to be. I think the Minister concerned ought to bring this Assembly up-to-date on this question. That is the only one on this.

1981-03-05

2:50 – 3:00 p.m.

Cde. Clarke: Cde. Speaker, I would suggest to Cde. Persaud to raise this question with the policy Minister of Agriculture when he comes to defend his Head of Estimates

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: We are talking about a regional system and we have a Regional Minister. This is a Regional Estimate.

The Chairman: If that is the answer, what do you want me to do?

Head 95, Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica - \$5,457,600- agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

The Chairman: Page 244

DIVISION XXXIII: 4 – REGION 4

Question proposed that the sum of \$5,703,000 for Division XXXIII: 4 – Region 4, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Ram Karran: Item (vii) – Mon Repos Road. A short question, Your Honour, to enquire whether this road is going to be built this year. This road has been in a deplorable condition for a considerable period and every year we are told that work will be done on it, it will be maintained, and nothing has been done. Will it be done this year?

Cde. Clarke: Yes, Cde. Chairman.

The Chairman: I will now put the Division with the corrections.

<u>Page</u>	<u>Column</u>	
244	Subhead No.	Insertion of subhead numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 appropriately.
	Code No.	Insertion of code numbers 142,001; 142,002; 142,003; 142,004; 142,005; 142,006; 142,007; 142,008 and 142,009 appropriately.
	Division XXXIII:4	Deletion of (i), (ii), (iii), (iv), (v), (vi), (vii), (viii) and (ix). Total to read total Division XXXIII: 4

Division XXXIII: 4, Region 4 - \$5,703,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 245 and 246.

HEAD 96 – REGION NO. 5
MAHAICA/BERBICE

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,882,000 for Head 96, Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice, stand part of the Estimates

The Chairman: The question is that the sum \$1,882,000 for Head 96, Region No. 5 –

Cde Ram Karran rose.

The Chairman: You must be quicker, Cde. Ram Karran. It is only because it is you that I am turning it back.

Cde. Ram Karran: A question that would be asked at any stage of these regional estimates is here: “Driver, Office Assistant, Caretaker, Craft Production and Design Officer”, all lumped under one item. The number of people employed last year was two. I wonder how the hon. Minister and his Department are going to be able to administer this. It runs all the way through. The observation I am making is that it is a new department and it is very necessary, with such a blank page on the other side, for the Minister or Ministry to have these itemised as much as possible to give Parliament an opportunity to understand what is taking place. In some places there are Carpenters, Plumbers, Masons and everybody listed in one item. Here again we have the same thing – “Driver, Office Assistant, Caretaker, Craft Production and Design Officer.” I am sorry. There are two items, one for \$6,700 and the other for \$10,000.

The Chairman: If you look under Establishment you will see how many Officers will be employed. It does not say so many Plumbers and so many Masons but the totality will be 39.

Cde. Ram Karran: If you look at the other item, the number of Officers employed will be preposterous compared with the figure show for the Estimate.

The Chairman: Parliament is not in a position to say how many Masons and how many Carpenters or how many Craftsmen.

Cde. Clarke: I can assure the Assembly, Cde. Chairman, that the information required by my friend on the other side is available and will be made available at a subsequent time.

Head 96, Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice - \$1,882,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 247.

DIVISION XXXIII: 5 REGION 5

Question proposed that the sum of \$314,000 for Division XXXIII: 5, Region 5, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: I will now put the Division with the corrections:

<u>Page</u>	<u>Column</u>	
247	Subhead No.	Insertion of subhead numbers 1, 2 and 3 appropriately.
	Code No.	Insertion of code numbers 143,001; 143,002; and 143,003 appropriately.
	Division XXXIII: 5	Deletion of (i), (ii), and (iii). Total to read Total Division XXXIII: 5

Division XXXIII: 5, Region 5- \$314,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 248 to 250

HEAD 97

REGION NO. 6 – BERBICE/CORENTYNE

Question proposed that the sum of \$4,797,900 for Head 97, Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Ram Karran: Before you put the question, just to emphasise the point made, the hon. Minister has indicated that he will make the information available. I merely cited subhead 1 (9) to show that the same thing has occurred throughout these estimates. We have at item (9) Telephonist, Vehicle

Driver, Checker, Gateman –

The Chairman: Cde. Ram Karran, you will get the same answer.

Cde. Ram Karran: What I want to ask, if the hon, Minister will go through the estimates. We got the impression that he will give the information only in respect of the last question but I hope he will go through the estimates and give Parliament the information under each Head.

The Chairman: The observation is in respect of each?

Cde. Ram Karran: Yes Sir,

Cde. Clarke: What I am saying is that the information required by my friend on the opposite side, if it were to be put in these Estimates will result in a very voluminous document.

The Chairman: Notwithstanding it is voluminous, or otherwise, it is the duty of members to know.

Cde. Clarke: I have indicated that the information is available and can be made available to my friend.

The Chairman: Yes, Cde. Vice-President.

The Vice-President, Economic Planning and Finance (Cde. Hoyte): Cde. Chairman, I wonder if I may intervene here as the person having overall responsibility for the preparation of and the presentation of the Budget to this honourable Assembly. Two years ago I did point out that the whole format and content of the Budget was going to be changed, the Budget methodology was going to be changed and the Budget would be restructured that it would be a more effective tool for management in the Public Sector and for development.

The changes being reflected here are consequential upon those observations I made in 1979. It is really of no use to this Assembly to know that there are five cooks and three office assistant in a Ministry. What is important as a management tool is to know the categories. We have already started in the Budget format to indicate the number of senior administrative staff, clerical, technical and operatives because this is the only way in which one can have a proper over-view of the structure of the whole Public Service and of individual Ministries.

I submit that the way in which we have been presenting information in the past is really unhelpful. It, I submit, causes members to waste time in asking peripheral questions and presents them from getting to the core of the matter. What we are seeing here are the changes which will take place and which will be more definitely institutionalised next time.

The Chairman: Cde. Vice-President, is this only in relation to personnel or is in relation also to

things like equipment where there has been a paucity of information?

Cde. Hoyte: That is another matter. I am talking about staff.

The Chairman: I merely ask because one can well understand that aspect of the matter but when you are going to put \$1 million for Maintenance of Roads, certainly members have a right to know.

Cde. Hoyte: They have a right to know. They can ask and I am sure they will be told; but I do not think the other side can dictate to this side what format the Budget should be prepared in. We do not accept that.

Cde. Ram Karran: I do not want to suggest that we can dictate the format. In fact, I conceded very early in this debate that we have been informed about these new departments. One expects that there will be changes, but if there are changes, as my friend said – and these changes are indicated here – one function of Parliament is to examine your Estimates in relation to last year's and those for the years before. That is why it takes this form and all Parliaments examine Estimates in that light.

What the hon. Vice-President is saying now is that they have decided to change the format and that we have nothing to do with it and more than that - -

The Chairman: The Vice-President is not saying that.

Cde. Ram Karran: He says we are asking peripheral questions. You have among the employees those who are pensionable, those who are non-pensionable. They must be show separately. What I found – and I have drawn your attention to it, Sir – in previous Heads passed was that there were 85 people employed last year for a ridiculous sum of \$5,200 and that sort of thing.

I am saying that the hon. Minister did not do his work. His supervisor ought to see that he does his work properly with a view to getting Members of Parliament to understand. I have drawn that to your attention. I am not saying that we want to change the format and presentation of the Estimates. We want to know what is to be spent this year and what was spent last year and why more is being spent this year. We have a right to know. It is not the format. And if money was spent last year and it is not shown under these Heads, let it be identified in the Estimates where we can find those heads and so on. The whole thing is a ridiculous presentation of the Estimates unlike any other Parliament.

Cde. Hoyte: Obviously, Cde, Chairman, the hon. Member is having certain conceptual difficulties. If we are changing over, there is no way in which the present Budget could be like the last, and I would have thought that that was self-evident. What I did say was not that they were asking peripheral questions, but that the way in which the Budget was prepared and presented in the past induced peripheral questions and moved the focus of members away from the real issues. Nobody, for all the years I have been in this honourable Assembly, has ever questioned or analysed the structure of a Ministry to see what the relation was between the clerical people and the technical people; in other words nobody has ever looked at the Budget in terms of management concepts, and I am saying that the way in which the Budget was prepared prevented such an analysis. Surely that is far more important than asking whether there are two more caretakers for guest houses or whether there is another office assistant

Head 97, Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne - \$4,797,900 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 251.

DIVISION XXXIII: 6 – REGION 6

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,275,000 for Division XXXIII: 6 – Region 6 stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: I will now put the Division with the corrections:

<u>Page</u>	<u>Column</u>	
251	Subhead No.	Insertion of subhead number 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 appropriately.
	Code No.	Insertion of code numbers 144,001, 144,002, 144,003, 144,004, 144,005 and 144,006 appropriately.
	Division XXXIII: 6	Deletion of (i), (ii), (iii), (iv), (v) and (vi). Total to read Total Division XXXIII:6.

Division XXXIII: 6 – Region 6 - \$1,275,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 252 and 253.

HEAD 98 – REGION NO. 7 – CUYUNI/MAZARUNI

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,690,700 for Head 98, Region No. 7 – Cuyuni/Mazaruni – stand part of the Estimates.

Head 98, Region No. 7 – Cuyuni/Mazaruni - \$1,690,700 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: 254.

DIVISION XXXIII: 7 – REGION 7

Question proposed that the sum of \$102,000 for Division XXXIII: 7 – Region 7 stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: I will now put the Division with the corrections:

<u>Page</u>	<u>Column</u>	
254	Subhead No.	Insertion of subhead numbers 1, 2, and 3 appropriately.
	Code No.	Insertion of code number 145,001; 145,002; and 145,003 appropriately.
	Division XXXIII: 7	Deletion of (i), (ii), and (iii). Total to read Total Division XXXIII: 7.

Division XXXIII: 7 – Region 7 - \$102,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 255

HEAD 99 – REGION NO. 8 – POTARO/SIPARUNI

Question proposed that the sum of \$854,200 for Head 99, Region No. 8 – Potaro/Siparuni, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 99, Region No. 8 – Potaro/Siparuni - \$854,200 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 256.

DIVISION XXXIII:8 – REGION 8

Question proposed that the sum of \$124,000 for Division XXXIII:8 – Region 8, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Cde. Ram Karran.

Cde. Ram Karran: (i) Agriculture Development and (ii) Miscellaneous Works. Cde, Chairman, I want to find out from the hon. Minister what are these miscellaneous works. The amount of \$24,000 for agricultural development, I understand, is going to be used to construct a boat and repair houses of extension officers, but \$100,000 listed as “Miscellaneous Works” does not seem to have any explanation. The word “Miscellaneous” as you know in this Assembly is related to toilet paper. I don’t think that the Government is going to use that to buy all that toilet paper.

The Chairman: Yes, Cde. Minister.

Cde. Clarke: Cde. Chairman, the \$100,000 for Miscellaneous Works is in respect to community development projects to the identified by the Region.

The Chairman: I will now put the Division with the corrections:

<u>Page</u>	<u>Column</u>	
256	Subhead No.	Insertion of subhead numbers 1 and 2 appropriately.
	Code No.	Insertion of code numbers 146,001 and 146,002 appropriately.
	Division XXXIII: 8	Deletion of (i) and (ii). Total to read Total Division XXXIII: 8

Division XXXIII: 8 – Region 8 \$124,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 257 and 258.

HEAD 100 – REGION NO. 9 – UPPER TAKUTU/UPPER ESSEQUIBO

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,439,600 for Head 100 – Region No. 9 Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 259

DIVISION XXXIII:9 – REGION 9

Question proposed that the sum of \$129,000 for Division XXXIII: 9 – Region 9, stand part of the Estimates

The Chairman: Yes, Cde. Ram Karrann.

Cde. Ram Karran: Item (ii) Miscellaneous Works. Cde. Chairman, if the answer is the same as on the previous head, Division XXXIII:8 – Region 8, will the Minister tell us whether work is going to commence on this project for this year or are the authorities going to identify all these projects. I just want to know because I do not want to come back next year to find out that nothing has been done.

The Chairman: Yes, Cde. Minister

Cde. Clarke: The answer is “yes”, Cde. Chairman.

The Chairman: I will now put the division with the corrections:

<u>Page</u>	<u>Column</u>	
259	Subheads No.	Insertion of subhead numbers 1 and 2 appropriately.
	Code No.	Insertion of code numbers 147,001 and 147,002 appropriately.
	Division XXXIII:9	Deletion of (i) and (ii). Total to read Total Division XXXIII:9.

Division XXXIII:9 – Region 9 - \$129,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 260 and 261

HEAD 101 – REGION NO. 10 – UPPER DEMERARA/BERBICE

Question proposed that the sum of \$902,800 for Head 101 – Region No. 10 – Upper Demerara/Berbice, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Cde. Ram Karran

Cde. Ram Karran: Item (17) – Allowances. Cde. Chairman, we have seen Estimates all these years with “Allowances”, but there is always an explanation. What is the allowance for? It is a sleeping-out allowance? Is it a meal allowance? Is it a travelling allowance? Will the hon. Minister tell us what the item is all about? It can cover a multitude of sins.

The Chairman: Cde. Clarke.

Cde. Clarke: Cde. Chairman, indeed, it is to cover a multitude of activities

Head 101 – Region No. 10 – Upper Demerara/Berbice - \$902,800 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

The Chairman: Page 261, Region 10.

Cde. Clarke: Cde. Chairman, I wish to draw attention to the following corrections that need to be made to this Division.

<u>Page</u>	<u>Column</u>	
262	Subhead No.	Insertion of subhead numbers 1, 2 and 3 appropriately
	Code No.	Insertion of code numbers 148,001; 148,002 and 148,003 appropriately.
	Division XXXIII: 11	Division XXXIII: 11 to read XXX:10. Deletion of (i), (ii) and (iii). Total to read Total Division XXXIII:10
	Explanatory Notes	Division XXXIII:11 to read XXXIIIL10.

I also wish to move the following amendment to the Division:

<u>Page</u>	<u>Column</u>	
262	Subhead No.	Insertion of a new subhead numbered 4.
	Code No.	Against subhead 4, insertion of code number 148,004.
	Division XXXIII:10	Against subhead 4, insertion of new subhead to read Rehabilitation of Primary and Secondary Schools.
	Total	Against subhead 4, insertion of amount of \$500,000 and changing of total to read \$744,000 instead of \$244,000.
	Other Finance	Ditto.
	Explanatory Notes	Against subhead 4, insertion of a legend reading to rehabilitate school buildings in the Linden Area.

1981-03-05

3:10 – 3:20 p.m.

Amendment put, and agreed to

DIVISION XXXIII:10 – REGION 10

Question proposed that the sum of \$744,000 for Division XXXIII:10 – Region 10, stand part of the Estimates.

Division XXXIII:10 – Region 10 - \$744,000- as amended, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 27.

HEAD 14 – MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Question proposed that the sum of \$8,500,000 for Head 14, Ministry of National Development, stand part of the Estimates.

3:20 p.m

Cde. Collymore: I would like to speak on subheads 1, 2, 3, and 4.

The Chairman: You can't speak on subhead 1, Personal Emoluments.

Cde. Collymore: Cde. Chairman, I don't want to speak on the item, I want to speak on subheads 1, 2, 3 and 4. Now we note that this Ministry has been spending a lot of money, and contrary to tradition in this honourable Assembly, no report and no explanation have been given for the vast majority of the sums spent. I would like to ask the Minister responsible if he is satisfied with the state of affairs. I would like to also tell the Minister that the way in which this Ministry is functioning, is in direct opposition to what the hon. Vice-President –

The Chairman: Don't worry, tell him, ask him questions.

Cde. Collymore: The Vice-President had said, and just to refresh his memory, that the system for financial control and accountability in the public sector will apply equally to the Public Corporations and to Central Government Agencies. Yet we have year after year no explanation as to how these sums are spent. For this year, we are going to have \$8.5 million expended, but all that the estimates have shown so far is how \$1 million is going to be spent. Cde. Chairman, we feel that this is totally inadequate, and something is definitely wrong. In relation to the Ministry as a whole, we are opposed to this Ministry. We are also opposed to some of the aspects of the Ministry. We have certain suggestions to make to the Ministry, if he will take them into consideration and I would like to make these suggestions and to ask him if he will consider them.

The Chairman: Don't worry with the suggestions. I am worrying with these estimates in front of me.

Cde. Collymore: we would like to ask the Minister questions.

The Chairman: Ask him questions in relation to this which I have before me, please!

Cde. Collymore: Will the Minister consider re-deploying all personnel elsewhere, including himself? That is the first question. Will the Minister consider transferring the Youth Division to the Education and Culture Ministry? Will the Minister also consider transferring the sports section to the Ministry of Education and Culture, and also re-deploying the sports Minister, who is well-known cricketer? And will the Minister also consider deleting all other expenses in this particular Ministry? And will he consider dismantling and closing down this same absurd Ministry? These are the questions, Cde. Chairman.

We note that we have been consistently asking for explanations as to how the funds are being spent but they have not been saying anything, they have not been replying, and this Ministry is at variance with the tradition of all the other Ministries. I would like to ask the Minister, too, if he knows that since this Ministry was created in 1975, up to this moment this Ministry will have spent \$66 million. Does he know that? And does the Minister know that all the explanation, all the information given to this honourable Assembly, pity the indignity as you inferred a little while ago, pertained to only \$2 million? Does he know that? Does he know that? Does he know that the sums not accounted for in this Ministry between 1975 and 1981, amounted to \$64 million? Nowhere in the world do you find such a state of affairs where out of the \$66 million expended, only \$2 million is accounted for.

When the vice-President for Economic Planning and Finance was making his presentation, we noted that he was very serious when he made the comment that Government accounting systems would be tightened up and all loopholes plugged. I was looking at him and I consider he was serious, because he was not smiling, and we on this side of the Assembly are also serious and we are not smiling at all. We feel this is an outrage and all the loopholes must be blocked up, and this Ministry must not be at variance with the Vice-President's assertion in the Budget statement. It must conform, Cde. Chairman, I would like to ask the Minister if he can give us an explanation as to how the other sums of money have been expended. We would be satisfied if it makes sense. That is all I have to say.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister

The Minister of National Development (Cde. Corbin): Cde. Chairman, I would like to answer the questions very quickly. First of all, it is quite untrue that the funds allocated to the Ministry of National Development have been unaccounted for. Hopelessly false. Secondly, Cde. Chairman, he asks if the Minister will consider re-deploying personnel elsewhere. The answer to that is, No! Even if the personnel were to be re-deployed from the Youth Division to any other Ministry in the Government, if the sports section as well as to the re-deployed, that would not mean that there will be no expenditure. In other words, there will still be expenditure for carrying on the work for the promotion of youth in this country, and there will still be need for funds to be expended for the development of sport in whatever Ministry we may place it. The fact is that the accounts of the Ministry of National Development are subjected to both internal and central auditing, and the Auditor General does audit the accounts of the

Ministry of National Development.

The Comrade asked whether I am satisfied with the work of the Ministry of National Development. The answer to that is, Yes! I am satisfied that the Ministry of National Development is playing a very vital role in the development of this country. He also asked for an explanation as to how the Ministry works. I had been present in this Assembly several times, Cde. Chairman, when the former Minister of National Development spent a lot of time explaining the rationale for, and the reasons why the Ministry of National Development was established. I just wish to repeat briefly that in any society and particularly in any country, if the Government is serious about promoting the development of its people, it is necessary to create an organisation such as the Ministry of National Development that can concentrate on the mobilisation of people – the human resources of the society – which is extremely important, if development is to take place. Without people, development cannot take place.

Sometimes in the provisions in other Ministries areas of development overlooked and there is need to make provision for an agency that can really deal with the mobilisation of people. The organisation of workers' education programmes, a number of other programmes for mobilisation of people, and generally preparing them to play a meaning role in national development. This Ministry functions in this way so that it can harness the abilities of all the people of Guyana so that they can contribute to what the Ministry says – national development.

3:30 p.m.

Cde. Collymore: I just have a short supplementary question. I would like to ask the Minister if he would assure this Assembly that all audited accounts of that Ministry which have not been tabled will be tabled in this August Chamber.

The Chairman: If –

Cde. Collymore: We do not know what is going on. It is a wheel within a wheel. It is a vicious circle.

Cde. Corbin: When the Reports are presented, Cde. Chairman, they will be presented to this Assembly.

Head 14, Ministry of National Development - \$8,500,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 186 and 187

HEAD 79 – TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,950,000 for Head 79, Trade and Consumer Protection, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. N Persaud: Page 186, subhead 1, items (9), (11), (13), (14), (15) and (16). On page 187, subhead 20.

Cde. Chairman, since I want to deal collectively on these – they all deal with the same matters – I seek your permission to take all of these together.

The Chairman: Yes.

Cde. N. Persaud: Item (9) deals with one Chief Allocation and Distribution Officer; (11) is one Chief Price and Pricing Policy Officer. Then we have two officers of Allocation and Distribution and three for Prices and Pricing Policy; one Consumer Protection Officer and two Assistant Consumer Protection Officers.

I think we are all very much aware of the acute shortage of essential food and other items in Guyana. Now, this has been a problem which we have been told arose out of the restriction on importation in Guyana due to the shortage of foreign currency. If we were to accept the fact that there has been and there is a shortage of foreign currency and these officers are now in the position of trying, as the names spell out – Chief Allocation and Distribution Officer and Allocation and Distribution Officers, one would have thought that since a situation has arisen in the country due to the shortage of foreign exchange, then every effort would have been made to ensure that allocations are made on a very equitable basis. It is very disheartening and discouraging to note in this Assembly that although this matter has been aired in so many forums we still have, up to today, discrimination and unequal distribution of food

and other essential items.

What about the high prices? We have a Prices and Pricing Policy Officer and yet prices keep sky-rocketing despite the fact that we were told in the 1980 Budget that there was going to be a new pricing policy whereby prices would have been reduced. The fact of the matter is – and I challenge the Minister who made this statement subsequent to the Budget Speech in this Assembly – to prove where in any one of the Government corporations prices have been reduced. All that he had to say was that the mark-up has been reduced but in spite of the fact that the mark-up has been reduced existing prices at no particular time have been reduced. Therefore, it is a shame!

Cde. Chairman, we must understand that this is a very sore problem. I would like to ask what is the function of all these officers whom I have named since I want to believe that they have not been executing their jobs properly. What is spelt out here? Prices and Pricing Policy. I would like to ask what is the pricing policy of this Government? Prices are rarely fixed. It is useless to give a little increment or give a little relief, such as income tax, with one hand and take it back with another. Prices keep going up year after year, shipment after shipment. What we found is that housing prices started to go up, food prices started to go up. The 8 per cent consumption tax is again put on and we must understand and appreciate that wages have virtually been frozen.

I would like to know from the Minister concerned what is really their pricing policy in that we have seen absolutely no reduction in the prices. And I would like to ask a particular question in relation to the distribution of foodstuff particularly in the country: what yardstick is used? How are these officers who are named here able to monitor the demand in various communities? Whether it is not true that the bulk of the goods go to the Knowledge Sharing Institute which is controlled by the P.N.C? The profits, instead of going to state enterprises, instead of going into the Complex that we had before where the profits went into the State Treasury, the profits that accrue from the K.S.I. are now being thrown into the P.N.C.'s treasury.

I would like to ask what is the pricing policy and how do they find out what is the demand in the areas particularly where they do not have the K.S.I. Of course, where the K.S.I. is, the goods are channeled there. Obviously discrimination is there and unequal distribution plagues the nation.

I would like to enquire, since it is a very sore problem, what are the functions of these officers, the pricing policy and on what basis the allocations are being done. This is just to recapitulate.

On page 187, subhead 20, subsidy – Conveyance of Foodstuff to Hinterland, Cde. Chairman, I think you are also aware of the fact that emphasis is being placed on the development of the hinterland. People who work there, upon whom we depend to develop the hinterland, live and work there under very atrocious conditions. Therefore, one would have expected that these people ought to have been subsidized in a very tangible manner. We find here that the sum of half a million dollars is being sought in the Estimates for 1981 as a subsidy for the conveyance, that is, the transportation of foodstuff into the hinterland. I would like to ask the Minister, first of all, whether he feels that this sum of half a million dollars is adequate to subsidise these people who live in these remote areas, people who are denied many

of the facilities that we who are in Georgetown do enjoy. I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he does not think that it is time that some consideration be given to subsidizing not only transportation but the actual commodities. I would like to ask the Minister if he is aware that a pack of 20 Bristol cigarettes that is sold in Georgetown for \$1.33 is sometimes sold in areas in the Rupununi for the high price of \$2.90. Also, whether the Minister is aware that flour, for example, is sold for the high prices of one dollar and rice and sugar also are sold at one dollar per pound.

Therefore, I would like to ask the Minister whether any consideration is given first at all to granting more subsidy on transportation and, secondly, to subsidising some of the essential items for people in these areas.

The Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection (Cde. Hope): Cde. Chairman, the first observation relates to what the comrade speaks of as an inequitable distribution of essential foodstuff. It is well known that the country is in fact existing in a state where there is a foreign exchange shortage and, therefore, all the things that we would like to import we cannot import, but what is clearly true is that essential foodstuff like milk, for instance, and wheat to make flour is another example – Government, despite the shortage of foreign exchange resources, has allocated sufficient of these resources to ensure that adequate supplies of these commodities come into the country.

The point I want to emphasise is that despite the foreign exchange shortage the Government has, in fact, allocated from year to year enough money, enough foreign exchange, to ensure that adequate supplies of essential commodities are brought into the country, commodities like wheat, like milk, like salt, to mention only three of several examples.

3:40 p.m.

Cde. Chairman, what has certainly been true is that there have developed certain distortions in the distribution system not really because efforts have not been made to ensure that goods which are available are distributed in an equitable manner, but because in the distribution chain we have found a number of people who, in many cases, are defeating the system by not distributing goods in the way the goods were intended to be distributed – goods which have been allocated to them for that purpose.

The Government is aware of these difficulties and, in fact, is even now taking steps to survey the country – the process has begun and is in fact continuing – to establish lists of outlets in all the areas in a manner which would ensure a sufficiently large number of recognised outlets in each area, based on certain geographical considerations and population considerations, to serve these areas. On the basis of those lists, goods of an essential nature will be distributed to the listed outlets in amounts adequate to serve the population and this will be monitored and it is being monitored.

I must say in this context that one of the functions and one of the good purposes that the KSI outlets have been serving is to ensure that essential commodities are fairly and properly distributed throughout the land. It is no accident, Cde. Chairman, that there are about seven or eight KSI outlets spread in Georgetown, Leonora, Vreed-en-Hoop, Grove, Mahaicony, La Bone Intention, Leguan, and Wakenaam – and this is important - the demand for these outlets is increasing. The population is calling for these outlets and this is so because, despite what the member of the Minority Party has just said, it has been demonstrated to the population that the presence of these outlets does two things; first, it guarantees adequate supplies at fair or regulated prices and secondly, it ensures that the population at large, or at least the population in those areas, is protected in large measure from alternative outlets that want to black-market and overcharge people.

Cde. Speaker, another question was raised relating to prices. The question was asked, “Are there examples of commodities in the shops, particularly in the State enterprises, which have been reduced as Government said the prices would be reduced?” Prices have been reduced for shoes, for instance household articles and kitchen articles.

Cde. Speaker, I think that the members of the Minority Party need not feel uncomfortable when their questions are answered in a way they did not expect them to be answered. The truth of the fact is that prices have been reduced, but I don't think anyone in his right senses today can expect process, particularly imported goods, to remain even stable in the present circumstances of the world.

In the Budget Speech it was pointed out the high level of inflation that is taking place throughout the world. The inflation, Cde. Speaker, means that prices are going up and there is no way you can avoid that. That has nothing to do with the importers. It has everything to do with the suppliers and those people are producing milk, those people are producing the split peas that we hanker for, and those people are producing the wheat that we don't grow but we all want to eat.

Cde. Chairman, what the Government has done is to very jealously review requests for price increases wherever these requests are made in circumstances where the imported price has gone up, and when one examines the mark-ups that are put on many of these essential items, one discovers a fact which goes right through the system and that is, the mark-ups have been put at minimal levels; very minimal levels.

One of the complaints that have been made, for instance, when we were importing evaporated milk, was that if a retailer lost one tin of the 48 tins in a case he made a loss. The reason was that the mark-up placed on these items was very, very low and, therefore whenever a request is made to the Ministry for an increase in prices the Ministry examines these with great care and it is only in circumstances where the increase is certainly unavoidable, based purely on the land cost of the article, that the Cabinet would agree to an increase in the price.

I do not think anybody, again in his right sense, can believe that in our circumstances with inflation as it is today, that the Government can think it can subsidise all articles coming into the country. And we do subsidise because I do not feel the members of the Minority Party are aware that in the case of kerosene oil, kerosene oil is subsidised to the extent of \$1.5 million for this year. Now, they skip that point and that is a fact, and that is only one. And so is flour, and so is salt. There are a number of commodities, Cde. Chairman, which the Government does in fact subsidise, but the Government cannot subsidise all articles in the present circumstances of raging inflation.

The point is that there are instances where in fixing prices we have been forced to increase prices only by the quantity by which the price went up for the landed article and we have in fact in a number of cases sought to retain the given money value of the various mark-ups attributable to the wholesaler or retailer. Powdered milk was the most recent example of that where, because prices had to go up because the landed cost went up, the Government increased the price but only to the extent of that landed cost and the money value of the mark-up remained the same.

But the Government does not stop there, Cde. Chairman. In its buying policy the Government ensures that the best prices are given to the consumer. We have negotiated milk at the prices current for a whole year which means whatever are the inflationary experiences internationally, one thing this country will be guaranteed is that the present prices for powdered milk will remain stable throughout this year. So it is not only the level, it is not only the fact that the Government is always hesitant to grant price increases and when it does, it grants the minimum prices that are possible, but also in its procurement policy the Government seeks to ensure stability in those prices in a world where prices are certainly not stable.

Cde. Chairman, the other question that arose related to the subsidy for the conveyance of food. The question is asked whether we think that that is adequate. All I would need to do is to point to the estimates before the member and show that in 1978, \$195,000 approximately was allocated for this purpose. In 1979, \$292,000, in 1980, \$450,000 but only \$434,000 was spent, and in 1981, \$500,000 has been allocated. What is clear there, Cde. Chairman, is that the amount which has been allocated for the purpose has been rising over the last three or four years and this clearly indicates the Government's anxiety to ensure that as far as is practicable within the limits of financial constraints that the people who reside in the hinterland get their goods from the coastland at prices which are in fact subsidised.

On the other hand, the question was raised as to whether we will subsidise commodities coming out of the hinterland in the same way. That is true. We are already doing that but this will not be revealed in these estimates. If one examines the estimates of the Ministry of Agriculture, then it will be found there but the Government's policy is that to avoid inordinate transportation costs, and transportation by air is always a high cost, the people who reside and produce within the hinterland should seek as far as is practicable to be self-sufficient in terms of the food they produced and the food that they consume.

Broadly, that is Government's policy but apart from that the Government nevertheless recognises that there are some goods which must go in and is prepared to subsidise the transportation of those goods. It was also recognised that the areas' output needs to be exported to the coastland and it needs to be done on a subsidised basis in some cases so the Government has placed funds for this purpose, as I said before, in the Ministry of Agriculture. When we come to those Estimates, I hope you will be vigilant enough to observe it.

The Chairman: I will now put the head with the correction:

<u>Page</u>	<u>Column</u>	
186	Establishment 1981	Against item (1), changing of figure 1 to read 2 and total to read 90 instead of 89.

Head 79, Ministry of Trade and Consumer Protection - \$3,950,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 188 – Division XXIX.

DIVISION XXIX – MINISTRY OF TRADE
AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Question proposed that the sum of \$241,000 for Division XXIX, Ministry of Trade and Consumer Protection, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Narbada Persaud: We note that the sum of \$25,000 was voted and perhaps spent last year. This sum has been increased to \$241,000 and the legend reads: “To provide for purchase of miscellaneous equipment.” We note also there is a grant. Can the Minister kindly say what is this miscellaneous equipment?

Cde. Hope: The reason for this estimate, this provision, Cde. Chairman, is to provide for the acquisition of certain types of equipment, film projectors, that will be used in the export promotion unit whose work we are now accelerating and which is to be financed essentially from a grant from the European Economic Community.

The Chairman: I will now put the Division with the correction:

<u>Page</u>	<u>Column</u>	
188	Code No.	Code number to read 112,001 instead of 134,001.

Division XXIX, Ministry of Trade and Consumer Protection - \$241,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 189.

HEAD 80 – MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

Question proposed that the sum of \$100 for Head 80, Manufacturing Industry, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 80, manufacturing Industry - \$100 – agreed to and ordered to sand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 79 to 83.

HEAD 33 – MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND MINING

Question proposed that the sum of \$950,000 for Head 33, Ministry of Energy and Mining, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Ram Karran: I want to speak under the subhead 45, 46, 47 and 48 and to ask a simple question if the hon. Minister responsible for this Head will indicate to this Assembly how many field trips have been made for last year. I ask this question because my information seems to be very accurate, that geologists and other technical staff who ought to be in the field are unable to get in the field because of the unavailability of money for them to go there and because of the absence of materials which they are supposed to use in this scientific work.

The Chairman: Cde. Ram Karran, what are you talking on?

Cde. Ram Karran: Item (45)

The Chairman: That is salary for the Commissioner and it is not going to be here any more. It is a token provision to keep their pensions until they go over to the new Ministry of Mines.

Cde. Ram Karran: These people are going into the Corporation and this is the only opportunity one has to criticize the Government for paying people and having them virtually in a sinecure. If they can go into the field because of the absence of materials and the absence of equipment and the absence of money for them to be paid their allowances and so on, we might as well compensate, pension off these people and tell them: "Look, happy riddance."

Cde. Ram Karran: In fact, if I asked the Minister the number of vacancies existing under this Head, Your Honour would be surprised because the chaps are going away every day not because of political persecution but because they are frustrated, they cannot get to carry out their functions. They were trained as geologists, they were trained as scientists and they have to sit down in the office and write papers. That is not what they are employed for and the Minister ought to respond to that criticism.

1981-03-05

4:00 – 4:10 p.m.

4:00 p.m.

The Chairman: Minister responsible

/No reply from Ministerial Benches./

The Chairman: Well, Cde. Ram Karran, I cannot help with that. I will now put the question which is that the sum of \$950,000 –

Cde. Ram Karran: If the Minister is not here to answer.

The Chairman: I am not coming back. The Minister must be here.

Cde. Ram Karran: To a point of order.

The Chairman: There is no point of order. I will now put the question.

Head 33, Ministry of Energy and Mining - \$950,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 84

DIVISION XX – MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND MINES

Question proposed that the sum of \$11,055,000 for Division XX, Ministry of Energy and Mines, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I would like to know if there is a Minister to answer.

The Chairman: I am not a Minister. You do not expect me to answer.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I want to speak on subhead 2, 8, 16 and 17.

The Chairman: It is 4 o'clock. We will take the suspension.

Sitting suspended at 4 p.m.

On resumption –

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Sir, in order to implement all these projects, in order for all these provision to materialise, we have to have the technical skills, the expertise.

I recall that last year, or the year before, when I raised the whole question of technical personnel with respect to the Ministry of Energy, the Minister pointed out to the Assembly the number of people who were being trained at the time. My first question then is: What is the position with respect to technical personnel to give effect to all the items affected under the subheads I have named. These subheads have to do with the Hydro Project, with metal, with gold and with oil. All of these are involved and I can deal with them together, pose my questions together, for simplicity.

Specifically on hydro, Cde. Chairman, I am sure that you will concede that the consumers of this country, particularly those who cannot afford to pay, wait anxiously for the time when energy can be much cheaper than it is at the moment in this country. We have been hearing about a lot of new ideas. Some years ago, talking about hydro, the Government was concentrating on the big project. The members of the Government were talking about standards. They were not concerned about the little Tiger Hill project but one finds that currently they have somersaulted, they have catapulted and they are going back to little project like Tiger Hill.

The Chairman: I am not allowing that. We are dealing with the Hydro Division. We had a long discourse on that. You yourself made a long contribution. Cde. Jack was at pains when he spoke on the President's Speech. We are dealing with the Hydro Power Division. So much voted in respect of these projects. Let us hear the question.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: The question is: What is being done currently to speed up the process to ensure that people will have to pay less for electricity? That is the first question. Secondly, is it true that the Government has failed to attract capital to implement those big projects that it was talking about before and that now it has gone back to the very suggestions that we have been making in this Assembly to use the smaller project like Tiger Hill? The charge also will be that the Government is behind time. We would have been in a much better position. In exactly what project, I would like to know, this \$2.6 million will be expended? That will be subhead 8.

The Chairman: If you look at the three asterisks in the legend you will see on what projects it will be expended.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I want more details bearing in mind all the contributions you referred to earlier.

Upper Mazaruni Development Authority. Under this subhead I would wish very simply to call

for a public enquiry, for a parliamentary enquiry. I don't think it is any secret that millions of dollars in vehicles and machinery are idle, cannibalisation has been taking place for a number of years and up to today –

The Chairman: Which subhead?

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I am dealing with Upper Mazaruni Development Authority. It is an Authority. There is no detail but we have been putting money into these projects year after year without the Assembly being told how the money is being expended and I think each one of us is sensitive as to public accountability and what I will say here is –

The Chairman: Did you read the legend below? “To provide additional capital to the Authority, for optimization Study and for drilling operations on site – IBRD financing.”

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I am saying that this is so. We are putting money year after year and we have had no concrete statement as to what the result is. We are talking about inputs. What has been the output? What has been the gain? What has been the benefits? We have had no report in the Assembly up to today.

I make the further charge, (a) that we have been putting money into the Authority and the money is not properly spent; (b) machinery required is not properly cared for. As a result I was making the charge of cannibalization and the fact that millions of dollars of machinery have been lying idle, particularly with respect to the project. I hope I am clear on that.

Probably the Minister will want in the same vein to answer what has been the position with the drilling. We hear from the lips of the President that oil is expected in 1981. Will he tell us what stage the drilling has reached so that we can know something about that project? That would be vital to the economy of this country.

I moved to subhead 16 which deals with gold. I'm still of the view, despite that a Commission has been established, that our very rich areas - -

The Chairman: Cde. Persaud, do you see what this is?

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I read it. Grant from Iraq.

The Chairman: For exploration.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Even if we get a grant, the grant comes to this country and the Parliament, I am sure, would like to exercise some measure of authority as to the utilisation of the grant for exploration. We have had various kinds of exploration for our gold, private claims, private people. What I am saying is that up to this day, Government, the State, has not succeeded, despite several contributions, to monitor our six mining districts so that we can maximum output from them.

Secondly, despite the fact that there has been some increase in the production of gold – the price for gold today is higher than it has been at any other time in the History of this country, despite the fact that we are procedures of gold we ought to be able to get a greater amount of production. We are exploring; we are getting more money; we are using personnel. Isn't it true that the amount of royalty is left totally on those who are engaged –

The Chairman: What is the relevance? Royalty has nothing to deal with exploration of this project.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: If we are going to deal exploration, we must be able to look – You see I looked under Geology and Mines and there is no provision.

The Chairman: You cannot use me to get at something else.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: The corporation, as you know sir, has been established under an Act of Parliament.

The Chairman: When that is reached, talk about it.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: What I want to know, is the Cde. Minister satisfied that despite all the exploration – Let me put it this way – that despite the exploration we have succeeded in getting maximum output in our rich minerals? I think that is a fair question. Exploration is going on. Maximum output, because that is not reflected in whatever is collected generally in the economic presentation before the Assembly.

I move to the other subhead, which is 17. I simply pose it this way: Is it true that negotiations are on foot to invite a foreign company to get up a smelter? Is it true that a local lawyer is engaged in negotiations? And if I can proceed further to say that the foreign company is Reynolds. If it is not, which is that company? If I am wrong, will the Minister inform this Assembly what is being done with respect to the smelter?

The Chairman: Is there any Minister who will answer?

Cde. Hope: Cde. Chairman, on the question of training, a number of young people are being trained in a number of fields relevant to geology and mines. There are geologist being trained, for instance; there are mining engineers. These young people are being trained not under any subhead here but under the general scholarship scheme operated by the Public Service Ministry.

4:40 p.m.

With respect to subhead 8, Hydro Power Division, this refers to a number of studies which are being commissioned at the moment for small hydropower sites which have nothing to do with any alternative to the Upper Mazaruni site. These are sites which, once developed, will not and were never intended to be part of the national grid as I understand it. In other words, even when we do have the Upper Mazaruni power scheme, these areas will not in any case have been served and the purpose of this provision is really to carry out studies in certain areas for mini hydropower sites to help us to supplement the main grid. They will not form part of the national grid. That was never the intention and they are not an alternative to the Upper Mazaruni scheme.

With respect to the question raised on the Upper Mazaruni Development Authority, this Authority has no machines and, therefore, I could not trace the relevance of the question.

The Chairman: Let us be fair to Cde. Persaud. The relevance of this question was because he does not know anything. No report has ever come to Parliament so he is at a loss to enquire, to know what he is talking about. So that is the relevance of the question.

Cde. Hope: Well, I am sorry he is at a loss, Cde. Chairman, but certainly this is not the opportunity for him to seek access to information.

The Chairman: He does not know so he has to ask.

Cde. Hope: The other question raised was in relation to gold. There is Mining Commission one of whose objectives is to enable the better monitoring of the gold mining operations and the collection of royalty from these operations in the hinterland. Certainly the exploration referred to here is not at a stage where it can yield any output. The efforts referred to under this subhead are really for the exploration and no production has yet come out of those exploratory efforts.

The question was also asked, is it true that the Government was in consultation or negotiation or something of that kind with a foreign firm with respect to the smelter? I think, Cde. Chairman, it is common knowledge by now that the Government is making efforts to have the smelter as a part of the Upper Mazaruni Hydropower Smelter Scheme established in this country. That smelter would require a large amount of money for investment. It would also require substantial amount of technology which we do not have. It would also require a substantial amount of access to markets which we cannot best arrange and therefore, the Government will be in touch and has been in touch with certain international companies who have the technology to sell and who have access to markets that they will need as part of the smelter operations. These negotiations, I am sure – these contacts I must say: I am not sure it has reached the stage of negotiations – these contacts are in fact being made with a number of companies and it will be up to the Government at the end of the day to select the company with which it could come to some agreement.

The Chairman: I will now put the Division with the corrections:

<u>Page</u>	<u>Column</u>	
84	Division XX	Division XX Ministry of Energy and Mines to read Division XX Ministry of Energy and Mining
	Explanatory Notes	Ditto.
	Total	Deletion of amount of \$250,000 shown against subhead 2.
	Other Finance	Ditto.
	Explanatory Notes	Against subhead 2, changing of legend to read Transferred to Division XII: 6 instead of See note below. Deletion of note referred to.

Division XX, Ministry of Energy and Mines - \$11,055,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 8 and 9.

HEAD 4 – SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,319,100 for Head 4, Supreme Court of Judicature, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subhead 1, (3) – Justice of Appeal; (4) Puisne Judge. I understand, Cde. Chairman, vacancies exist under items (3) and (4). With the Attorney General tell us exactly when they will be filled – both for Justice of Appeal and Puisne Judge?

Item (8) – Commission of Title. There is no Commissioner of Title. I know the facts. I know who were the people holding it from time to time. So when will the vacancy be filled and when will the court be convened?

Item (10) – Registrar; item (11) – Personnel allowance to K. W. Barnwell. I understand that the position of Registrar is not filled and I understand the provision of a sum of money for personal allowance to a K. W, Barnwell, that that person is not in the country and I think it is fair that Parliament be told whether he is coming back ; if he is not coming back, then why should we continue to provide in this Parliament a sum of money so regularly for someone who is not here. I might be wrong, but I think the Assembly ought to be brought up-to date and if the vacancy truly exists? I think it ought to be filled speedily without any delay because when these vacancies are not filled the holders of these offices become frustrated and they are not likely to perform. I am not saying that the current incumbent is not performing. Probably he is the best person for the job, I don't know, but what I do say is that we must fill these vacancies.

Item (14) – Clerk to the Chancellor. Cde. Chairman, I understand that the Chancellor is without a Clerk and this has been so for some time. This is so with respect to the Appeal Court. I recall that I

raised these questions before and the whole question of suitability and qualifications and all of that, but whatever the position is, I think if the vacancy exists as I understand, then it ought to be filled.

Subhead 11 – Expenses of Jurors; Subhead 12 – Expenses of Witnesses. Cde. Chairman, I am not questioning the sums. I have seen that criticism in the past that adequate sums were not provided, as a result, we could not get all the courts functioning, particularly in their criminal jurisdiction, so to speak, but what I want to raise with the Attorney General is the fact that complaints have been coming regularly from those who are called upon to serve as jurors with respect to payment and I think whatever sums are being paid, that sum had been fixed in the forties. And so it is with respect to witnesses and I have been around long enough to know. One of the ridiculous things that I pointed to the last time was that a professional was paid five dollars when he was called upon to give evidence before the court and as far as my information goes this has not been changed. That existed since I was a clerk some 12 to 16 years ago. I think that the time has come when something be done to take corrective measures so that frustrations which have developed will discontinue and we can have the processes of justice flowing a little better than at the current time.

4:50 p.m.

The Attorney General and Minister of Justice (Cde. Dr. Shahabuddeen): Cde. Chairman, as regards subhead 1 item 3 and item 4 which relates respectively to vacancies in the Court of Appeal and the High Court, I would like to say my good friend is correct in stating that vacancies do exist but I think he will concede that the vacancies are not many. There is one vacancy in each court and I am happy to say that steps are in train to fill those vacancies. I think one appointment is imminently expected, but I am sure he would agree with us that we should proceed in this important area with some sense of caution, so as to make sure that the independent bodies which are charged with the responsible function of selecting or finding the right men to fill the right positions have had a full opportunity to sift the availability within the legal profession.

Now, he is also right in his remarks on the position relating to the two posts of Commissioner of Title. I would like to articulate the reasons which he hinted at as to why these posts are vacant. One Commissioner was only December last translated to the High Court and the other one has more recently gone on pre-retirement leave. Here again, I am in a position to say that the responsible and independent authorities which are charged with the function of filling these vacancies have got the matter very much in hand and, in fact, one appointment will be announced very shortly.

Now, as regards item (10), the substantive Registrar is on secondment to the island of Dominica for a year to help there. I think my friend is aware of the fact that that small community was ravished by a hurricane about a year ago. The records in its registry were literally blown to the winds and as part of our commitment to the whole concept of regionalism, which my friend will know is an essential element in both foreign policy projections of Cde. Prime Minister, we have felt obliged at much inconvenience to the administration here, to assent to the release on secondment of this very experienced officer to assist that island in reconstructing its records.

Now, as regards item 14 of subhead 1, perhaps there is a little inaccuracy here in what my friend said. It is true substantive appointment has not been made in the post of Clerk to the Chancellor, but we do have a body in the position. There is a comrade who is in fact acting as Clerk to the Chancellor and giving good service. Of course, those concerned will be looking into the question of making a permanent appointment.

Now, I turn to my friend's remarks with respect to subheads 11 and 12 on page 9 concerning Expenses of Jurors and Witnesses and I would like to testify to the perfected sense of history which my friend displayed when he referred to the time when the fees for jurors and witnesses were last fixed. He is correct in that and we are aware, as he is, of the fact that the level of compensation now specified by law is somewhat below what should be considered economically correct and proper, but, of course, there are two or three points to be taken into account. It is not a field in which, and I am sure my friend will agree, we can ever proceed on the basis that we can compensate a man economically for his service in an area in which the State is entitled to make some little call on his sense of public service, which ought to abide in each citizen who takes his responsibility of citizen seriously. I do not deny that that should not mean that a man should not be paid anything at all; there should be some compensation. I accept that the level of compensation is below what would be reasonable these days and I am glad to say that we shall be looking at this very soon.

The Chairman: I will now put the Head with the correction:

<u>Page</u>	<u>Column</u>	
9	Code No.	Against subhead 1, changing of code number to read 006,0001

Head 4, Supreme Court of Judicature - \$1,319,100 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 10, Head 5, Magistrates.

HEAD 5 – MAGISTRATES

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,639,800 for Head 5, Magistrates, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, subheads 8, 12 and 13. One subhead 8, Rental of Court Rooms, I think the Attorney General will concede that there have been frequent complaints from Magistrates. These complaints have found themselves also in the press, all kinds of complaints, and I hope that action is being taken to provide better facilities in which the Magistrates can function. But I want to draw attention particularly to the fact that the Bogotville Court has not been functioning for some time and people within that area are compelled to go the Wales.

The Chairman: What are you talking about?

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Rental of Court.

The Chairman: Yes. Is Bagotville a rental Court?

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Mr. Chairman, I do not know and if the Court is not rented I would say that there is no Court at Bagotville, when the Government secure a building whether by acquisition or rental to continue the Court at Bagotville.

Then I move to subhead 12, Remuneration of Advisory Committee to Rent Assessors; and I can take subhead 13 with that one. I think I omitted subhead 11, Miscellaneous Removal Expenses, Magistrates Expenses in connection with Licensing Board, etc. No criticism is meant to the Board, I simply want to raise this question for a response from the Attorney General.

As we look at this country today, city and rural areas equally, we see a number of new rum shops and morality is deteriorating in Guyana. I want to raise the question for a positive response and I am sure we will have a good response from the Attorney General this afternoon. If we must not concern ourselves with the society, with people, what kind of recreational facilities we provide them with – I don't want to talk about that – I simply want to say that the answer is not the granting of more licences for rum shops or liquor restaurants which licensing comes under the Liquor Licensing Ordinance. I know there is a question of the licensing of clubs which comes under the Clubs Ordinance but here I think the Attorney General, he himself being a legal practitioner, said that many clubs today are glorified rum shops and we must be concerned.

The Chairman: You will have to put a substantive Motion for that because this is dealing merely with expenses of removal and the magistrates' expenses in connection with this.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I hope you will grant that permission for such a vital issue in the country. You might be concerned with things like this. [Interruption.] I do not want to question any of your Rulings but simply to say this is the highest forum in the country. [Interruption.]

I want to speak on subhead 13. Rice Assessment Tribunal. These Rice Assessment Committees that are headed by magistrates, and this has been the tradition, have not been meeting with the frequency that they ought to, because, generally, magistrates who are rent assessors are usually called upon to preside over criminal and civil matters. As a result, the small rice farmers suffer when they wish to have their claims heard in court. I want to make a positive statement. Countless complaints have come in from rice farmers, particularly on the Corentyne that not one sitting of the Rice Assessment Committee was held in 1980. I am sure this is a matter which must concern the Attorney-General.

5:00 p.m.

Cde. Dr. Shahabuddeen: Cde. Chairman, we have in previous debates in the Committee of Supply discussed the position of Bagotville Court, which is the subject of subhead 8 and my friend's remarks. There is a certain dynamic in events which has led to the present situation concerning this Court. When the Court was first established many, many years ago the road on the West Bank Demerara River was little better, I think, than a rough dirt track road. Due almost entirely to the initiative of this Government, we now have an excellent paved road in the area. This has led to certain consequences.

The intervals between the placing of the Courts when they were positioned originally was in a large measure dictated by the facility with which litigants and witnesses could travel from place to place. Now that the facility with which they can travel has been so very greatly enhanced, now that it has become so very easy for people to move speedily along the West Bank, it has become a little illogical to maintain the original sitting of these Courts. What has happened is that in what is comparatively a small stretch of territory – I think 8 miles are all that is involved between Wales where we have Sisters Village and Vreed-en-Hoop. It is true; my friend is quite right in directing my attention to the fact that one has also to take into account the Canals Polder, but I will have a word on that in a moment.

When one takes into account the events through which we have come and the signal improvement which has been made in that area, it becomes a little illogical to maintain the original spacing of the Courts. If one were to remove Bagotville Court, as has now happened, the utmost that a litigant along the Bank would have to travel would be 4 miles. If he starts from Bagotville going either way, North or South, all he would have to travel is 4 miles to reach a Court.

My friend is right in saying that the position of witnesses and litigants in the Canals would be a little different: they would have to travel a little more. But how much more and how many more difficulties involved when we consider that these improvements to which I refer have been limited, I believe, not to the coastal road only but have been extended inland to the Canals themselves?

I remember a story told by the Prime Minister some time ago about a man who was blind and who lived in the Canal and who used to walk about the old Canal Road with the use of a stick. He would use the stick to take soundings of the road surface and guide his steps accordingly and after they paved the road he came out one day and tried to navigate in the old way on the canal road but was not receiving the same sonar signals from his stick that he used to receive and so he hailed out to a passer-by and asked "Is this the same road?" and the passer-by assured him that it was and he said, "But it can't see it any more." [Laughter.] So that is the kind of evolution through which we have passed under the guidance of this Government as a result of which I submit the Assembly would agree that there is no longer any logic in retaining the Bagotville Court and consequently the Government was right in converting it to a kindergarten school in which capacity it will, we believe, contribute more greatly to the welfare of the citizens in that area. [Applause.]

Subhead 11, Licensing Board, was the subject of Your Honour's ruling which I must hasten to respect notwithstanding the laudable ingenuity of my friend to bring in broad questions of morality into what is really a very narrow subject. So I must pass now to subhead 13 dealing with the functions of the

Rice Assessment Committee.

It is true we have had a setback in the functioning of the Rice Assessment Committee in one part of the country and that is the Corentyne. This has arisen because of a very special and tragic incident which cost us the life of one of our Magistrates. Members of the Assembly will recall that last year a Magistrate in Berbice passed away in rather distressing circumstances. Now, my good friend will appreciate that one just cannot cast around and find a replacement at will. It has become rather difficult these days to recruit people to the legal services of the Government in the broadest sense so the best we could think of was to make use of the chairman of the Rice Assessment Committee in that area who, as my friend knows, is a qualified legal practitioner and to ask him at much personal inconvenience to preside over the ordinary Magistrates Court. That, I accept, has led to a certain withdrawal of his services from the Rice Assessment Committee and steps are in hand to alleviate the situation in keeping with what has been a consistent principle observed ever since Rice Assessment Committees were established. I think they were established in 1956. I don't recall now what Government was in office but ever since Rice Assessment Committees were established in 1956, my friend will bear me out, it was the practice for Chairmen of these committees to function additionally as Magistrates and to help out their other Magistrates in the discharge of ordinary magisterial functions. Of course, we must bear in mind that the Government is conscious of the fact that this additional use of their services must not be allowed to extend to the point where there is any substantial decline in their contributions to what really are their primary responsibilities, namely, to function as Chairmen of the Rice Assessment Committees.

Head 5, Magistrates - \$1,639,800 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

5:10 p.m.

HEAD 9 – OMBUDSMAN

Question proposed that the sum of \$44,300 for Head 9, Ombudsman, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Cde. Persaud.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: A short question, Cde. Chairman. It is more than a year that the office of Ombudsman has been vacant. The Constitution – and here we talk about regard and respect for the Constitution. There can be no doubt that there will be people in this country who want to utilise the services of the Ombudsman and I cannot, and I am sure you, too, understand the delay in filling the vacancy which is a constitutional obligation. If we talk about respect for the Constitution, I will this afternoon say that the greatest disrespect has been shown to this particular article in the current Constitution as well as the earlier Constitution – the 1966 Constitution. Will the Attorney General indicate when the office of Ombudsman will be filled?

The Chairman: Cde. Attorney General.

Cde. Dr. Shahabuddeen: Cde. Chairman, I cannot indicate definitively when the office of Ombudsman will be filled because, as my friend and Members of the Assembly will know, the filling of

the office really lies in the hands of Cde. President who can only act after consultation with Cde. Minority Leader. I hope Cde. President will be having the full benefit of the views of Cde. Minority Leader very shortly and that all the relevant steps will be taken by Cde. President and Cde. Minority Leader, who is involved, to have this position filled.

The position really is that my friend is right in saying that the post has been vacant for some time, but I think he would accept that latterly, what happened was the vacancy subsisted during the terminal period of the last Constitution. We have got a new Constitution now and I entirely agree with him that the steps which have to be taken should be taken to fill the post. I am confident those steps will be taken with all convenient speed.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: One short response, Cde. Chairman. I will be the last in the Assembly to attempt to advise the very capable and competent Attorney General, but he knows what consultation means and even if the Minority Leader does not respond to consultation, the Constitution is clear that the President must proceed to fill the office. That must be no impediment to the filling of the vacancy.

Cde. Dr. Shahabuddeen: Cde. Chairman, I really applaud my friend's temptation to enter what could be a very difficult field. I have not researched it in the depth which would authorise me to make a definitive contribution on the subject to this honourable Assembly but I would leave the matter just where I left it in except, I think, I ought to make it very clear that I am not suggesting that the Minority Leader is in any way in default. I want to make that very clear. I merely say that the appointment machinery and procedures do involve the participation of the Minority Leader.

Head 9, Ombudsman - \$44,300 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 21.

HEAD 12 – PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS

Question proposed that the sum of \$300,200 for Head 12, Public Prosecutions, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 12, Public Prosecutions - \$300,200 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 40 and 41.

HEAD 18 – ATTORNEY GENERAL

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,384,000 for Head 18, Attorney General, stand part of the Estimates

The Chairman: Cde. Persaud.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: One short question, Cde. Chairman. I want to raise it in general with respect to vacancies. I recall raising certain questions specifically on the last occasion and the

Attorney-Generally gave certain assurances. My information is that the place is still somewhat depleted and there exist there a number of vacancies. We talk about legislation which I do not want to refer to which is very important and I am sure if we do not succeed in attracting the personnel we require, and indeed to keep those that are there with experience, it will be a tremendous set-back to the department.

The Chairman: Cde. Attorney-General.

Cde. Dr. Shahabuddeen: I would like to record my deep appreciation for the solicitude shown by my friend, which I am sure is sincere, in the welfare of this little but very important, essentially important, department of the Government. We all know very well unless we have a department of this kind which is ready, able and willing to act, the business of this Assembly for one, will itself come to a standstill. It is as simple as that, so I do hope that when the time comes for us to request an enhancement of current salary levels in the department concerned we will have the fulsome and active support of my friend. Beyond that I do not think I can usefully contribute.

Head 18, Attorney General - \$1,384,300 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 42.

HEAD 19 – OFFICIAL RECEIVER

Question proposed that the sum of \$153,000 for Head 19, Official Receiver, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 19, Official Receiver - \$153,300 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 43.

HEAD 20 – DEEDS REGISTRY

Question proposed that the sum of \$369,800 for Head 20, Deeds Registry, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 20, Deeds Registry - \$369,800 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 37 and 38.

HEAD 17 – MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Question proposed that the sum of \$16,500,000 for Head 17, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 17, Ministry of Foreign Affairs - \$16,500,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 39.

DIVISION IX – MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,200,000 for Division IX, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stand part of the Estimates.

Division IX, Ministry of Foreign Affairs - \$1,200,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Cde. Vice-President for Parliamentary Affairs, I am proceeding with the head dealing with Agriculture. The hours of Sitting, as you know, are until 6:30 p.m. and from 8 to 10 p.m. When I am finished with Agriculture I am going on to Home Affairs and Information.

Pages 55 and 56.

HEAD 27 – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,642,800 for Head 27, Ministry of Agriculture, stand part of the Estimates.

5:20 p.m.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Under the heading which involves the Planning Department, I wish to say that we all recognise from time to time that this is an important department. I would like the Minister to tell us whether all these offices are filled.

Minister of Agriculture (Cde. Tyndall): Cde. Chairman, the Planning Department reflects a re-organisation of the Ministry, and staff have been transferred from what had been the Resources Development and Planning Section of the Ministry. All the posts have not been filled. The Chief Agricultural Planner is in an acting capacity and the three posts of Agricultural Economist are to be filled.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I deliberately did not ask any question on the other page because Cde. Dalchand will deal with subheads 2 and 3. [Interruption.]

The Chairman: I will now put the Head with the correction:

<u>Page</u>	<u>Column</u>	
55	Establishment 1981	Against item (1), changing of figure 1 to read 5 and total to read 136 instead of 132.
	Explanatory Notes	Against item (1), insertion of a legend to read (1) Four additional offices created.

Head 27, Ministry of Agriculture - \$2,642,800 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 57 to 62.

HEAD 28 – AGRICULTURE

Question proposed that the sum of \$8,821,900 for Head 28, Agriculture, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Can I take it that Cde. Dalchand will not be permitted to speak?
/Pause./

Cde. Chairman, dealing first with page 57, under Crop Science, I would like to pose a similar question, whether all these offices or these posts have been filled. That question is premised on the experience that if our farmers are to function at their optimum, they require the help and aid of all the services within the Ministry of Agriculture and my information is that these services are not forthcoming. One of the reasons has been given as the shortage of technically qualified personnel.

I want to simply rephrase that question and urge the importance of ensuring that we do not allow this Ministry to be depleted any further so that when we come to items like Extension and Education, we will see the need to have a new approach where the farmers can be involved in sharing their practical experience with the men who have been trained technically. Our information is that a great number of them have been sticking to theory and they have not been able to answer questions that farmers have been posing to them from time to time. There is the need for technically qualified men but because people, who have been drawn from the Guyana School of Agriculture, were sometimes without the total exposure in practical agriculture, in many areas they have been of more disservice than real service to the community and this, undoubtedly, sir, has been an impediment to farmers producing as they would like to.

If I am to deal on the matter of soils, we still have a situation where proper use is not made of the various feasibility reports because the technical men are not feeding the farmers with the kind of information that they want so that they can utilise their land using the crops that are best suited. I can cite Cane Grove as an example where certain crops were planted on toxic soil, and there are other areas in the country, because the kind of information that they require has not been forthcoming to them. This being so, Cde. Chairman, I think we need to look at these Departments, at these officers, with the sole objective that we can get them to play their full role of the benefit of the farmers in the country.

(Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud continues)

If I am to go to the last pages, there are a number of provisions like Development of Bee-Keeping, which is subhead 11. This is something that we should be able to produce not only for home consumption but, indeed, for exportation. I am sure the members of the Government will concede that right now, speaking in this Assembly, we have a shortage of honey. That is one point, but the second point is: What machinery the Ministry of Agriculture has in operation to ascertain quality of production. I think that question is simple enough for the Minister to follow, bearing in mind the kind of adulteration that takes place in the process of honey production. He probably might wish to tell us the number of apiaries existing in the various parts of the country and what kind of input is being given to those apiaries by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Looking at this Head, there has been complete absence of diversification. Traditionally we have been sticking to rice, sugar and coconuts.

The Chairman: Under what subhead are you speaking? You have just finished with bee-keeping.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: All these subheads will deal with inter-cropping and diversification, and inter-cropping and diversification can only become realities when the technical facilities and advice are available to the farmers. Some of the experienced farmers, undoubtedly, can be involved in inter-cropping but the greater number might not be able because out of season they could have other crops coming in as cash crops.

The Chairman: How has that to do with the development of Bee-Keeping?

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I moved from Bee-Keeping.

The Chairman: What have you gone to now?

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I was dealing with other subheads.

The Chairman: The only other subhead you told me is 30.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subhead 12, Agricultural Extension Services will give me tremendous scope to contribute, Cde. Chairman.

The Chairman: I had it on the other page.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I have gone to page 61. That subhead is a fantastic subhead because what I am saying is with experience: contrary to all the utterances, the services that are vital to improve the agricultural sector are not available and I can point a more specific question to the Minister: To what extent has there been inter-cropping? And if so, in what areas? And what has been the benefit and output of those inter-croppings?

We know that we have diverted recently to peas but the cost of production undoubtedly has been a consideration and my information is that the peas produced on the sugar estates are being sold below cost of production. I would be an advocate for the consumer but what I do say is this: If the correct technology is used, peas can be produced much cheaper as in so many other areas of agriculture.

The Extension Services – whether you look at Mon Repos or you look at Timehri, whether you deal with vegetables or you deal with other crops, these services have been run down. The provision of seeds has been inadequate. Not only the technical facilities are not there and the technical input is not there to provide the material, but whatever is there is not extended to the areas that can really function efficiently and effectively in this country. I would pose the question: with the exception of those known extension stations, what new extension stations and facilities were brought into operation within recent years. The answer, Cde. Chairman, would be: None.

So not only honey will suffer a setback but, generally, other areas of agriculture. Generally the experience in this country has been that at some times you get many cabbages and on other occasions you cannot get; then you have an escalation in prices. This is also applicable to other crops. It is because the advice and planning are undoubtedly absent.

I had wanted to make the contribution that G.M.C. could have been the link with these other facilities within the agricultural sector so that the storage facilities would have been there to preserve the produce when the supply was plentiful and I think these linkages are absent in the agricultural sector.

Subhead 23, Grant to Guyana School of Agriculture Corporation. If I could take subhead 21 first – Fishing Industry Aid. There is another problem here and I do not think that the members of the Government would deny that many of the private fishermen with their fishing boats have been selling their fish to private vendors. We have to ask the question: why? They are without equipment. They ought to be given greater concessions. I know as a fact that the Co-operative Society has been making some representation for the fishermen. They have been complaining about the prices offered to them for their fish. Hence, when they come in with their catch, they divert from the Government buying places into the hands and markets of the vendors.

If we utilise our resources in fish, in sea-food, we would not only have constantly an adequate supply of fish on the market – and cheap fish – but we would be able to move one step further in providing canning facilities so that we could preserve them and people such as the miners, could take full advantage of the resource and facilities we have in the country.

We are not opposed to a policy aimed at helping the farmers and fishermen. Once you have the alternative, once you have the substitute, by all means you can come down heavily on importation.

The Chairman: Cde. Persaud, now let us deal with the question Fishing.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I am dealing –

The Chairman: Ask something about a reduction in the subsidy to the Fishing Industry.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Will the members of the Government not concede that from the Report that is available they have fallen far below expectations in production.

Secondly, is it not a fact that we can offer the consumers of this country fish at a cheaper price?

Thirdly, that the private fishermen are not being treated justly? They are not being encouraged and as a result the Government is not succeeding in getting their catch and they go to the private vendors.

Those are obviously the facts and if you were to traverse these places you will see what I am saying is true.

I move to subhead 23, Grant to Guyana School of Agriculture Corporation. I simply want to make this point. I have spoken at length before on these subheads. There are a number of people who would like to get into the Guyana School Agriculture but for some reason or the other when they apply they are not being taken. I do not know why. People complain they point to their interest, they point to their qualifications. What I think ought to be given deep thought is this: That the Government should work out a programme where children of farmers in various parts of the country can be drawn on an organized basis for entry into the Guyana School of Agriculture once they have the requirements. This is not happening. You have a situation where people who are total strangers to the agricultural sector and to agriculture by itself probably are drawn in greater number and, as a result, they go back only with theory and without practice and practical experiences.

Will the Minister say if at any stage in the Government selection of people for entry into the Guyana School of Agriculture this policy was pursued where you can have people drawn on a geographical basis with experience? I am not saying other people should not be brought in but if you do it that way it would mean that people living in the areas will be able to go back and serve the area in which they have experience both from the practical stand-point and the general geographical layout of the area.

5:40 p.m.

Cde. Belgrave: Subhead 30 – National Cane Farming Committee. Under this subhead there is a sum of \$20,000 allotted to the National Cane Farming Committee. The question posed to the Minister is if the Minister is satisfied with the expenditure of these sums of money, because I learnt also that there is a special grant of \$500,000 from another fund. When last this Committee was audited? If it is that there has not been an audit report upon this Committee, will the Minister say how early such an audit will be carried out. My information is that there has been a lot of mis-spending and abuse in expenditure of this nature. Will the Minister say if the Committee has not been audited.

The Chairman: How will they audit the Committee? You mean the accounts of the Committee.

Cde. Belgrave: The accounts of the Committee.

The Chairman: Well, say what you mean.

Cde. Belgrave: The Minister understands me, only you do not.

The Chairman: Yes, because I am stupid and you are sensible, Cde. Minister.

Cde. Tyndall: Cde. Chairman, I have been given such a long series of questions by my good friends on the opposite side that I shall try not to spend the rest of this session in answering them. First of all, on the question of vacancies, I am quite sure that my good friends of the Minority Party have appreciated the fact that the agricultural sector has been expanding at an unprecedented rate in keeping with the programmes of development introduced by this Government. It should, therefore, not be surprising that there may be some lag between the acquisition of certain skills or personnel for the staffing of the programmes and the rate of development of the programmes and this is in no way peculiar to Guyana. It is a characteristic feature of development.

With respect to the vacancies, I wish to assure him that the position is not really as desperate as he seems to imply in his questions. In fact, the position is very heartening. Most of the positions under the various heads have been filled. These are in respect of Crop Science: for instance, items (14) and (15) Microbiologist and Senior Agricultural Engineer have to be filled; items (16) and (22) Agricultural Engineer and Office Manager, Central Agricultural Station, one vacancy each. And in respect of items (42) and (43), Curator, Botanic Gardens and Bee Officer, the vacancies there are to be filled. Item (33), Poultry Officer, under “Veterinary and Livestock Science” is vacant and we hope that that will be filled during the course of the year. I wish to assure my good friends of the Minority Party that all efforts are being made by this Government, efforts including training of personnel both at the Guyana School of Agriculture as well as overseas, taking advantage of fellowships and scholarships, and also in keeping with the plans under the provisions made by this Government for training overseas.

With respect to the question of soil capability – I do not think that those are the exact words, but I think that my friend was referring to this question when he spoke of making use of feasibility studies in order to improve cropping patterns, it is not a question of feasibility studies, it is a question of

determining accurately the soil capability in order to plan and to advise farmers as to what are the most desirable or effective cropping patterns for this area and, indeed, the Soil Science Department of the Ministry has a very big programme going in this area.

We have a testing capability of 360 soil samples per day and we hope to increase this capability to over 600 per day because to determine cropping patterns, one has to deal with the varieties of soil in each area and they may vary significantly within a region or within a distance of a few square miles.

Soil capability tests are being conducted in respect of land all over the country from the Essequibo right on to the Black Bush and the Corentyne areas. In fact, in respect of the Corentyne, there is a special project the Black Bush Front Lands Scheme under which soil capability tests are being carried out in order to determine cropping patterns.

With respect to the production of honey, provision has been made and arrangements have been made for the procurement of 1,000 mated queens in order not only to restock those hives which have been destroyed by Africanised bees, but also to give a boost to the industry. As a result of these measures, it is expected that the production of honey will increase and not only will we be able to restore former levels, but we will be able to increase production significantly. The objective is not only to satisfy local needs but also to expand exports.

The quality of honey varies in accordance with the season. I think this should be obvious to someone who has such a deep interest in agriculture. On the question of quality control, the best approach is education and the Ministry of Agriculture, through its extension services, is providing such technical assistance to farmers both in the rehabilitation programme as well as for developmental purposes. Of course, one hopes that farmers will respond by producing not only more, but by adhering to quality standards and one hopes that they will realise that only by maintaining a high quality product will we be able to penetrate the Caribbean Market. The Ministry will certainly endeavour through effective supervision to ensure that quality standards are maintained.

I now turn to the concern shown over our agricultural diversification programme. Agricultural diversification is one of the fundamental policies of the agricultural sector of this Government, and one can see it in the actions being taken by the Government. Diversification can mean two things. It can mean the introduction of crops not already being grown. It can also mean the expansion of crops which are grown only in a small way. I did mention the project for the expansion of coffee production. In fact, shortly, within two weeks, a consultant will be coming under the auspices of the Flood and Agriculture Organisation to advise on a programme for the expansion of coffee production which would include better husbandry practices, better agronomic practices. It would include advice on disease control measures, the elimination of termites, and the means of storing to minimise losses. The objective is not only to satisfy local needs but also to develop an export capability because our special coffee could be used in blending. We have to examine our soil capability with the possibility of introducing new varieties other than the Liberica which we are now growing, which produces a very excellent coffee from the roasted beans. I commend this to my friends opposite, to support the local industry, I recommend the use of our local ground coffee. Of course, we would like to expand to the processing stage.

We also have a programme for increasing our milk production. We have three pilot projects which are being executed and these will give us the knowledge and experience to provide the necessary inputs, the technical inputs and the animal husbandry inputs, in order to develop this industry.

We are also introducing action to expand production in other areas, poultry, legumes. I did mention mung and urid and I hope my good friends will pioneer the use of mung and urid by using those products. The Ministry can offer them seeds if individually they would like to produce these products in their backyards.

Cde. Chairman, in agriculture there are seasonal shortages of so many things.

Concerning the Guyana School of Agriculture Corporation, Cde. Chairman, first of all, with respect to the admission of candidates, the Government does not admit candidates. The Guyana School of Agriculture is a corporation, it has its own standards geared at ensuring what it acquires the students who can benefit from the programme, so that our resources will not be wasted in our efforts to produce more people to service the agriculture sector. I am glad to hear, and we do know that many times the number of people who can be admitted to the school - -

The Chairman: Cde. Tyndall, I understand that a note has been passed to you and a reply is being awaited on that note. Can you joust address your mind to it? Sorry to interrupt you.

Cde. Tyndall: Cde. Chairman, one of the questions that was asked concerns the extension services. I wish to assure the member that this Government has a programme for increasing the extension capability of the Ministry of Agriculture, and under this programme five extension and seven marketing centres are going to be established. I wish to assure him also that the programmes in research as well as education are designed to increase to extension capabilities of the Government.

The Chairman: You had questions dealing with fishing industry aid, Grant to the Guyana School

of Agriculture, and the National Cane Farming Committee in relation to the auditing of their accounts.

Cde. Tyndall: Cde. Chairman, with respect to the grant to the Guyana School of Agriculture, the Government contributes only a part of the full expenditure of the institution. The institution itself through its production policy finances about 65 per cent of its operations. With respect to the grant to the cane farmers, monies are made available under the Sugar Industry Rehabilitation Fund in order to assist in the provision of certain services such as access roads and dams and bridges.

The Chairman: All he is simply asking is whether the accounts are being audited.

Cde. Tyndall: Cde. Chairman, the accounts are being audited by the Auditor General and will be submitted shortly.

Head 28, Agriculture - \$8,821,900 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 63 to 65.

HEAD 29 – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

LANDS AND SURVEYS

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,804,200 for Head 29, Ministry of Agriculture – Lands and Surveys, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: This is dealing with Emoluments. This is the salary of the Superintendent of Surveys. Either the post is filled or it is not filled or he is not performing his functions or something and there is no necessity for it.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I understand there is a move to integrate two ministries and I was asking a simple question if that was so, so that as a member of the Assembly I would bet an opportunity to assess the whole question of land surveys.

I now move to page 65. The first question I want to ask is on subhead 9, Revenue Protection. Will the Minister explain what is the purpose of this vote, how the Government hopes to protect revenue in this Ministry? I could not understand the vote, what is the purpose. It is a small vote but still the Assembly would need the explanation.

Subhead 10, Essequibo Estates. Nearly all of them have been completely run down and are totally neglected. I would invite the Minister, seeing that he is one of the new Ministers of Agriculture, to visit these places so that he can have a first-hand knowledge of them for if I am to refer to each one and deal with details he would be at sea. So I want to invite him to visit them, but those closer to him I would tell him about them.

The same position, which is much nearer, is Vergenoegen Land Development Scheme, subhead 12, but when you look at the provision of \$40,000, that is an insult by itself. When one is aware of what has to be done in the Vergenoegen area. It shows that with the provision of \$40,000 no real development will take place at Vergenoegen. If so, let the Minister tell me how he hopes to do it. His predecessor has failed.

Subhead 15, Garden of Eden Land Development Scheme. I know that scheme very well and it is a fact today, when we are trying to encourage farmers to go on the land, that many of those who are there and who have been there are trying to come out. If you look at the scheme you will see complete neglect at Garden of Eden and it is not performing as it did earlier. We have earlier drawn attention to schemes like Mara, which the Government has allowed to go to ruin.

I want to take subhead 17, Cane Grove La Bonne Mere Land Development Scheme. I wonder how many members of this Assembly ever made a visit to Cane Grove. We have alluded earlier to a private estate on the East Coast that we know as Hope. Cane Grove, which is a Government estate, is a disgrace. We have all come out severely against logies on the sugar estates but worse than logies exist here. Water supply is absent and people are compelled – I have gone there on umpteen occasions – to use polluted water from a nearby trench both to cook and to wash clothing. By their very action, because there is no other water supply, they themselves add to the pollution but they cannot do better. There is no road. When rain falls you cannot enter the scheme. I recall very vividly – and Cde. Chairman, you have some information because I have raised it in this Assembly on umpteen occasions – when a former Minister, Mr. Robert Jordan, visited the area at a time when I was there myself and it was under water – and do not let us fool ourselves: the work that is going on at M.M.A. will not help Cane Grove. You have had pumping equipment there. I have spoken about this some time ago, those people still continue to suffer from flooding which, undoubtedly, is impeding them from a decent living.

I really want to be a strong advocate for the people at Cane Grove. This is one scheme where people have been sued on occasion and I had cause to make representation to the then Minister asking him to waive the rentals because of their sufferings and this is one of the areas where people were compelled to farm on toxic soil. As a result they have lost their own input, their own capital and they obviously could not continue any longer in this scheme. I think the time has come for this Assembly to take heed and I went to ask the Government to come with a Supplementary Estimate to carry out a total overhauling of the Cane Grove Estate. I hope I have said enough to attract the attention of the Minister and the Assembly to Cane Grove.

Subhead 19, Wauna Land Development Scheme. What has happened to the palm oil project? At one time at every Sitting of Parliament we heard about palm oil. There are a lot of inadequacies there. Where is the equipment for them to carry out their work? You have had a total report from those who are involved. Search in your Ministry and you will find it. It will tell you what has to be done. My information is that no positive action has been taken up to now. The Minister should look at that Report and read it. I would like the Minister to tell us what is happening at Wauna.

Subhead 22, Resumption of State Lands. What was passing through my mind was whether we still have a situation in this country as we had when the land was known as “Crown Land” and people were paying paltry pepper-corn rentals of a shilling or twenty-five cents, as we know it now, per acre and they were allowed to sublet to others without being on the land. There is need to carry out an investigation to see whether this situation still exists. I drew the attention of the Assembly to this before and there is no doubt that there still exists unscrupulous people who will be paying paltry sums to the Government coffers and will be exploiting the real tillers who undoubtedly are tilling the soil and producing on the land. What acreages of State land and in what areas has Government resumed? I think it is a vital question and it is time that the Assembly takes cognizance of it.

I move now to subhead 23, Investigation of application for Lands. This is a sore question. We have at least one million acres of arable land in this country. There is no need at the moment for the Government to repossess anybody's land to allocated land to those who have applied to the Ministry of Agriculture. Some time ago we were told that there was a Committee that was dealing with land allocation. Who are the members of the Committee? When last did the Committee meet and how many new acres of land have been allocated, where and to whom? Those are the obvious questions. There could be no doubt that we have land facilities to make a positive assault on the growing unemployment in this country, but the Government has not pursued, nor is the Government at the current time pursuing any programme or policy for allocation of land.

6:10 p.m.

Subhead 23 – Investigation of application for Lands: When you are talking about repossessing lands, you have lands that are idle, State lands. You do not have to take them away from anybody. You just have to provide the work, create the areas, do the drainage and irrigation work, prepare the land, examine your voluminous library of feasibility studies and place farmers to produce on those lands the crops that are best suited for them. Garden of Eden, a P.P.P. scheme; Mara, P.P.P. scheme; Black Bush, P.P.P. scheme. Where is your new scheme? And even those that were serviced and those which the P.P.P. initiated have been allowed to run down by this Government.

The Chairman: How is that relevant?

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Sir, we are very much in advance of time. Agriculture is listed for Monday. We are doing it on Thursday.

The Chairman: I am not talking about time. How is it relevant?

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: It is relevant because if I am to allude with some degree of persuasion to what we have and what we can do with what we have there will be obvious need for a contribution to effectively bring home to the mind of the new Ministers what they can do to improve the situation in agriculture. That is what I would wish to say in answer to your query.

The Chairman: We are dealing with subhead 23.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: That is what I am dealing with.

The Chairman: Yes, but half of what you said in my opinion is irrelevant.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Well, that is your ruling. I don't think so. I would like the Minister on that subhead to tell us what is being done with respect to the allocation of new lands, the resumption of State lands from the hands of those who, undoubtedly, have been exploiting, if this still continues, the poor farmers of this country.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister.

Cde. Tyndall: Cde. Chairman, with respect to the first question, that is, the integration of Surveys with Works, I am in a position to say that this matter is under review to see what is really the most effective arrangement. No decision has yet been taken. With respect to revenue security, this is a provision to protect revenues collected particularly in the riverian areas. It is a provision for security purposes.

In so far as the Essequibo Estates are concerned, with the introduction of the new Regional Councils, some of the responsibility for these estates has been passed to the Regional Councils. In Essequibo, for instance, the Essequibo Estates, some of the responsibility has been transferred to the Region in which they are situated.

With respect to Vergenoegen, this is a drainage and irrigation district and the provision here reflects Government's contribution to what the Drainage and Irrigation Board is doing for that estate. In so far as Cane Grove is concerned, Cane Grove, as we know, had one steam pump. That pump has within recent times been replaced by three pumps capable of draining 150 cubic feet per second and in fact Cane Grove has the best drainage capability. There is a problem with the internal drainage and there is a plan to remedy this situation.

In so far as Wauna is concerned, Wauna is now the responsibility of Guysuco and the contribution here reflects Government contribution to this programme.

In so far as the resumption of State lands is concerned we have an active programme for the resumption of lands not beneficially occupied. In fact, in the land development schemes we have repossessed over 1,000 acres of land. In so far as the treatment of applications is concerned, Government has set up Land Selection Committees and these committees comprise of local farmers, people who know the applicants, and people who can advise on these decisions, and Government acts on the basis of these decisions. We do admit that the procedures under the existing legislation are some what slow, and with a view to expediting action, Government has established a Committee which will look into the question of speedy repossession of land. The committee's work has not yet been completed.

Head 29, Lands and Surveys - \$2,804,200 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 66 to 68.

HEAD 30 – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

HYDRAULICS

Question proposed that the sum of \$4,852,400 for Head 30, Ministry of Agriculture – Hydraulics, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Cde. Persaud.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: One short question, sir. Will the Minister identify the vacancies that exist in this Ministry? This is a Ministry that has suffered greatly over the years. A number of experienced people are no longer there. There might be a few.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister, the question is if you could identify the vacancies.

Cde. Tyndall: May I, with your permission, Cde. Chairman, ask the Minister responsible for Works and Hydraulics to answer this question?

The Chairman: Cde. Van Sluytman.

The Minister, Drainage and Irrigation, in the Ministry of Agriculture (Cde. Van Sluytman): Cde. Chairman, vacancies exist in the engineering field and in the clerical field – engineers and senior clerks.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, I am merely concerned about the technical personnel, the engineers, who are so vital to make drainage and irrigation a success because my information is that we have a number of vacancies.

The Chairman: You want to know how many vacancies and when they will be filled?

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Yes.

The Chairman: Yes, Cde. Van Sluytman, we would like to know how many vacancies there are, if you know, and when there is the likelihood of their being filled.

Cde. Van Sluytman: Engineers, Cde. Chairman, there are eight vacancies. I cannot give an assurance when they will be filled because engineers are not readily available in Guyana. Guyana is not the only place having a shortage in the field of engineers. All the developing countries have that experience.

Head 30, Ministry of Agriculture – Hydraulics - \$4,852,400 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

DIVISION XII – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

Question proposed that the sum of \$43,618,000 for Division XII, Ministry of Agriculture, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Cde. Persaud.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subhead 16 – Purchase and Installation of Pumps. Cde. Chairman, I wonder if the Minister will tell us where and when these pumps will be installed. I want to tell him that the areas where these pumps were supposed to be installed were identified a long time ago in the 1966 – 1972 Development Programme. I alluded to them last year. Let him tell us now, when and where they will be set up.

Subhead 20 – Sea and River Defence (Essequibo). I want to talk about Essequibo. I won't cite some areas, but he knows that we had problems on the Essequibo because the sea defence was not properly monitored and I am sure his very competent officer will advise him, specifically on the East Coast. Problems are grave there at the moment in many areas.

The Chairman: I am not with you. We have completed subhead 16. What are you speaking on now?

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subheads 20 and 21.

The Chairman: There is nothing against subhead 21. Subhead 20

6:20 p.m.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subhead 20, Sea and River Defence (Essequibo). I was drawing attention to that and at the same time to the East Coast.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister.

Cde. Van Sluytman: As regards the pumps, we have already acquired them, some 42 electrical pumps. Our contribution to the MMA/ADA project is in the form of supplying ten pumps. In the Black Bush Polder, we are to hand over another eight or ten pumps.

As we move along the coastland, there are other areas that need drainage. We have the pumps but they have to be installed.

Subhead 20, Essequibo sea defence, I think Cde. Persaud wants to know what we are doing as regards Essequibo sea defences. In the La Belle Alliance area we are supposed to lay 240 feet of boulder slope. In the Hampton Court area, we propose to do boulder slope and “ric-rac” work, 1,500 feet. In the Walton Hall area, boulder slope of 100 feet and in the Perth area, 100 feet of boulder slope. Dartmouth area, 1,711 feet of permanent wall and in the Westbury area, 855 feet of “ric-rac” boulder slope. That is what we propose to do on Essequibo Sea Defences in 1981.

The Chairman: I will now put the Division with the corrections:

<u>Page</u>	<u>Column</u>	
69	Total	Against subhead 16, changing of amount of \$1,660,000 to read \$500,000.

Division XII, Ministry of Agriculture - \$43,618,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 70.

DIVISION XII:1 – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
IDB PROJECTS
ABARY RIVER WATER CONTROL PROJECT (M.M.A.)

Question proposed that the sum of \$55,000,000 for Division XII:1, Ministry of Agriculture – IDB Projects – Abary River Water Control Project (M.M.A.) stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: One short question on the M.M.A., Cde. Chairman. I observe that both Phase One and Phase Two of the scheme have been lined together and I am aware that there is a special authority that has been set up.

Under subhead 1, Civil Works, I would like the Minister to tell us when exactly the project will be completed; what stage it is at the moment; what area it has reached and what area is going to benefit from the M.M.A. scheme. I am excluding Mahaica and possibly Mahaicony, and could the Minister

probably in the same breath tell us what acreages within the scheme are under active cultivation, what kind of co-ordination is taking place with the farmers so that they can be reassured, bearing in mind that on one occasion they were thrown into complete frustration, so that they can prepare themselves for any benefits that is to come out of the scheme itself.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister.

Cde. Van Sluytman: Cde. Chairman, the acreage in the old areas which we expect to benefit from the M.M.A. is something in the region of 115,000 acres, but because of this drainage and irrigation project, another 23,000 acres will benefit. The project will stretch from the Abary to the Berbice River. The scheme will be completed in June 1983. The member had asked what the \$38 million is for; that is for the Contractor.

The Chairman: I will now put the Division with the correction:

<u>Page</u>	<u>Column</u>	
70	Total	Against subhead 1, changing of amount of \$38,899,000 to read \$30,999,000.
	Other Finance	Against subhead 1, changing of amount of \$14,431,000 to read \$14,430,000.
	1980 Revised Estimates to 1978 Actual	Deletion of all figures.

Division XX:1, Ministry of Agriculture – IDB Projects. Abary River Water Control Project (M.M.A.) - \$55,000,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 72.

DIVISION XII:3 – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

SECOND SEA DEFENCE PROJECT

Question proposed that the sum of \$130,000 for Division XII:3, Ministry of Agriculture – Second Sea Defence Project – stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, one short question under subhead 3, Consultant Services. Are the consultants envisaged here local or foreign?

Cde. Van Sluytman: Local Consultants.

Division XII:3, Ministry of Agriculture – Second Sea Defence Project - \$130,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 73.

DIVISION XII:4 – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTUREIBRD PROJECTSTAPAKUMA IRRIGATION PROJECT

Question proposed that the sum of \$14,400,000 for Division XII:4, Ministry of Agriculture – IBRD Projects – Tapakuma Irrigation Project, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subheads 1 and 2. Cde. Chairman, I can pose the very question because I looked at that scheme not very long ago and what I observed is that a good deal of effort is being put into the construction of buildings. I am not saying that people who work on the scheme ought not to be housed but the speed one would have expected the scheme to proceed with is not evident. It is not a new scheme as I said. The Minister would tell us what staged it has reached and when he expects it to be completed.

Subhead 3, Equipment, Materials and Vehicles. This sum is substantial, \$3.6 million. My information is that equipment, machinery and vehicles generally, are not under proper control and security, and there have been constant complaints, not only in this scheme, but also in other schemes, of theft and misuses. What assurance can the Minister give this Assembly that this is not so at the moment and this will not happen with the sum provided in this Estimates.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister.

Cde. Van Sluytman: Subhead 1, Civil Works. Cde. Persaud asked what percentage of the scheme is completed. At the moment, 88 per cent is complete. The completion date fixed for that scheme is May of this year. It is our opinion anyhow, that when that date arrives, only about 89, perhaps 90 per cent of the work will be completed.

6:30 p.m.

There is, anyhow, a one year maintenance period during which the contractors must maintain the scheme. During the period of one year it is hoped that the remaining 10 per cent will be completed.

Subhead 3, Equipment, Materials and Vehicles. I have never heard about any abuse of our vehicles at the Tapakuma Irrigation Project. I imagine that they have been using the vehicles as any other Ministry has been doing in this country. I will certainly investigate to find out whether there has been any abuse of the vehicles at the Tapakuma Irrigation Project.

Division XII:4, Ministry of Agriculture, IBRD Projects, Tapakuma Irrigation Project - \$14,400,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 74.

DIVISION XII:5 – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
TAPACUMA IRRIGATION PROJECT

Question proposed that the sum of \$14,300,000 for Division XII:5, Ministry of Agriculture, Tapacuma Irrigation Project, stand part of the Estimates.

Division XII:5, Ministry of Agriculture, Tapacuma Irrigation Project - \$14,300,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 75.

HEAD 31 – FORESTRY

Question proposed that the sum of \$100 for Head 31, Forestry, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 31, Forestry - \$100 – agreed to and ordered to stand art of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 76.

DIVISION XII:6 – MINISTRY OF FORESTRY

Question proposed that the sum of \$250,000 for Division XII:6, Ministry of Forestry, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: I will now put the Division with the correction.

<u>Page</u> 76	<u>Column</u> Subhead No.	Insertion of 1 appropriately.
	Code No.	Code number to read 139,001 instead of 1. Total Division XX to read Total Division XII:6

Division XII: 6, Ministry of Forestry - \$250,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 77.

HEAD 32 – MINISTRY OF FISHERIES

Question proposed that the sum of \$100 for head 32, Ministry of Fisheries, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 32, Ministries of fisheries - \$100 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page. 78.

DIVISION XIX – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTUREFISHING

Question proposed that the sum of \$230,000 for Division XIX, Ministry of Agriculture, Fishing, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: I will now put the Division with the corrections:

<u>Page</u>	<u>Column</u>	
78	Code No.	Against subhead 1, 2, and 3, insertion of code numbers 136,001; 136,002 and 136,003, respectively
		Division XIX Division XIX Ministry of Agriculture, Fishing to read Division XIX Ministry of Fisheries.
	Explanatory Notes	Ditto

Division XIX, Ministry of Agriculture, Fishing - \$230,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Comrades, on the resumption I propose to do Home Affairs and if that is completed, Information. Will the Vice-President for Parliamentary Affairs ensure that the relevant Ministers are here or someone to answer when the questions are asked.

Assembly resumed.

Sitting suspended at 6:30 p.m.

On resumption –

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: We will now deal with the Ministry of Home Affairs, page 45 and 46, Head 21.

HEAD 21 – MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,026,500 for Head 21, Ministry of Home Affairs stand part of the Estimates.

Head 21, Ministry of Home Affairs - \$2,026,500 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 47 and 48.

HEAD 22 – POLICE

Question proposed that the sum of \$29,610,800 for Head 22, Police, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Collymore: I rise to speak in relation to subhead 1 including items (1) to (28) on page 47.

The Chairman: Just a minute. Page 47.

Cde. Collymore: On page 47 I will speak on item (1).

The Chairman: You cannot speak on 1 (1). It is statutory.

Cde. Collymore: Items (2) to (28) and on page 48, I want to speak on subheads 3, 14, 21, 28, 42.

Mr. Abraham: Mr. Chairman, subhead 20.

Cde. Collymore: I would like to ask the Minister if, in view of the situation pertaining in the country today where crime is concerned, he is satisfied with the output of the Establishment. We do not for one moment question the veracity of the officers but the management of the Force because people are complaining every day about what is taking place. We note that the Force is going to cost \$29.6 million this year. The total cost of it, including capital expenses, is \$31 million dollars. We on this side of the Assembly would like to know if the Minister is satisfied that the taxpayers are getting their money's worth out of it. We do not think so and if the Minister can give us certain assurances we would be glad.

We have been receiving certain complaints from members of the Force and it appears that there are certain factors which need to be investigated. One is that the Force is ill-equipped. There are shortages of vehicles, including motor cycles, squad cars. This is seriously affecting the mobility –

The Chairman: If I may advise you, I think you can properly bring that under Transport and Travelling. The items you are talking about are merely emoluments. If you want to talk about Transport,

there is a subhead Transport and Travelling and you can raise it there.

Cde. Collymore: Some of the members complain about poor pay. We are satisfied that their grouse is legitimate. The lower ranks are ill-paid whereas the upper ranks, the top bracket, are super-salaried bureaucrats.

We also note that the top bracket of the Police Force are highly political. This is having a serious impact on the mass at the bottom and this, perhaps, is one of the reasons for various inadequacies – perhaps we can say “inefficiencies” – where crime is concerned. The results of all these – being badly equipped, poor pay, too highly politicised top bracket – are a fall in efficiency and a lack of public confidence, in fact, waning confidence.

I would like to turn the page to go to page 48, where it deals with Transport and Travelling, subhead 3. We have received complaints that mobility is seriously affected when there are reports of crime. In some cases, the Police have to hitch hike. We have a hitch-hiking Police Force. In the rural areas particularly, when there are outbreaks of crime, the Police are at a serious disadvantage in responding immediately and this cause a poor output from the Force. I would like the Minister to look into this and see if he cannot correct it. I notice elsewhere that vehicles are going to be bought but when you look at the figures the number of vehicles is totally inadequate.

We also note that there are several cemeteries for police vehicles. The biggest cemetery is at Eve Leary. I would like to ask the Minister responsible is he is not thinking of rejuvenating these cemeteries.

The Chairman: Rehabilitating.

Cde. Collymore: If a dead man can vote I don't see why you can't rejuvenate a car.

I would like to ask the Minister if he is thinking of putting a stop to the cannibalism that is taking place on police vehicles. We think that if spare parts in an adequate quantity are brought in for these vehicles they could be made operative and they will improve the efficiency of the Force. We think that it would be much cheaper to import the spare parts than to import complete vehicles.

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8:10 – 8:20 p.m.

8:10 p.m.

Subhead 21 – Prevention and Detection of Crime. We note from the newspapers – from reports – that Guyana is up to its ears in crime and it seems that it is paying. The previous Minister was asked on several occasions to submit reports to this Assembly and he has submitted reports only up to 1976. We note from the report submitted by the Commissioner that in 1976 booty – property stolen by thieves – amounted to \$3.6 million and out of that the figures show that very little was recovered. In fact, 8.1 per cent of this loot was recovered. The previous year (in 1975) \$2.8 million in property was stolen and a better average was recovered – 11.6 per cent – so that it appears that the competence or efficiency of the force has dropped.

I would like to ask the Minister what he is doing to improve this state of affairs because it has deteriorated at an alarming level. Last year there was a wave of armed robberies and this year it has stated again, and for this year, even taking into consideration reports in the Government Press, it appears that nearly \$500,000 in booty has already been stolen and several people have lost their lives. Concern has been expressed in many places. Even the government has expressed concern about it and the businessmen in particular have been having talks, I know, with the Minister as to how to alleviate this state of affairs.

Cde. Chairman, we are very concerned about it. It appears that even judges are also attacked. We want the Minister to give this Assembly assurances that the bandits will be contained. We are also very worried because it appears as though the high unemployment rate is having a serious effect on the crime situation. It actually helps to generate or intensify the crime syndrome and other Ministers in collaboration with the Minister of Home Affairs ought to get together to know what measures to take, besides police measures, in combating the crime menace.

Cde. Chairman, I would like to bring to the Minister's attention that robberies appear to be very, very prevalent, and according to last year's report which was submitted to this Assembly, it seems as though the vast majority of the robberies are committed in urban areas. It means that the police force should be more equipped and more alert in urban areas. The figures show 88.4 per cent of robberies are committed in urban areas. We note, also, and we acknowledge that the police have been doing something because we note that the bandits have shifted their base of operations to the rural areas. Because of that, I would say, police surveillance in the city and the town they have moved to the rural areas. It means that the police must be more mobile to deal with it. Once again I must point out that they are not mobile and they are not properly equipped and this is why thieves are escaping scot-free.

Cde. Chairman, another factor to note about the crime syndrome is rape. A lot of hot air was ventilated on the opposite side about the plight of women, but not one single person on the opposite side spoke about the molestation of women which is taking place steadily and increasing year by year. Women are being raped all over the place and, Cde. Chairman, you know that many people who have been raped are so embarrassed that they don't report to the police. Those brave ones who report to the police have to endure the added embarrassment of having their cases taken in open court. We have also made suggestions here already that these cases be held in camera and not to subject the ladies to further

embarrassment, but our Government which claims to have the ladies' interests at heart has done nothing about it since 1975 when they made that proclamation.

Cde. Chairman, I would like to bring to the Minister's attention that between 1970 and 1976 there were 744 women raped; 744 women are raped in this country. For the Minister's attention, the detection rate of rape in 1976, the last year of the report, was only 11.7 per cent. It is the poorest detection rate and the reason is primarily because the women are embarrassed to come forward. If the Minister can give an assurance that these cases will be held in camera we will have a proper weapon to deal with rapists and would-be rapists.

Cde. Chairman, we must also mention the use of narcotics. We had cause to mention the situation on several occasions. We note that the use of drugs – hard drugs – is intensifying in Guyana and concern has been expressed in various places, but we are not convinced that enough is being done by the police establishment to combat the menace.

We know for a fact, and the Minister knows and I think the public ought to know, that there are marijuana farms in Guyana. These farms are in the Rupununi. Some are elsewhere in the hinterland. Some are in the North-West District. One of them is on the Soesdyke – Linden Highway, and elsewhere.

Cde. Chairman, I would like to ask the Minister, if he is aware of this, what is he doing about it? In fact, we know that some of the farmers have been destroyed by the police, but we know others exist because other reports appearing in various parts of the Press indicate that more and more farms are being discovered and more and more people are planting the farms.

Cde. Chairman, narcotics – be the use of this drug – is a menace to the youth of this country and I think it is a very serious state of affairs which warrants top priority in tackling it. There are too many pushers and too many growers and we must make use of all the necessary forces at our command to combat this menace. We must also make use of Interpol because it appears that some of the hard drugs pass through Guyana, are left in Guyana and are consumed by Guyanese. We have to stamp out this before it gets worse.

Cde. Chairman, the Vice-President in his Budget statement referred to the need to increase production and I was saying that fear of bandits is one of the reasons for low because when farmers plant their crops, thieves go and reap. When cattle owners bring in their herd, thieves go and take out two or three head, slaughter them and bring them to town and so forth, and this causes disincentive. We are asking the Minister to look into this state of affairs. It is not only the small farmers who are suffering, but the Government itself is suffering from praedial larceny.

I have here a clipping from the Chronicle because the Government cannot say that it is not accurate – Sunday Chronicle, February 1st, 1981. In fact, before I quote February 1st let me quote February 2nd: Guyana Chronicle, February 2nd, 1981. This deals with rustling and the Chairman of the Government Company, Lidco, was complaining and he said that the Government suffered a loss of over 3,000 head of cattle, valued at \$3 million. The Chairman also said that he suspects that even members of the security forces are involved in this organised rustling. These acts were concentrated at the Pirara,

Cataways, Mara and Moblissa ranches. Small farmers also suffered tremendously and some of them were forced to quit the business. The Manager contended that rustling was as well-organised business. He reported that there have been incidents of law enforcement officers being caught stealing cattle's from the various ranches.

8:20 p.m.

I would therefore like to ask the Minister to look into this report and to ensure that the Government does not suffer this kind of loss because in the final analysis the taxpayers, people like you and me, Cde. Chairman, have to pay. Dealing with the same trend, on Sunday, February 1, 1981 from Guysuco –

The Chairman: Cde. Collymore, you have other heads and you have been talking on these things for twenty minutes. It is up to you. I am just reminding you if you want to discuss the other heads –

Cde. Collymore: Cde. Chairman, you know what I normally do. I deal at length under subhead 21, Prevention and Detection of Crime. I would hardly have to speak elsewhere because everything is concentrated there.

The Chairman of Guysuco is complaining about theft and he says last year alone Guysuco suffered losses amounting to \$799,000 because of stealing. Then he spoke about arson. Well, we will come to that soon. Now, we are here arson. Cde. Chairman, I would like to ask the Minister if he is paying keen attention to the enormous number of government premises which have been destroyed by fire and records and stocks lost. Because of this the police force cannot operate and detect embezzlement.

Cde. Chairman, when Cde. Vice-President was reading his Budget statement, he mentioned that in the Custom and Excise fire so many records were lost that the Government has had to appeal to the people to come forward and say what they had imported. We are saying that fire was an act of arson and embezzlement. Authorities are asking the Minister to investigate and if it is investigated, to give this Assembly the assurance of the results of the investigation. Cde. Chairman, we are not satisfied also that the Blairmont Oil Depot Fire was an accident. We feel it was arson and also fraud, and we are asking the Minister to say if it was investigated, what has been the outcome of the investigations.

Now, we are also asking the Minister if he has investigated the recent fire at the Springlands Bond of the Guyana Rice Board. Believe it or not, while that fire was taking place, the C.I.D. was investigating the Rice Board because of theft of rice valued at \$100,000 so it is no accident that a fire took place there because there are two ports for exporting rice, Port Georgetown and Port Springlands. And we are not fooled by the recent shake-up in the Rice Board where some officers were sent on leave. We want them to be properly investigated and if they are guilty, tried, because we feel it is fraud on a massive scale. You can't pet these people. There are some of them who are now facing the court for the last two years. We must bring more of them to show as an example. They must stop it. We on this side ask the Minister for certain assurance that these things are being investigated and if they have been investigated, what has been the outcome of the investigations.

Cde. Chairman, we are also very much perturbed over murder. We know only recently that two youths were killed and dumped in the Lamaha Canal at the back of the Gardens. We feel that this is a case of rape and murder and we are asking the Minister to say if he has investigated and what is his opinion of it. The Vice-President in his statement said that they are creating an atmosphere of peace and tranquility and that they are going to eliminate fear; people must walk the land in peace. People cannot walk the land in peace. It is said that the youth was hit on the head and drowned and the girl was molested.

Cde. Chairman we would also like to bring to your notice some armed robberies which have resulted in killing and many people at a large say – I would like the Minister note this in particular – that these bandits are dressed in G.D.F uniform. This is of great concern to us. We will not say from this event that G.D.F troops are robbing and killing people and raping but we are saying that the people cannot be wrong and the bandits are wearing G.D.F clothing. The police must investigate and ensure where these bandits are coming from, if they are G.D.F. soldiers, and if so, why they are committing these acts in army uniform. This is disgracing the Army, people come not to trust the Army, and the Minister must look into it. Some months ago there was a noise about prosecuting of people wearing Army garments. We want the prosecutions to be kept up and the vigilance also to be stepped up because we are very concerned about these bandits reported to be wearing Army uniforms. Cde. Chairman, where there robberies are concerned, these killers and bandits do not look at people. They rob anybody. At Linden, they robbed a very senior man of the P.N.C. They killed him and they made off with \$80,000 of his property, so they are not looking at P.N.C and P.P.P. My friends on the opposite side must take note and we are calling for very strong measures against these bandits.

Cde. Chairman, next we have a case of the human rights crisis. We know that according to a report from the Guyana Human Rights Association, nineteen people have been killed by the police without an inquest held. Why? We want inquest to be held. We are asking, therefore, that inquests be held into this state of affairs.

Cde. Chairman, we would also like to call upon the Government through the Minister of Home Affairs to give surveillance on the Demerara Harbour Bridge at night. It is reported to us that a lot of stolen goods cross the bridge from the west to the east at night and consequent on certain assurances from the Police Commissioner, motor vehicles are not searched. We suspect that booty comes across to Georgetown via the bridge at night. We would also like the Minister to say, in view of the serious crime situation, what his Ministry to say, is doing to enlist the co-operation of the people to stamp it out. Many citizens in those areas want to form vigilante groups once the Minister can deal with that and shed some light as to what progress is being made by getting citizens themselves to help the police combat crime in those areas.

Cde. Chairman, I would like to impress upon the Minister the need for him to submit up-to-date Reports. It is an insult and an indignity to this Assembly when we realise that only up to 1976 we have had Reports from the Commissioner of Police. It is ridiculous. At least this year we should have had the 1978 Report. When are we going to have the 1977 Report, if that is possible?

The Chairman: Cde. Minister.

The Minister of Home Affairs (Cde. Moore): Cde. Chairman, since the last speaker spent his time primarily on subhead 21 on the question of the Prevention and Detection of Crime, I would think that that is the only area in which I ought to make some response of any significance.

On the question of the output of the Establishment, which he raised, we are satisfied about the output of the Police Establishment. On the question of the loyalty of the Police, we are more than satisfied, for this Police Force that we have in this country was efficient and loyal to their colonial masters and let say that they trained their police well although we have effected certain reorientation so that the Police can better understand their role in the present society in which we live.

Not only did they serve the colonial masters well but they also served well an unpopular Government which faced the wrath of a nation which it had provoked into open revolt by a draconian series of budgetary proposals. I refer to the infamous Kaldor/Jacobs concoction which drove this nation, as I said, almost to the point of self-destruction, but those of us who had the misfortune to live through those dark years which even now I refer to as the days of national distress, will remember in front of Freedom House in Robb Street where the Police stood their grounds under fire of bricks, bottles, stones and what have you and they did not retreat, in the face of massive widespread assault, in defence of an unpopular Government. If the police serve the present Government, the Government of the day, with the same loyalty and dedication they are doing no more than their duty and no more, indeed, than my friends on that side of the Assembly would wish them to do.

Reference has been made to the fact that the Force has to put up with shortages of equipment, as we all have to in our various spheres. I do not think that the Vice-President in presenting his Budget sought to disguise the fact that because of our economic circumstances we have to make do with little, but the Police and, indeed, the Government agencies have shown considerable ingenuity in mending, in fixing, in repairing and in getting things to work and, necessity being the mother of invention that process of recovery, of cannibalisation, of repair and rehabilitation what have you, will be continued and, further, in order to increase the mobility of the Police, it is proposed in the Estimates to expand the equestrian capabilities of the Force. [Interruption.]

The Chairman: Comrades, we are not outside.

Cde. Moore: My friend has seen the resemblance between the horse and – Let me come to the area in which my friend made his major presentation and that is in the area of –

The Chairman: I hope there will not also be a major reply.

Cde. Moore: -- of the prevention of crime. Let me say that I have personally observed, long before I ever dreamed of becoming Minister of Home Affairs, the Police, when the rest of us like my friends on the other side, who keep respectable hours, they are comfortable asleep in our beds, Police Officers whom I have seen at Court working throughout the day – I have seen them on various postings at night up to 10, 11, 12, 1 o'clock and when I thought that they had gone home to rest I was told later – Cde. Commissioner, correct me if I am wrong – that they had then gone to visit sentries at posts and then, after that, they were to report for drill and/or P.T. early in the morning. The Police Service works above and beyond the call of duty and sometimes up to the very limit of human endurance in defence of this nation and in the preservation of law and order.

But it would be puerile, it would be simplistic, it would be naïve to assume that even with the most vigilant and resourceful Police Force in the world we would eliminate crime, as my friend on the other side is attempting to suggest. In the most wealthy countries in the world, in the most powerful nations on earth, there is crime and the Police can do no more than to contain crime to acceptable limits. Some of the rascals will always slip through.

Reference has been made to a number of armed robberies and the Police do their planning and, as my friend has rightly said, if we tie up the cities with patrols and so on the bandits switch to the East Coast and if we tie the East Coast they switch to the West coast and the things like that.

My friend has made reference to a number of things which he knows about. He knows where the rapes take place and where the robberies take place and where the frauds take place. I wonder if he is not withholding information from the Police if he waits until he comes to this Assembly to make these nebulous statements publicly rather than passing them on to the Commissioner of Police whose doors are always open for the receipt of information of that kind. I would like to invite my friends on the other side, if there is any information which they have which would assist the Police, or which they think would assist the Police, please do not wait until they arrive in this Assembly to disclose it; please bring it to the nearest Police Station at the very earliest opportunity. I am assuming that these gentlemen are not afraid to enter the police stations or have no good reasons to fear to do so.

On the question of “narcotics” which I believe is properly pronounced “narcotics” we have created with the people who consume narcotics have described as a drought in the land. That means to say that the boys cannot even get a smoke in town such in the vigilance of the Police. They have, to use the American expression, “busted” them.

It is true that from time to time we discover farms. Those farms are condignly extirpated and the growing plants are taken up by their roots and are properly disposed of by burning or by some other such device. Only the other day, at North Fork, I believe, where there was a little disturbance of the peace, the police found flowering plants of the family of cannabis sativa and they were uprooted, burnt and destroyed except for minute quantities which were brought to Georgetown for the purposes of analytical examination.

So that we do not have a narcotics problem in this country, even as an entrepot or otherwise. There are one or two who, we know, have had a smoke. As I said, there is such a drought in the land that some of them have even smoked “boo”. I take it my learned friend knows what “boo” is. “Boo” is the flowering of the male plant.

The Chairman: Your learned friend? Your learned friend?

Cde. Moore: I apologise, Cde. Chairman. That is misplaced appellation. So much for narcotics. On the question of rustling of cattle, that is a perennial problem with which we have always had to deal. Sometimes the cattle owners have resorted to summary justice and sometimes some rustler, or erstwhile rustlers, I think, have been found floating in certain creeks with both hands amputated. So that that is a problem, I confess, which the police are giving their serious attention to, but I would invite the speaker on the other side to report, as I said, any evidence or statement which he has on that matter to the police.

On the question of rape which the comrade on the other side dealt with some feeling, it is true that rape is not often reported for one reason or the other and, also, I wish to draw to his attention that the police know of a variation in rape known as “trip”. I do not know whether he has heard the expression, but all those things are being carefully examined with a view to preventing them.

But let me make this serious point. Please exhort young girls, particularly, if possible, not to walk in dark areas at night. Let prudence prevail. Let them walk in numbers. Let them walk in well-lit streets and areas and so on. If they are going to certain places for entertainment, let them go with an escort. In other words, we have to try and educate people so that they do not, wittingly or unwittingly, fall prey to certain persons. As I was saying, the comrade on the other side has a comprehensive knowledge of these matters.

On the question of G.D.F. uniforms, we have instituted prosecutions. It is impossible to trace down all these pieces of clothing. In England if they require a police uniform to commit a crime they make it and it is not beyond the ingenuity of the Guyanese people to make it. I will agree with my friend that the G.D.F. uniforms have been abused, or it is with G.D.F. uniforms that those rascals, bandits, saboteurs and arsonists destroyed the offices of the General Secretary of the People’s National Congress and the Ministry of National Development. They were clad in G.D.F. uniforms.

Cde. Chairman, there has been reference to the “human rights crisis” in Guyana. There are no places of preventive in Guyana. There is no detention without trial in Guyana. There are no arbitrary searches, arbitrary arrests. There are no arrests except under due process of law and the only people who have to fear the police are persons who wish to break the law and therefore invite the official conduct of

the police. This country, I repeat, has no places of preventive detention and there is no one now in any place of detention in Guyana who is not there under due process of law.

Cde. Chairman, one serious point which was made and which I wish to respond to equally seriously is what can the public do to assist in dealing with the spate of crimes, particularly violent crimes, which have broken out. A number of public-spirited citizens have formed themselves informally into groups to protect homes and properties. We cannot sanction, however, the creation of private police forces, or we cannot advise a resort to self-help. That being so, Cde. Chairman, the police have initiated and have encouraged the establishment of crime prevention committees in many areas, and the area from which I come, Kitty, has been conspicuously successful for its crime prevention committee of which, I believe, several members of this Assembly are members.

Crime prevention committees do exist. There was one which the Commissioner and I met on the West Coast of Demerara and there was another which we met only a day or two ago on the East Bank, Demerara. So I invite my friends on the other side of the Assembly to join those committees and encourage others to do so because it is common ground between us that the police cannot do it all and any help which is forthcoming from the public is welcome. These crime prevention committees are not allowed to function in isolation. The police give assistance, they give technical help and in all cases they also try to effect a police presence, and citizens have made their vehicles available. They have come out at night and they have been patrolling their areas and we wonder where the bandits will strike next. But we are trying to rely on such sources of intelligence as we have to try and strengthen our guard in the areas where they haven't struck as yet to make sure they do not catch us unprepared.

The bridge to which reference was made is well policed, we feel, is well lit at night and the police maintain a 24 hour surveillance over that public utility. I think I have said enough by way of response but I wish to assure my friend that nothing of importance which he has said has escaped my attention. I have to disappoint him by saying that we have thought of all this before, we discussed all this before, we have been taking steps to deal with the points which he has raised before. I am happy that he, too, is aware of some of the problems which we face and I invite his attention and his assistance in dealing with what, after all, is a communal problem, a community problem – the problem of policing.

Head 22, Police - \$29,610,800 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

8:50 p.m.

The Chairman: Pages 49 and 50.

HEAD 23 – PRISONS

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,373,400 for Head 23, Prisons, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 23, Prisons - \$3,373,400 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: page 51, Fire Protection Services

HEAD 24 – FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,907,000 for Head 24, Fire Protection Services stand part of the Estimates.

Head 24, Fire Protection Services - \$2,907,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 52, Registration and Elections.

HEAD 25 – REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,463,400 for Head 25, Registration and elections, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 25, Registration and Elections - \$1,463,400 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 53, Head 26, Registration, Immigration, Births, etc.

HEAD 26 – REGISTRATION, IMMIGRATION, BIRTHS, ETC.

Question proposed that the sum of \$237,200 for Head 26, Registration, Immigration, Births, etc., stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Ram Karran: Under subhead 1 and 2, I would like to ask the hon. Minister what improvements have been made with respect to the issuing of birth certificates to people who require these documents particularly for schools and for business, for instance, marriage, passports, and so on. I think it was said here on the last occasion by the last Minister. I must concede that the Minister is new and inexperienced but it has been a burning question, it has been publicized considerably and I wonder whether the efforts made by the last Minister have caused any improvement, and if the Minister is in a position to say whether there are further improvements, having regard to the large number of people, particularly school children who live far away from the city, whether the new arrangements for these

documents to be issued outside of Georgetown have been implemented and how are they working.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister.

Cde. Moore: Cde. Chairman, the concern shared by the hon. Deputy Leader of the Minority Party is shared by this Ministry. I must pay tribute to the efforts of my predecessor in this regard for under him substantial improvements were already made. What we propose to do now is to take the thing a stage further and I am delighted to explain to this Assembly and to the hon. Member what those steps are.

First of all on the question of education and birth certificates for school children, one of the difficulties which arose where some children were not admitted to schools unless they had proper birth certificates, that practice, I have discussed with my colleague who normally sits on my right, the Minister of Education, and we have agreed that hence forward no child will be refused entry into any school in this country on the ground that he does not have a birth certificate. But, it does not stop there.

What I have proposed is that parents should be encouraged, as a part of the documentation concerning their children's entry into school to submit their birth certificates then and if they haven't got birth certificate then, to get them and let them form part of their children's record at school. We have also written to the Ministry of Education and they have written to schools to say this: that those children who wish to have their birth certificates for examinations this year, let them submit their applications now and not wait until the peak bottle-neck period immediately before those birth certificates have to be submitted so that bottle-necking will not take place. But human nature being what it is, some people will still be late in spite of the encouragement.

We have therefore developed a priority system. If the school and/or the Ministry of Education stamps the application with a school stamp or some recognisable stamp, it automatically gets priority. Further to that, a number of people have approached me directly, for one reason or another, and the Registrar and I have worked out a system under which there are certain priority ratings. It is not a priority rating to say you want to go on holiday to the United States or anywhere else. It is not a priority rating to say you want a birth certificate just for no good reason. When there are good reasons, we give a priority rating and we try to get it off ahead of the others. But, Cde. Chairman, that is not enough. What is required therefore, is to get a system put in that priority or no priority, the normal processing of a birth certificate can take a short time and that is what we are aiming for, and to this end we have done several things.

Inside the Ministry itself, we have taken some space from the Commissioner of Elections and we have put some of our staff there to ease the cramped conditions under which they worked. That has already improved their physical conditions giving them a little more elbow room so they can work a little more freely. As soon as the clean-up campaign is over, we are going into Cde. Ferreira's office and we are going to remove from that office all the stuff which needs to be disposed of. There are certain records which are obsolete. There are certain accumulations of garbage, of jetsam, which have to be removed and those will be removed. We are also going with the help of the staff to clean up the physical appearance of

the place so that the staff will work in more pleasant and commodious surroundings.

In addition to that we have got a bookbinder, who is working full time so that the physical condition of the records will be better, the books will be easier to handle, we have got some transcribers with good handwriting which is legible and which can be read, who have been put to the task of writing, we have developed incentives, we are measuring the output of each member of the staff per day and we are asking them to produce a certain minimum number of birth certificates. Further to that, where we are hit by the bottle-necks, we are putting in a system of overtime so that those bottle-necks can be removed.

9:00 p.m.

The Chairman: Cde. Ram Karran.

Cde. Ram Karran: The hon. Minister obviously has been doing his own thing because in this chamber his predecessor had given us certain guidelines by which we could expect that there would be some improvement. My friend seems to have made an about-turn. He is talking now about priorities. We all like priorities but with the system of priorities comes the system of bribe-taking, with priorities comes the system of discrimination and one would like to see the latter part of the hon. Minister's contribution put into effect.

I understand that certain things have been done here. Are those things done with a view to improving the situation even though it takes a little longer than this system of priorities which has its own built-in bits of discrimination? The staff will say that a man goes there for sickness – and a lot of people develop sickness – and that is not a priority case and the man dies. I would not like to see a thing like that implemented. I would like to see, first of all, that the system is clear so that everybody -- why should a guy who has a stamp on a letterhead go there and get priority when somebody else who has been there two months before cannot get service? That is built-in discrimination.

The Chairman: Cde. Moore. You have not finished, Cde. Ram Karran?

Cde. Ram Karran: No, sir, it is bringing about a great deal of dissatisfaction in the community.

The Chairman: What has happened is that Cde. Moore has merely dealt with the situation in Georgetown and he has not attempted to say anything about what the last minister had informed us about, namely, that centres are being set up in New Amsterdam, in Essequibo and probably in Linden where the bottle-neck will be alleviated by people going there instead of coming to Georgetown. I think his response to you was to show that the serious are of children going to school and not having birth certificates and being rejected has been given a priority consideration, not that consideration would not be given to other applicants.

Cde. Ram Karran: I assume that the Minister is neophyte and I see that point in so far as the children are concerned, but it would seem to me on the other hand that he has abandoned all the other things that the Minister said. If that is not Your Honour's understanding, it is all right, but in this

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9:00 – 9:10 p.m.

particular area, this is the archives of the country. Papers or documents that are there become waste, garbage. The Minister needs his head examined because an applicant went to the Registry to get his birth certificate and they told him that for that period the documents have all been destroyed and he cannot get a passport on the Immigration Agent's certificate. A special affidavit and all sorts of trouble had to be taken before the man was able to get to travel. It took him one year to do that. The Minister tells us that the documents they have in that place are garbage. I do not see that the Registrar's Office can have garbage. I don't care how dilapidated it is.

The Chairman: it would be a lot of old newspapers and so on. Cde. Moore. We have spent quite a lot of time on this.

Cde Moore: I admit to being neophyte. I would rather be that than an ancient relic.

The Chairman: No, no, no. We are not making any aspersions. He was merely saying that you are new to the job. You cannot call him an ancient relic. [Laughter.] After all that is my Deputy Speaker. I have to protect him.

Cde. Moore: Let me hasten to assure the hon. Member that the things which are being thrown out are old application forms which have been filled already and the birth certificates sent out. It is that kind of useless material that is being cleared out. We have not taken leave of our senses to throw away the birthcertificates or the records or the books or the valuable documents. Let me hasten to say that before I was interrupted, Cde. Chairman, I had not yet got around- and Cde. Chairman I thank you very much for clarifying the position. What we have done, we have taken a series of emergency measures to deal with the present situation in the meanwhile implementing a system which will permit the speedy processing of applications of all kinds in the future. That, I think, I said clearly enough but the English language is one which is not easy of understanding in certain quarters.

The Chairman: In this Parliament we speak English.

Cde. Moore: That is still the official language and, Cde. Chairman, you clearly understood me although apparently some others did not

Coming back to the point raised by you, Cde. Chairman, already the sub-registry in New Amsterdam is functional. There are people in training now from Bartica, from Mabaruma, from Linden, from Anna Regina, in Georgetown, who are going to return to their respective areas in order to deal with the processing of these documents there.

As I said in my opening presentation, we are aware of what my predecessor has been doing and we have been following that. I thought that my learned friend was aware to that. I did say in my opening presentation, so that we have build upon the foundation that is already there. We are working hard. I say this seriously: it is an unsatisfactory situation that people have to wait so long for these documents. We are doing a number of things to alleviate that situation. I am sure my learned friend --

The Chairman: Who?

Cde. Moore: I am in the wrong Court.

The Chairman: I don't mind if they are really learned.

Cde. Moore: If the Deputy Speaker fell ill and had to have a birth certificate tomorrow to get a passport, by the latter half of tomorrow, he would get the birth certificate tomorrow morning and the passport tomorrow afternoon and we would give it to him with all convenient speed for his medical attention.

The Chairman: I will now put the Head with the correction:

<u>Page</u>	<u>Column</u>	
53	Head 26	Against item (2) changing of salary scale to read A25 instead of A20 and insertion of a legend to read (2) Office reclassification.

Head 26, Registration, Immigration, Births, etc - \$237,200 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 54.

DIVISION XI

PRISONS

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,100,000 for Division XI, Prisons, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Ram Karran: Subhead 4 and 5, Housing and Purchase of Horses, etc., respectively. I notice that the Commissioner of Police has taken his leave. I wonder if I can ask if the Minister is in a position to say what is the position with respect to housing of policemen. The information reaching me is that there is widespread dissatisfaction among the young policemen, particularly young policemen, who cannot start out on a family because they cannot get housing even though the conditions under which they work, particularly in Georgetown – in the country areas you can get a house here and there, very unsuited. I know a young policeman in Kitty who was trying to get a house for almost a year and he had to hang around the stations and line with in-laws.

The Chairman: You don't have any for rental, Cde. Ram Karran? You could not help him?

Cde. Ram Karran: No, you might have. I wonder if the hon. Minister could give us an idea as to how much they are catching up with this much needed service to policemen and while I am on my feet I wonder if I can ask whether it is not more economical for the Government to improve its stock of horses rather than buying them. We have had in the Police Force a long tradition of horses and training and that sort of thing. I remember that at one time we used to breed horses for the Police Force, a very good system. Now we are merely flying them to the North West. We should stop flying them and breed them instead. Has the Ministry thought about that rather than buying horses for \$20,000? Incidentally how

many horses do you propose to buy for \$20,000?

The Chairman: Cde. Moore.

Cde. Moore: Cde. Chairman, on the question of housing, the Police are fully integrated into all the housing programmes which are going. There is, of course, as the leader has pointed out several times, a Dependants Pension Fund from which they are entitled to draw and the question of housing is very much under review and police are encouraged to acquire their own houses. There is also a housing scheme, I think at Yarowkabra on the Linden Highway for policemen alone.

On the question of horses, we are indeed trying to upgrade the quality of the horses and they are horses which have to be robust and sturdy for police work to take a grown man rather than a jockey-size mount. Therefore, we need two good studs which could service the broad mares properly so that we could have the correct breed of horses which can really stand up to the kind of work which is required by the police service. We intend to expand the equine section and to preserve that tradition of the Force.

The Chairman: I will now put the division with the corrections:

<u>Page</u>	<u>Column</u>	
54	Division XI	Instead of Division XI Prisons, changing of Division to read Division XI Ministry of Home Affairs.
	Explanatory Notes	Ditto.
	Other Finance	Against subhead 4 changing of amount of \$400,000 to read \$700,000.
69	Total	Against subhead 16, changing of amount of \$1,660,000 to read \$500,000.

Division XI, Prisons - \$3,100,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

9:10 p.m.

The Chairman: Page 32 to 35.

HEAD 16 – MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

Question proposed that the sum of \$5,675,600 for Head 16 – Ministry of Information – stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Cde. Mohamed.

Cde. Mohamed: Subhead 8 – Distribution Expenses (Publications).

Cde. Chairman, I simply wish to ask the Minister of Information whether on of the functions falling within this head is the distribution of materials distinct from Government materials, particularly P.N.C. materials. I say this because, coming to my attention from several who have gone –

The Chairman: Cde. Mohamed, you asked a question. When you get the answer then you can ask again, if it is not satisfactory.

Cde. Mohamed: May I add there, Mr. Chairman, if the Minister answers “Yes”, whether he would consider putting an end --

The Chairman: Don’t worry if it is “yes”. Let us hear if it is “yes” or “no”, because you will have “ifs” and “buts”. If he says “yes”, you are entitled to ask again. If he says “no”, that would put an end to it.

Cde Mohamed: Subhead 9 – Films–Cinematography. I notice here that there has been a reduction of the vote for 1980. May I say, sir, that we welcome this cut and may I underline that it is one that we have called for several times and one which the previous Minister, I remember well, defended very strongly. Now we see that the present Minister is responsive and we are happy about it.

The Chairman: what is questioned then on it? You are happy about the reduction. What is the question?

Cde. Mohamed: If you permit me, Cde. Chairman, I am coming to that. I would say that the cut in this direction is very good because we think that the films coming from the Ministry seek to encourage and promote a false consciousness in this country and we are happy and would like to enquire from the Ministry whether he should consider using the scissors further and cut out more under this head.

I would also like to enquire from the Minister whether he considers that the money spent in this direction is wisely spent. I ask this because I am aware that there is a lot of concentration on the production of 35 mm films, the processing of which is very costly as against the processing of 16 mm films. I understand the cost of processing a four-minutes 35 mm film is \$150 (US) whilst that for the 16 mm costs \$50, but still we seem to be concentrating on 35 mm film, particularly at this stage when there are not many items of equipment or projectors to project 35 mm films. I think the Minister ought to consider that question and I would like to know whether that is really so.

I would like to enquire from the Minister what is the Ministry’s or the Government’s position with respect to the film “Terror and the Time” which was produced by Guyanese. The Vic Dahara team, I understand that it was produced also with some help from the Ministry of Information, but which film is not approved to be publicly shown. I have had the opportunity to see this film, Cde. Chairman, and I can say that it has a very rich historical content and reflect a lot about our struggles against colonialism and I cannot understand why it is not publicly screened because I think it would be helpful, particularly, for younger generation to day to understand the struggles against our colonial masters – the struggles against colonialism – and some of the problems, difficulties and persecutions that even leaders of today had to undergo. I would like to enquire from the Minister what is the position with respect to the film “Terror and the Time”.

Subhead 11 – Broadcasting – General. Here I want to express our dissatisfaction that the Government-owned radio stations are not in their programmes reflecting in a representative way the views of the different parties in this county and I wish to underline, particularly, the views of the People's Progressive Party remains today the majority party in this country and is the strongest party. I think that the Government ought to give consideration to the People's Progressive Party being allowed greater opportunities to express their views on many topical and current problems facing Guyana, particularly, I would say, the debate on the question of socialism and the approach to it. We have our approach, the Government has its approach.

The Chairman: Cde. Mohamed, could you ask the question, why Government is not allowing this something. I don't want to hear a big lecture.

Cde. Mohamed: I would like, Cde, Cde. Chairman, to ask the Minister whether he would consider opening up greater opportunities so that the views of the People's Progressive Party in particular can be aired over the Government-owned radio stations. Whilst I do recognize some efforts, particularly during the December 15th elections and, also, with respect to the debate in this Assembly, some of it was done, but I do not think that can be enough, really and truly, if one wants to be very objective.

Subhead 19 – Expenses – Film Censorship. I have had separate and private discussions with the Minister of Information on this question of the Film Censorship Board. I wish to additionally ask of the Minister whether this board is indeed functioning. I ask this in view of the points I took up during the debate with respect to the quality of films coming in and being screened in this country, and the P.P.P's representative on this board has informed me that for a number of months now he has not received an invitation to attend meetings. This raises the suspicion that this board is not meeting regularly, it is not functioning, and, if that is the case, we would like the Minister to ensure that it meets regularly and it does its work effectively.

Subhead 21 – Publishing and Publicising. Again I must welcome the reduction and I am constrained to underline, furthermore, that we have for a number of years called for a cut in the expenditure here. Again I wish to ask the Minister to consider using the pruning knife on this head because I don't think a hefty – huge – amount nearing \$500,000 is really and truly needed at this stage when our country faces so many other problems that need more urgent attention and we think that the money put in this direction is not the best use of the people's money at this stage.

9:20 p.m.

Let us look at subhead 24 Public Relations Programme, I wish to ask the Minister whether funds from this head have been used for other purposes apart from Public Relations Programme or what could be considered to be Public Relations Programme. For example, have sums from this head last year or the previous year been used to finance members of the Press –

The Chairman: Cde. Feroze, I am dealing with this year's estimate, not last year's.

Cde Mohamed: Let us deal with this year's estimates. I wish simply to say, Mr. Speaker, that last year we were asking for \$525,000 as compared with \$504,000 the previous year, and this again we are asking for \$525,000. It seems to me \$½ million simply for Public Relations Programme is a bit exorbitant and obviously it needs a lot of clarification and explanation. I would like to inquire why, and if, and whether the fund is used for purposes other than what it asks for here. I wish to also ask the Minister if this Public Relations Programme fund is in any way, as I think it is, a reflection of the unpopularity of the P.N.C. and therefore they need this huge amount to help them to shore up at least at the propaganda level the popularity and to refurbish the image which they further besmirched after the December 15th General Elections.

Subhead 28, Communication Training, here, Mr. Chairman, you would notice that while we approved \$10,000 in the 1980 estimates, the revised estimates do reflect anything and the probability is that that money was not spent, and again for 1981 the Minister is asking for the same amount. I would ask the Minister to give an explanation whether Communication Training was conducted and pursued over last year, and if that was not so, why not, and whether indeed he has plans to implement such a programme during 1981.

Now subhead 32, Contribution to News Agencies, I notice in the legend that this will include contribution to new agencies. I wish to enquire what are these new agencies referred to here. At the same time I would like to enquire whether the Minister of Information would wish at this moment to invite Prensa Latina, a Third World, a non-aligned and a socialist news agency back to Guyana, because it may very well be recalled that this Agency was functioning until very recently and had to pack up because of the lack of co-operation between the Ministry and this Agency as far as my information goes and I would think that the Minister would have no hesitation to invite such an agency back to Guyana and to build very close fraternal relationship with such an agency.

I wish at this point to underline that if one were to look at the Chronicle one would see the new species of interpress service which is the Christian Democracy News Agency in Italy capitalist-based, Associated Press United States based, and still, although we have the Christian Democracy Interpress Service being widely used and the "AP" being widely used, on the other hand we seem to have turned a blind eye towards building a good relationship and a fraternal relationship with Prensa Latina, and I wish to underline further, socialist non-aligned Third World and developing agency. I would ask the Minister to make some comments on that because it seems to be relevant to the stated objectives of the Government of going towards socialism.

Subhead 34, Printing and Binding, here again I wish to refer to the huge sum for printing and binding, I would ask the Minister at this stage, as he has done with two other heads before, to consider using and I think there is every right and every need for using, the pruning knife on this head because I cannot understand and I cannot agree for \$600,000 to be devoted purely at this time, when so many things are needed in this country, very urgently, and very essential, for printing and binding.

Subhead 35, The Guyana News Agency. We have heard quite a lot about this in recent times and let me not hesitate to say that in our view this is a further millstone around the neck of the Guyanese people. We ask many questions and we would like to question the running of this Ministry in many ways, as I have done. Here again, in our view, this Agency is going to be purely and primarily engaged in the promotion of P.N.C. propaganda abroad. I wish to emphasise here that we are not in favour of this News Agency at this stage, we do not think it is going to be very balanced, that it will give an objective report based on what we have observed before, and we would like the Minister to discontinue this activity. We do not need it at this moment, maybe later on, but at the moment I think we have our priorities wrong.

The Minister of Information (Cde. Campbell): the hon. Minister raised the question whether the vote for subhead 8, Distribution Expenses (Publications) includes expenses for publications of the P.N.C. The answer, Cde. Chairman, is, generally speaking, it does not. On a few occasions where this is relevant it is done. I can give one particular example which is a matter of public information. When a certain group of gentlemen, I do not remember what they called themselves, gentlemen and ladies from the developed world mainly, came to Guyana during the last elections and they were received by the Information Officer of our Ministry, those people were given packets of information published by and available from the various political parties including the P.N.C. including, where it was available, the P.P.P.

9:30 p.m.

(Cde. Campbell continues)

It was unfortunate that our officers did have some great difficulty in locating the publications of the Opposition. I am sorry. The 'Opposition' as they then were: the 'Minority' as they are now called. On occasions like that when people are here to look at the political situation we feel it is our duty to make available to them publications, not only of the Government, not only of the Ministry, but of all agencies. Whenever we have had delegations, for example, we have ensured that they have had copies of such publications as the Mirror, the Catholic Standard and on certain occasions we have posted those publications abroad. In certain circumstances, Yes. Publications of all political parties, including the P.N.C., but also including the party to which the hon. Member has the greatest honour to belong. /Interruption./

On the question of films, the hon. Member, my very good friend, once a year goes through the ceremony of indicating his learning in the area of film production by raising the question of 35 mm as against 16 mm films. I did thank him on one occasion for raising that question but we have, even before then and particularly since then, been looking at this matter. The position is that it is not a simple matter of deciding whether you are going to do 16 mm or 35 mm. The cinemas show only 35 mm films and if we are going to make films available to the cinemas they have to be available in 35 mm.

We have been carrying out some experiment to see how easy or difficult it is to film in 16 and to blow up to 35. So far it has proven to be much easier but convenient, having regard to the technology to us, to do it the other way around. But we are still experimenting with that particular matter.

The hon. Member raised the question of a film known as the Terror and the Time. When he raised it I was very happy. I thought he was going to raise that question in the context of a certain exercise which might properly engaged the attention of a ministry other than my own, a Ministry whose head answered questions in this Assembly a little earlier during this Sitting. I know that the hon. Member knows the circumstances relating to the production of that film. This is not a political matter as he seeks to make out: it is a matter which my colleague, the Minister of Home Affairs, and certain officers in his Ministry might more properly deal with and he knows this. Perhaps myself and the hon. Member could make a joint approach to the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Police to solve the problem.

He raised also the matter of quality of films and the problem of film censorship. I would wish to accept personally that our Ministry has not been able during the past two years to make any impact as far as improving the quality of films available in our cinemas is concerned and that is responsibility which I stand before and accept. This is a matter in respect of which we shall be endeavouring to make some headway.

The question of quality of film is not essentially a question of censorship: it is a question of availability of films, it is a question of the kind of films thrown up by the system and it has to do with the way the system is organised both internally and internationally. May I add that from time to time we have been approached by the Minority Parties, particularly the People's Progressive Party, about the quality of certain films and the Chairman of the Film Censorship board has always responded immediately to any

suggestion or recommendations relating to films. This is a matter which regard to which throughout the year we have been working close together. It is not a matter of contention.

With regard to the Board of Film Censors the question whether the representative of the P.P.P. has been receiving requests to attend meetings of that Board, I wish to say that wittingly or unwittingly the Member has stood before this Assembly and committed what I think could properly be called in the language of the Assembly “terminological inexactitude”, because I have spoken to that representative only recently. He has said to me that there was a period during which he was not being invited but that matter has been resolved for some time. It has always been made clear to members of the Board that they do not have to wait passively to receive invitations to attend sittings of the Board. They know the day and the time when the board meets and the Board has always been meeting on those days and at those times once members are available. So there is no question of inactivity of the Board of Film Censors.

The hon. Member raised the question of publishing and publicising and asked whether it is necessary at this time to spend this sum of money to educate our people about what is happening in this country, about what the Government is doing for them and about the Guyanese reality. I think the Members of this Assembly who have a love for education and who believe in the very development of the consciousness of the people that he speaks of would accept that it is necessary to spend this money and, if you can afford it, even more.

I said during the general debate, and I repeat, that an examination of the publications of the Ministry of Information would indicate that we go far beyond the normal duties, the normal tasks, of Government propaganda which is a legitimate expenditure by any Government. We have gone beyond that and we have published information which does not propagandize on behalf of the Government but which educates the people and I think I must have failed in my duty in not making some of these publications available to members of the Minority, particularly to my friend. I shall try to correct that situation because I am sure if he were to look at some of those publications, if he were to look at some of the things which we have put out about Critchlow, about Edun, some of the things which we have put out about International Year of the Disable, some of the things which we have put out to educate people about pricing and pricing policy, I do not think that he would raise that question. I have too great a regard for his intelligence to believe he would raise that question after examining those publications.

And then he raised the question of the Public Relations programmes and one of the questions he seeks to ask is whether money is used under that programme to bring journalists into this country to see what is happening in this country. I would say with no apology and with the greatest of pride that the answer is Yes. We have been bringing people into this country so that they can see for themselves the difference between the Guyana as portrayed by the Minority when they travel, as indeed the Leader of the Minority is doing right now – the difference between that Guyana and the real situation.

9:40 p.m.

And the fact that we are prepared, Cde. Chairman, to bring people to Guyana to see for themselves indicates clearly either that the Minority parties have been, to say the least, exaggerating the problems of this society and/or totally misrepresenting what is happening. For this reason, we have brought these people and, as I indicated during the general debate, whenever we bring them, as a routine we ensure that we call the office of the Leader of the Minority – the Leader of the People's Progressive Party – and arrange interviews with all such delegations except once when it was not possible for the time-table to coincide with the time-table of the Leader of the Minority. For some strange reason during that period when they were being advised as to whether to contest the elections or not, they had some difficulty meeting the Press. They were afraid.

With that one exception, Cde. Chairman, every delegation that we have brought into this country has been offered, as a matter of routine and on the basis of our own initiative, without a request from the delegation, without a request from the People's Progressive Party, I have arranged for them to talk to the Minority so they could get both sides of the story. We have said to them, any part of this country they ask to go, we'll take them. We have said to them, any member in any organisation, existent or non-existent, that they want to talk to, we will arrange for them to talk to these people, and I think it is proper that this Assembly approve money to bring people to our country to understand and see for themselves the reality in Guyana and if my friend is afraid and embarrassed by the presence of foreign journalists to see the truth for themselves, then he must get up and say so. That is a matter of personal and political embarrassment.

He raises the question, Cde. Chairman, as to whether money is being spent for public relations because of the unpopularity of this Government. Which unpopular government could receive the kind of support, the kind of vote that we received on the question of the Security Council without even indicating an interest in being elected to the Security Council? The image of this Government, of this country, as far as intelligent people internationally are concerned is without question. It is only a few people who have developed the reputation of "has been" in their own country, it is only people who could make no political headway in their own country, who would follow the Minority and believe that this Government has a problem of image. Which decent person, which decent organisation, which decent country has ever supported the Minority or accepted the Minority's views of happenings in Guyana? None, I submit, Cde. Chairman.

The hon. Member raises the question of Communication Training and he asks whether we did train last year as we indicated we would have done by a vote of \$10,000. The honest answer is that we did. We did a tremendous amount of training and we are proud of some of the training which we did. Owing to a problem of printing, the money spent under this head was omitted from the relevant column. I don't have the exact figure, but it was a figure closely approximating the \$10,000 originally voted. Do we plan to train this year? Yes. In fact, right now we have a group of people receiving training every week-end with a view to their possible employment in the media and I did indicate in the general debate that training and upgrading the quality of our people in the media is a prime priority of this Government and the Ministry.

And then he goes on and gets himself into trouble on Printing and Binding where we approved \$600,000 last year.

The Chairman: he also asked a question on subhead 32 – Contribution to News Agencies.

Cde. Campbell: With your kind permission I prefer to take subhead 32 and subhead 35, the Guyana News Agency, together, so I wish to skip that and deal with subhead 34, Printing and Binding. He raised the question and asked that we should slash that amount. Are we willing to cut that amount? The simple answer, Cde. Chairman, is that we would be willing to have this amount reduced if the hon. Member is willing to take the responsibility for the non-publication of the Official Gazette, because if he knew anything about these Estimates he would know that this money represents the cost of printing the Official Gazette. So, if he is willing to have the Official Gazette cease publication, the answer will be “yes”. If he is not willing to take that responsibility, then the answer will be “no”.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister, I don't think it could be his responsibility. That is a matter of law. You have got to publish Gazette and it is not his liking it or not.

Cde. Campbell: Thank you very much, Cde. Chairman, that makes this point even stronger. Then there are two other expenses in respect of which the hon. Member raises questions – “Contribution to News Agencies” and “The Guyana News Agency” and he makes full use of this opportunity to contradict himself. He said on the one hand that now that we have a Guyana News Agency we must establish relations with Prensa Latina, and then he goes on to say there must be no Guyana News Agency.

I have great difficulty with that kind of logic, Cde. Chairman. I have great difficulty to understand how Prensa Latina must have relations established with it by an organisation which the member suggests should not exist. But that is the kind of logic that is the kind of intelligence that results in the member belonging to a part known for its political looniness. People are not prepared to accept leadership on the basis of that kind of intelligence.

He speaks about the Inter Press Service as a capital institution – Christian Democratic Institution based in Italy. The Inter Press Service is one of the leading news agencies attempting to provide a voice both in terms of hardware and software for the Third World – for developing countries. Inter Press Service, because of the kind of approach it has been taking, has signed agreements and has established relations with a number of developing countries - a number of Third World countries - and a number of socialist countries and among those countries with which IPS has established relations is the Republic of Cuba. I do not know whether the hon. Member is suggesting that we must be more socialist than Cuba and not have relations with an organisation with which Cuba has relations. I can only suggest once again, Cde. Chairman, that the member was discussing this matter on the basis of certain lack of knowledge which I am always prepared to deal with if he would offer me the opportunity.

Is the Guyana News Agency willing to welcome Prensa Latina back to Guyana? The Government of Guyana has never suggested to Prensa Latina that it should cease to have an office. I do not know what the representative of Prensa Latina said to the Minority Party on this matter. They have

told us that they were withdrawing on the basis of their own internal economy and their own internal re-arrangement as a temporary measure. If that is not true, if they gave another explanation to the Minority, then this is not a matter that I want to get into. This is their personal domestic business. It is a matter for them.

But in relation to the more specific question as to whether GNA is willing to establish relations, the answer is that approaches have already been made to the Ambassador of the Republic of Cuba to have discussions with the relevant agencies with a view to establishing such relationship between GNA and Prensa Latina and similar discussions are to be held with the representatives of the Soviet Embassy. If that satisfies the hon. Member of our seriousness in presenting an unbiased picture and of having relationships based on our mature policy of non-alignment, which I hope he now accepts and his party no longer considers a circus, if that satisfies him as to our earnestness in this regard, then I am happy. If that does not satisfy him, Cde. Chairman, then there is nothing I can do.

He raises the question of the Guyana News Agency being a millstone around our necks and being a channel for P.N.C. propaganda abroad. The truth is that the Guyana News Agency, at least, for the present time, will have very little to do in terms of sending information abroad. It has a very minimal role and again, the hon. Member is perhaps indicating a failure on my part to educate him as to what the real facts are. The GNA has little to do with information going abroad and is much more concerned (a) with information coming into Guyana (b) with the flow of information from the rural areas to the city and the rest of the country.

Cde. Chairman, it is only a very unlightened Third World leader today who would question the need for this kind of news agency. It is accepted as a matter of great principle within the non-aligned movement and among all Third World countries that even the Third World need to have a voice of their own as they need to have their own internal systems to regulate the flow of internal information, and all the hon. Member is doing, as I said, is to indicate that there is some need for me to sit down and to educate him on some of the matters relating to a Ministry for which he obviously has some responsibility.

Head 16 – Ministry of Information - \$5,675,600 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 36

DIVISION VIII – MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

Question proposed that the sum of \$855,000 for Division VIII, Ministry of Information, stand part of the Estimates.

9:50 p.m.

Cde. Ram Karran: We have the bald legend again, and I raise it not with the view to rubbing it in but this Ministry in particular has been spending over the years under this particular subhead, Purchase of Equipment. You see it all through the years from 1978. Will the hon. Minister tell us what is going to be purchased on this occasion and whether this is the total capital cost for equipment, whether we have built up the requirements in that Ministry. I am happy to note under subhead 5 that at long last we are acquiring a building for the Archives. Will the hon. Minister say where this building is and whether this \$100,000 would be enough to equip it for the Archives [Interruption.] I was there.

The Chairman: Cde. Ram Karran, if you were here all the time you would have heard they have bought a place, I think Barclays Bank. They said so under some other Head. But, go ahead. I should not stop you.

Cde. Ram Karran: I have other business to do besides sitting here and being interrupted all the time. I did not hear them say so, but perhaps he can give that information to me, and whether \$100,000 will be enough for the equipment of this building. What is being done to rehabilitate the very valuable documents which are kept at the Archives? Most of them have been destroyed I am sure, the older ones, and what efforts are being made to photograph those invaluable documents that are there? What efforts are being made to repatriate some of the documents, maybe to copy them, that are in Holland, and that are in the British Museum and other places, which must be brought back, repatriated, if Guyana is going to be truly a free country, an independent country.

Cde. Mohamed: Subhead 3, Dubbing Theatre. You will recall I have always paid a keen interest on this subhead. I notice that the legend reads, “For further work on Colour Laboratory.” I recall from the early answers from the Minister that he seems to have a penchant to do teaching work rather than function as Minister of Education. I do not think I would have any objection if he so prefers and I would like him to get down into some teaching here to tell us whether this will be the final requirement, whether the terms further indicated that he will be continuing to request money for this colour laboratory, and whether he can indicate what more must be done how much more will be required or whether this will be continuous work that we will have to face from year to year.

Subhead 7, National Library. I am happy that this year we are witnessing the money for the extension of the National Library. We have called for this. He made a promise, I am happy to see that he fulfilling that promise. I notice also that the legend reads for the “erection of New Amsterdam Library.” We would like to ask whether the construction of the New Amsterdam Library will be completed this year and whether it will become operational from this year. Furthermore, I would like to enquire from the Minister whether he will consider sympathetically the idea of expanding and extending the services of the library on a regional basis so that the people within the different regions of the country will have a library which is necessary and which I think will be very useful in advancing education and helping people to acquire knowledge.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister

Cde. Campbell: I must confess that I find it surprising that the hon. Members sees some contradiction between my role as information worker and a teacher. In relation to the first question raised by the Acting Leader of the Minority for purchase of equipment, this money is being used for the purchase of a number of motor vehicles. I am sure one of his colleagues will inform him as to the answer to the question. It is also for the purchase of certain types of office equipment including equipment to facilitate the kind of copying which he spoke of latter on.

Now on the Dubbing Theatre, subhead 3, we hope that this money would go a far way toward completing the work that has to be done on the Dubbing Theatre but much will, of course, depend on a number of factors in respect of which we would not want to commit ourselves absolutely and these factors are obvious to anyone with a smattering of interest in economic problems.

On the Government Archives, the building which has been acquired is the old Barclay's Bank building at the corner of Main and Holmes Streets. That building is to be handed over on the 7th of this month and an invitation has been forwarded to the Leader of the Minority Party to attend that opening.

10 p.m.

With regard to such problems as preservation and repatriation or archival material, this is a matter in respect of which we have not voted large sums of money. There is some provision for this in the current estimates but this is the kind of expenditure in respect of which there are sums of money available from a number of international agencies and organisations and to the extent that we have a proper building to accommodate the library it will be much easier to obtain the kind of funding which is available to countries such as ours.

As to whether the money is sufficient, it is true that we could have used a larger sum of money but it is our hope and intention to use a sort of economy and care of expenditure which we have always been counselled by the Minority to use and we hope therefore we will be able to stretch this money and make it suffice.

With regard to the National Library, subhead 7, yes we hope to be able to work on this building this year but in any case there is a library operating in New Amsterdam. It is not properly housed and this is why we have to deal with this problem. He speaks of extending the services on a regional basis. The service is already operating outside of Georgetown but once the regional system is put into place, this is the kind of responsibility which, in collaboration with the National Library Committee, the Regional Democratic Councils might be able to help achieve.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 9 (1)

The Chairman: Cde. Vice-President for Parliamentary Affairs.

The Vice-President, Parliamentary Affairs and Party/State Relations: (Cde. Ramsaroop): Cde.

Chairman, I rise to move the suspension of Standing Order 9 (1) to enable us to go beyond 10 p.m. so that the consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure for 1981 and the Appropriation Bill through all its Stages can be completed.

Cde. Ram Karran: During the discussion on the preparation of arrangements for the debate I insisted that we were breaching the Standing Orders and that you were applying a procedure that aimed at using the guillotine against the Members, particularly the Members on this side of the Assembly, and I strongly object to the continuation of the business after 10 o'clock having regard to the fact that all our decisions have been based on Sittings from 2 to 4:40, from 4:30 to 6:30 and from 8 to 10. We have exhausted ourselves and we must go home and come another day. This debate was not to be finished today but because of the techniques adopted by the Government and by the Speaker – I strongly protest about it; we have been unable to get through all our business. Members have been stopped indiscriminately in their contributions to the debate based on a false sense of saving time. We are way ahead of time. Why do we want to continue after 10 o'clock? We did that out of courtesy to the first Vice-President to allow him to speak long beyond the sitting time. Every member of the Government who wanted to have an extension was given an extension. That courtesy was not applied to Members on this side of the Assembly. I think it is rank discrimination and I am not going to sit here beyond 10 o'clock.

Question put, agreed to.

Standing Order No. 9(1) suspended.

RESUMPTION OF CONSIDERATION OF THE ESTIMATES

Division VIII, Ministry of Information - \$855,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: comrades and hon. Members, this completes consideration in Committee of Supply of the 1981 Estimates of Expenditure. The Assembly will now resumed.

/Members of the Minority bowed to the Chair and withdraw./

Assembly resumed.

The Speaker: Cde. Vice-President for Economic Planning and Finance.

Cde. Hoyte: I beg to report the Committee of Supply considered the Estimates of Expenditure for 1981 and made amendments to two Heads and one Division:

Head 34, Labour - \$1,382,100 has been increased by \$387,000 and was passed at \$1,769,100;

Head 51, Plant Maintenance and Hire Division - \$5,250,100 was increased by \$1,732,000 and has

been passed at \$6,982,100;

Division XXXIII:11 – Region 10 - \$244,000 has been increased by \$500,00 and has been passed at \$744,000.

As a result of the amendments, the following changes will have to be made to the Motion. The total of the Current Estimates - \$420,909,300 – has to be increased by \$2,119,000 and should now be \$423,028,300. The total of the Capital Estimates - \$428,575,000 has to be increased by \$500,000 and should now be \$429,075,000. The net sum granted \$849,484,300 has been increased by \$2,619,000 and should now be \$852,103,300. The Resolve Clause of the Motion would also have to be amended. The total sum of “one billion, one hundred and seventy-six million, six hundred and seventy-eight thousand dollars” will now read “one billion, one hundred seventy-nine million, two hundred and ninety-seven thousand dollars”.

Amendment –

That this National Assembly approve the estimates of expenditure for the financial year 1981, of a total sum of one billion, one hundred an seventy-nine million, tow hundred and ninety-seven thousand dollars, net of appropriation-in-aid, and excluding three hundred and twenty seven million, one hundred and ninety-three thousand, seven hundred dollars which is chargeable by law, as detailed therein and summarized in the undermentioned schedule, and agree that it is expedient to amend the law to make further provision in respect of finance

put, and agreed to.

Motion, as amended, put, and agreed to.

The Speaker: Cde. Vice-President for Parliamentary Affairs.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 12

The Vice-President, Parliamentary Affairs and Party/State Relations (Cde. Ramsaroop): Cde. Speaker, now that the Estimates have been approved, it is necessary under paragraph (2) of article 218 of the Constitution that the Appropriation Bill be introduced in the Assembly to provide for the issue from the Consolidated Fund of the sums necessary to meet expenditure as approved and for the appropriation of the amount required. Consideration of the Appropriation Bill under our Standing Orders is a more formality. The Bill has been published and copies circulated to members. As we have passed the time on the Order Paper for the introduction of Bills, it is necessary for Standing Order No. 12 which sets out the order of business to be suspended to enable the Bill to be introduced at this stage. I now seek leave of this Assembly for Standing Order 12 to be suspended.

Question –

That Standing Order No. 12 be suspended to enable the Vice-President for Economic Planning and Finance to introduce the 1981 Appropriation Bill

put, and agreed to.

Standing Order No. 12 suspended.

10:10 p.m.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS – FIRST READING

The following Bill was introduced and read the first time:

Appropriation Bill – Bill No. 2/1981. [The Vice-President Economic Planning and Finance.]

PUBLIC BUSINESS

BILL – SECOND AND THIRD READING

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to provide for the issue from the Consolidated fund of the sum necessary to meet the expenditure (not otherwise lawfully charged on the Consolidated Fund) of Guyana for the financial year ending 31st December, 1981, estimates whereof have been approved by the National Assembly, and for the appropriation of the sum for specified purposes, in conformity with the Constitution” [The Vice-President, Economic Planning and Finance.]

Cde. Hoyte: Cde. Speaker, in accordance with paragraph (2) of article 171 of the Constitution, I signify that Cabinet has recommended the Appropriation Bill 1981 for consideration by the National Assembly and moved that it be read and second time.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a Second time.

Cde. Hoyte: Cde. Speaker, I move that the Bill be read a second time

Question put, and agreed to

Bill read a Second time.

Cde. Hoyte: Cde. Speaker, I move that the Appropriation Bill 1981 be read the Third time and passed as printed.

Question put, agreed to.

Bill read a Third time.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, “That this Assembly do now adjourn to a date to be fixed.”

Adjourned accordingly at 10:12 p.m.