

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORTS

/Volume 08/

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE SECOND SESSION (1982) OF THE
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FOURTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER
THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA.

20th Sitting

14:00 hrs

Thursday, 1981-08-06

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.,
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 Minister (10)

Cde. Chandisingh, M.P.,
Minister of Higher Education
Cde. O.E. Clarke, M.P.,
Minister of Regional Development
Cde. R.H.O. Corbin, M.P.,
Ministry of National Development
*Cde. F.E. Hope, M.P.,
Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection
*Cde. H.O. Jack, M.P.,
Minister of Energy and Mines (Absent)
*Cde. M. Shahabuddeen, O.R., S.C., M.P.,
Attorney General and Minister of Justice

- *Cde. R.E. Jackson, M.P.,
Minister of Foreign Affairs (Absent)
- *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.,
Minister of Education

*Non-elected Member

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
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.
- Cde. R.E. Williams, M.P.,
Minister, Fisheries, in the Ministry
of Agriculture
- *Cde. C.A. Nascimento, M.P.,
Minister, Mechanical Equipment, in the
Ministry of Works and Transport
- *Cde. F.U.A. Campbell, M.P.,
Minister of Information (Absent)
- *Cde. F.U.A. Carmichael, M.P.,
Minister, Forestry, in the Ministry
of Agriculture (Absent)
- *Cde. Y.V. Harewood-Benn, M.P.,
Minister of Public Service (Absent-on-Leave)
- *Cde. H. Rashid, M.P.,
Minister Office of the President
- *Cde. R.C. Van Sluytman, M.P.,
Minister, Drainage and Irrigation, in the
Ministry of Agriculture
- *Cde. R.A. Van West-Charles, M.P.,
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, Development and Culture (Absent-on-Leave)
- Cde. R.C. Fredericks, A.A., M.P.,
Minister of State for Youth and Sport, in the
Ministry of National Development
- *Cde. C.E. Wright, M.P.,
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., M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister
- *Cde. E.M. Bynoe, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister (Absent-on-Leave)

*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. Fredericks, M.P.,
- Cde. E.F. Gilbert, M.P.,
- Cde. J. Gill-Mingo, M.P.,
- Cde. A. McRae, M.P.,
- Cde. J.M. Munroe, J.P., .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. Vandeburg, M.P.,
- Cde. H.B. Walcott-Nascimento, J.P., M.P.,
Government Chief Whip

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

Cde. 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)

Cde. D. Hinds, M.P., (Region No. 10 – Upper Damerara/Berbice)

Members of the Minority (12)

(i) People’s Progressive Party - (10)

Minority Leader (1)

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

Minority Leader

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. Ramkarran, M.P.,

Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

Other Members (8)

Cde. J. Jagan, M.P. (Absent)

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

Minority Chief Whip.

Cde. N. Persaud, M.P.

Cde. C.C. Collymore, M.P. (Absent)

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

Cde. I. Basir, M.P.

Cde. C.C. Belgrave, M.P. (Absent)

Cde. Dalchand, J.P., M.P. (Absent)

(ii) United Force (2)

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

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

OFFICERS

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

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

PRAYERS

02:00 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Expression of Sympathy

The Speaker: Comrades, since we last met, Vice-President Hoyte has lost his father. I am sure that all of us would like to extend to him our deepest sympathy and ask him to convey to other members of the bereaved family our deep condolences.

Leave to Members

The Speaker: Leave has been granted to Cde. Harewood-Benn, Cde. Van West-Charles, Cde. Corrica and Cde. Jairam for today's Sitting, and to Cde. Bynoe to 19th August, 1981.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

Position of Public Accounts of the

Government of Guyana

The Minister of Finance (Cde. Sallahuddin): Cde. Speaker, I wish to make a Statement on what progress has been made with respect to the bringing up to date of the Public Accounts.

1. The 1971 Report of the Auditor General on the Public Accounts was laid in Parliament on the 1st June, 1981.
2. The 1972, 1973, and 1974 Reports of the Auditor General on the Public Accounts have been handed over and are now with the Printers for presentation in Parliament later this year.
3. The following outstanding accounts will be submitted to the Auditor General by the Accountant General as follows:
1975 by 31st August, 1981
1976, 1977, 1978 and 1979 by 30th September, 1981
1980 by 15th October, 1981.
The 1981 accounts will be submitted by 30th April, 1982.
4. The following Reports of the Auditor General on the Public Accounts will be ready for handing over as follows:
1975, 1976, 1977 later in 1981
1978, 1979, 1980 by 30th April, 1982
1981 by 30th September, 1982.

Thereafter, the Agencies concerned shall endeavour to meet the deadlines set in the Financial Administration and Audit Act, Chapter 73:01.

02:05 p.m.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTIONS

Signification of Cabinet's Recommendation for the
Consideration of Financial Papers Nos. 1, 2 and 3 of 1981

The Vice-President, Economic Planning and Finance (Cde. Hoyte): Cde. Speaker, in accordance with article 171 (2) of the Constitution, I signify that Cabinet has recommended for consideration by the Assembly the Motion for the Approval of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 1/1981, Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates, (Advances made from the Contingencies Fund in 1980), totaling \$11,330,632.

The Chairman: Perhaps you may signify Cabinet's approval of the other Papers and pass them up, please.

Cde. Hoyte: Yes, Cde. Speaker, I beg to signify also the approval of the Cabinet for the consideration of Financial Paper No. 2/1981 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates totaling \$69,697,311 for the period ended 31st December, 1980 and also, Financial Paper No. 3/1981 – Schedule for Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates totaling \$8,710, 045 for the period ended 15th July, 1981.

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL PAPER NO. 1/1981

“Be it resolved that the Committee of Supply approves of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 1/1981 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates (Advances made from the Contingencies Fund in 1980), totaling \$11,330,632.” /The Vice-President, Economic Planning and Finance./

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

Cde. Hoyte: I beg to move the Motion standing in my name.

Motion Proposed.

The Chairman: We will now consider Financial Paper No. 1/1981. I propose doing page 3, Capital Estimates, the item dealing with the Prime Minister. Page 3, item 1, subhead 2 – Buildings. We are doing page 3 to facilitate the Prime Minister.

Cde. Ram Karran (The Deputy Speaker): I want to ask if the Prime Minister would indicate who are the contractors in the construction of the building. Is it a school building, or Defence Force? Will the Hon. Prime Minister tell us why it is costing so much more than was originally provided.

The Prime Minister (Cde. Dr. Reid): Cde. Chairman, the cost has increased because, like so many things, costs have been increasing for materials, for workmanship and things of that sort. The work for the most part has been done by the members of the Defence Force and we have been careful enough to ensure that we use savings from another Head so that we can take care of this expenditure, for the building has taken a priority position as far as the Army is concerned.

Cde. Ram Karran: If it was done by the same staff, how is an increase in wages affected?

Cde. Dr. Reid: Cde. Chairman, I said that the prices of most things are going up, the cost of material is usually a heavy cost and even though the G.D.F. has been doing the work, some other labourers had to be recruited to assist in this work.

The Chairman: Page 1, item 1.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Head 6, Ombudsman, Subhead 8, Books and Publications. I have a short question. We are providing the sum of \$900 for books and publications. I would like to ask a question. This department has no Ombudsman. He has not been there for the past two years. Why are we providing money for books and publications when the Ombudsman himself has not been appointed and there is nobody functioning in this Constitutional position?

The Attorney General and Minister of Justice (Cde. Shahabudeen): Cde. Chairman, the position is that, although there is no one now holding the position of Ombudsman, there is an office of the Ombudsman and we do have administrative staff in that office. The office has to be continued against the day, which I expect will not be long now, when someone will be appointed to hold the office of Ombudsman. Meanwhile, we have standing orders for subscriptions to books and publications which cannot conveniently be discontinued merely because there is no one, for the time being, holding the office.

The Chairman: Item 2, Had 30, Ministry of National Development.

Cde. Ram Karran: May I ask the Hon. Minister to give some explanation as to the notes in the legend? It states here “Voted provision inadequate.” The whole thing seems inadequate because as it has been repeatedly pointed out in this Assembly, no

account is given of the money spent under this Head, National Development. What needs to be done? What is this \$503,199 going to be used for?

The Chairman: Not what it is going to be used for, what it has been used for.

Cde. Ram Karran: Thank you for your correction. What was it used for?

The Minister of National Development (Cde. Corbin): Cde. Chairman, as has been explained from time to time in this Assembly, the Ministry of National Development is engaged in extensive mobilization throughout the length and breadth of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana. In the course of these events it necessitates from time to time the mobilization of people, fetching them from one place to another. It also involves expenditure in projects which sometimes are not catered for in the normal way. As a result of this, during 1980, it was necessary to utilize this sum for national mobilization.

02:15 p.m.

Cde. Ram Karran: I has been pointed out repeatedly that the Constitution of this country requires that money spent on each item under any of these Heads should be itemized in the Budget. It has not been so and I want to draw to the attention of the Hon. Vice-President, Economic Planning and Finance, that this Head is not represented as it should be under the Parliamentary system. We have repeatedly asked this question and we have tabled specific Questions. If the Hon. Minister is saying that they have to do mobilization and what not with respect to the specific questions relating to certain years, this Parliament has asked for information as to how the money was to be spent. I would like to know how the Auditor-General is going to audit these accounts if the Hon. Minister takes the attitude he has taken in saying that the Government has a blank cheque to spend the people's money however it likes and you can have it or lump it.

The Chairman: When the Public Accounts Committee comes with that, you will be able to get the Auditor-General's comments. You heard Cde. Sallahuddin say you will bet them before year end.

Items 3 and 4. Item 5.

Cde. Mohammed: Head 44 – Ministry of Education, Social Development and Cultural – Primary and Secondary Schools, subhead 5 – Uniforms. Cde. Chairman, I wish to inquire from the Minister about the basis used for the distribution for uniforms to school children, and moreover, if he is in a position to let us know how many children

have benefited from the distribution of school uniforms.

I wonder, too, if the Minister is aware of the fact that all children in the country have not received school uniforms, that this lends itself to suggestions of discrimination or, as some would say, punishment for many children who have not seen fit to participate in mass games. Apart from the fact that the colours chosen cut across the uniforms that are presently used by individual schools, I wonder if the Minister can say what is the Ministry's intention with respect to uniformity in dress and its relationship to this distribution of uniforms.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister of Education.

The Minister of Education (Cde. Thomas): To answer the first question, Mr. Chairman, how many suits of uniforms have been distributed to school children, I am happy to report that ever since the President made the gesture on the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the Republic, we have been able to distribute 68,304 suits of uniforms to 34,152 students. The system used for distribution of the uniforms is a simple one. All new entrants to primary schools will receive two suits of uniforms. All new entrants to secondary schools will receive two suits of uniforms. All students attending nursery schools will receive uniforms.

To answer the question asked in relation to uniformity, we propose that at the three levels we have some level of uniformity. All nursery students will be required to use the colours which are identified for students attending nursery schools. At the primary level all primary students will do likewise and the same will go for the secondary schools. I don't know if that answers the Member.

The Chairman: Item 6 and the whole of page 2.

Cde. Narbada Persaud: Page 2, items 10 and 11. Item 10, Head 77 – Ministry of Finance subhead 13, Printing and Binding. I have noted the sum of \$65,250 was spent in addition to the \$150,000 approved for the year's Estimates. Now, the legend reads that this amount \$65,250 was to pay for printing of the 1979/80 Estimates and Budget Speeches.

In view of such a large sum I would like to inquire from the Minister the number of copies of Estimates printed for 1979 and 1980 and also the number of Budget Speeches printed for 1979 and 1980 bearing in mind that the sum is a very high one.

With your permission, Cde. Chairman, if I am to take item 11, Head 78 – Ministry of Finance – Accountant General, subhead 19 – Special Visits and Representation at External Conferences, I have noted that \$1½ million was approved for the 1980

Estimates and in addition another \$800,000 was spent making a total on this subhead of \$2,300,000. Cde. Chairman, we are talking about the time of austerity. To my mind this figure, \$2.3 million, does not really keep within that call for austerity measures at this time of crisis. Therefore, I would be very grateful if the Cde. Minister could provide us this afternoon with the answers to, for example, how many visits were made during the year 1980, and if he is in a position to state how many persons made up those visits. The third question would be, what is the separate cost for each one of those visits.

The Chairman: Cde. Sallahuddin.

Cde. Sallahuddin: Cde. Chairman, there is no unwillingness on the part of the Government to provide these details as requested, but surely the Hon. Member would recognize that it is not physically possible, at this time, to answer in such detail. But surely the information could be made available. Suffice it to say that with respect to his query on item 11, one must recognize that while at the beginning of the year you programme for special visits and representation at external conferences, several other conferences arise and, therefore, it becomes necessary to represent the country.

With respect to item 10, perhaps I can simply point out that in both instances we were in the vicinity of 500 copies. But one would recognize also that even if we were printing the same number of copies, not only would the cost of printing have gone up but also the cost of paper. Thank you, Cde. Chairman.

The Chairman: The whole of page 3, Capital Estimates. We have already finished item 1.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman item 2 Division XIII – Ministry of Agriculture, Subhead 44 – Sea and River Defence (Essequibo), I would like the Minister concerned to tell us whether the amount asked for now has taken care of all the threats to the sea defences in Essequibo, bearing in mind that several areas have been affected in the past, are affected at the moment, and farmers are complaining. We are not opposed to the vote but we would like to know whether it is being monitored regularly so that the farmers of that area will suffer no disaster again.

Item 3, Division XIX – Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, subhead 34 (New) – Guyana Hydro/Aluminum project. I would like the Minister to tell us, in view of the fact that the Mines Commission has been established, what programme the government is talking about under the legend: “To meet expenses of the Gold/Molybdenum Programme.” There is a Mines Authority, set up under the Act, that is functioning in a kind of autonomous way.

(Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud continues)

Hence, we would like to know which group, individuals or body will be initiating or pursuing, or have pursued, this programme and if that body or those individuals are companies. If companies, are they local or foreign?

02:25 p.m.

The legend against item 4, Guyana Hydro/Aluminium Project, reads: “To meet expenses of the Hydro/Smelter Project and the revival of the Resettlement Committee.” The Committee went dead. Why is there need to revive the Committee? I think the legend is grossly inadequate. If the Committee is to be revived, who are the people to constitute this Committee and what are to be the functions of the Committee? Have all the claims and complaints of people who have been disturbed by resettlement been dealt with? If not, what is the current position?

Cde. Ram Karran: I want to deal with items 5, 6 and 7. Perhaps I can deal with them in one or two general questions. Will the Hon. Minister seek to enlighten the Assembly on how much more will be required for the complete capital requirements for the cotton textile mill? It would seem to me that we have been spending money all the time for additional funds for construction. When is the construction going to come to an end and what is the total capital requirement for this project?

May I refer to this economic misadventure, the Guyana Glass Works, on which we have been spending and spending and we cannot see a piece of glass. When is this going to come to an end and when are we going to be able to produce glass in this country? I am told all sorts of things. The Government is not making information available to this Assembly with regard to these misadventures. Are we going to go on spending and spending? When are we going to put an end to the importation of glass bottles and have them produced in our country? I am told that \$38 million has been spent already.

I don't think this Assembly should be used as a forum to give glowing pictures of what is going on. Let us have the facts. Why is this plant not yet producing? Will the Minister kindly deal with it.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister of Agriculture.

The Minister of Agriculture (Cde. Tyndall): Cde. Chairman, it would be a

happy situation to be in a position to anticipate all the needs with respect to sea defence. Unfortunately, the elements are not so benign. One hopes, however, that the elements will allow us to stay within the provision made. I don't think it will be possible to go beyond that. Certainly, the Minister of Agriculture, Drainage and Irrigation will endeavour to ensure that the situation is as closely monitored as possible. Indeed, we are establishing a mechanism to do precisely this in the Essequibo area where we are carrying out a very expensive drainage and irrigation scheme. The sea defence works are very vital to the drainage and irrigation scheme and it is very essential to make sure of the integrity of this important structure.

The Chairman: Items 3 and 4. Who will answer those? Items 5, 6 and 7. Vice-President, Economic Planning and Finance.

Cde. Hoyte: Cde. Chairman, it is quite inaccurate of my friend, Cde. Ram Karran, alleged that information has not been given about these projects. Every time we consider these Heads in this Assembly, Cde. Narbada Persaud, in particular, has asked extensive questions and has got very careful answers to these questions.

On the general question raised by Cde. Ram Karran, I would have to indicate to him that I do not know the answer to that question for the simple reason that the Textile Mill is a complex. We started off, as Comrades will remember, with completing the facility for producing grey cloth, that is the fabric without any print on it. Then, Members will also recall, we completed the facilities for printing. We have in our stores very beautiful printed cotton fabrics. People can see the fabrics. People are buying the fabrics. People display the fabrics at fashion shows and in various ways. We are now contemplating extending these facilities to enable us to produce mixed fabrics, that is, polyester cum cotton fabrics. Thus, the textile mill project is on-going development. I could not stand here and say when the development will end or what will be the final cost.

I have already invited the members of the Minority parties to visit the glassworks. It is of no use standing up here or sitting here and making pronouncements. You have to go and see what is accomplished, what is on the ground. I have already explained to this Assembly in the course of the Budget Debate early this year that there was a problem with the supply of electricity. That problem is being resolved and I have been assured by the management of that company that later this year the Glass Works will be opened. I do not want to pin myself down to any precise month or ate or hour, for that matter, but

the facility is finished. I do hope that my good friend, Cde. Ram Karran, on one of his nocturnal peregrinations in that area will go in and have a look at the facility.

The Chairman: the whole of page 2. [Pause] This completes consideration of all the items. I will now put the Motion which is

That the Committee of Supply approve of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 1/1981 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates (Advances made from the Contingencies Fund in 1980), totalling \$11,330,632.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

The Chairman: I wonder whether we should not complete the other two Papers and then allow the Minister to put the Motions separately.

02:35 p.m.

Approved of Financial Paper No. 2/1981

“Be it resolved that the Committee of Supply approve of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 2/1981 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates (Releases made by Special Warrants in terms of Article 219 (3) of the Constitution for the period ended 31st December, 1980), totalling \$69,697,311.”

Cde. Ram Karran: I wish, sir, to raise a small question under item 12, Head 11, Prime Minister – Guyana Defence Force, and to ask the Hon. Prime Minister or the Hon. Vice-President, Economic Development and Finance, who has two hats –

The Chairman: Cde. Ram Karran, are you addressing the question to the Prime Minister?

Cde. Ram Karran: Yes, I would like the Hon. Prime Minister to tell me whether there has been a settlement with respect to wages and salaries in the Public Service. While negotiations, I understand, are going on between the T.U.C. and the Vice-President, Economic Development and Finance and the Vice-President, Public Welfare, I noticed here a sum of money - \$1,500,000 – for increased salaries with respect to one of the Services in the country. Is it the same think we are talking about or have we got one set of people being treated differently from the other set of workers engaged in the Government concern? Why is it, if the exercise is not completed, we have this large sum of money shown alongside this Head?

The Chairman: Cde. Prime Minister.

Cde. Dr. Reid: This is the business of 1980 and some examination was done with the Guyana Defence Force. Thus there was some change in emoluments in that area and thus we have these sums for increased wages.

The Chairman: Page 1, Capital Estimates, item 1 and 2.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Item 2, Division V – Prime Minister, subhead 4 – Nation Service. The legend states: “To provide additional finances to the National Service to meet its expanding programme of activities.” We want to ask the Minister concerned, in this case the Prime Minister, what programme has been expanded bearing in mind that one of the inputs that was expected of the National Service was cotton. We would like to know exactly how many tons of cotton, if any, have been produced by the National Service to meet the requirements, bearing in mind the substantial sums that are

voted year after year for the National Service, and bearing in mind Government's pronouncements of the kind of activities that are expected of the National Service. I would like to know, too when that figure is given what amount is being imported in the country. It is only then that we can know clearly what input the National Service is putting into the economy of the country. Our view is that these sums of money that are voted year after year and are increased time after time are a waste of taxpayers' money and we are opposed to it.

Cde. Dr. Reid: Cde. Chairman, the National Service is not only a production organisation, but also a training organisation. Thus, expenditure is not only for production but also for training people which, eventually, will help in the production in the long run. Cotton for all intents and purposes at this time in Guyana has been relatively new. It used to be grown historically but for many many years cotton was not grown in this country. As is obvious to any one who is interested in developing any new crop, it has the pains of development. It was good to know that the National Service has grown as many as 2,000 acres of cotton in this country, but for the requirements of the Textile Mill, some 10,000 acres must be under cultivation. With our weather conditions it is not always possible to grow the same acreage year by year and thus at this time on the ground for this particular crop it is only a small amount of acreage under cultivation. But work is going on and by the next crop we should have some 2,500 acres under cultivation.

Expert help has been sought and has already been used and some of our nationals are now trained in the cultivation of cotton. Usually they speak of the amount grown and harvested as so many thousand bales and so on. But outside of the cotton itself we have the cotton seed that is being stored up so that when we get the required equipment we will be able to process oil from the cotton seed, as well as the stockfeed. One cannot really premise the total revenue from the cotton fibre alone. One has to take into account the oil and the stockfeed from the cotton crop.

Some new services have been introduced in the National Service and a new facility has been installed at Koriri, far up the Canje Creek, where they are specializing now in growing some other crops in that area. Thus we have additional expenditure in the National Service.

There is only one last thing I wish to mention, that National Service is not only dealing with those who are at the centres, but also with some of the people who are being trained in other places, even those who are trained overseas. National Service is giving

an orientation so that all young people will in early life come to terms with work. Sometimes people get all sorts of learning and they do not learn how to work and in this practical environment, this new climate, young people can work together, even those who have to go to universities and colleges have to spend some time at National Service so that they will have a commitment to this country and will exert their energies in the process of development.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I have one short supplementary question. Will the Prime Minister be kind enough to tell us how many persons who have been subjected to the orientation about which he spoke, particularly those who have had overseas training and have not returned to the country and if they are among those who have been sued by the Government. This would give an indication of how effective this orientation is. If they are given certain orientation here and go on scholarships and do not return to the country, it will be a bad reflection on the system which the Prime Minister speaks so glowingly about.

Cde. Dr. Reid: Sometimes one would ask what would have been the result if there was no orientation at all. That is how we see education. Sometimes certain things do not bring the kind of results we would wish and then you ask yourself the question what would have happened if there was no orientation at all. That outside world we have to compete with, Cde. Chairman, is very attractive, it has the kind of publicity to attract our young people. We have to do a lot of work to ensure that they could stay in this country. It is not only happening in Guyana. As people get more and more training and learning, there is the tendency for greater mobility. And so you will find people moving from Canada to the United States, from the United States to Canada, from the United Kingdom to the United States and so on and so forth. And we, in our endeavour and urgency to keep as many of our people as possible must do this kind of orientation.

2:45 p.m.

For us, we are not really satisfied with the return of our students. Too many of them are actually staying away and there was a period when we could not have brought them back. One must remember also that some students have gone abroad to be trained without any orientation at all. That crop is now being harvested and we are seeing some of the results that we had not hoped for.

The Chairman: Page 1, Current Expenditure.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: One short question.

The Chairman: On the Ombudsman again?

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: We are waiting to see the person appointed very quickly. Item 2, Head 2 – Supreme Court of Judicature, subhead 11 – Expenses of Jurors. People who have been serving in the Supreme Court as Jurors have had a grouse and have been complaining and, thus, we are not opposed to additional expenditure whether for 1980 or 1981. I want to make the point before the Attorney General does it, that is, we accept civic responsibility and it is not a question of the monetary successes that will be gained out of the services but on the last occasion, I pointed to the years when those sums were fixed. I would like to know what is being done to put them on a reasonable basis bearing in mind all the changes that have taken place and indeed the escalation and inflation and what have you.

Cde. Dr. Shahabudeen: Cde. Chairman, my friend has spoken with much merit on his side. This is an area which can do with review and reconsideration. Indeed, it has been the subject of earnest examination for some time. But I believe my friend and the Assembly will appreciate that it cannot be approached in a piecemeal way. It is all connected with the evaluations which must be made of our total circumstances in these times of austerity. We hope that we will conclude this examination within a reasonable time and be able by next year this time to come back to the Assembly and say something more pleasing to my friend.

The Chairman: Page 2, except items 12 and 13.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: One short question on item 11, Head 9 – Public Prosecutions, subhead 11 – (New) Uniforms. You will probably pardon my ignorance, I am trying to reconcile it. The legend is grossly inadequate, and I take this opportunity to criticise those who prepare these documents. I am sure they could do better here. One knows or one has an idea of what is the function of the office of Public Prosecutions. They are not policemen; I do not expect Attorneys-at-Law to be given uniforms. The

sum is \$610. I think the Members of the Assembly are treated very very discourteously.

Cde. Ram Karran: I forego that question.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, just to ask the same question, I wondered who are the persons to be provided with uniforms?

Item 17, Head 18 – Attorney General – Deeds Registry, subhead 10 – Maintenance of Office Equipment. I have no quarrel with the sum of \$516 requested because the voted provision was inadequate to meet increased costs. But I wonder if I could make a plea as I have done before in this Assembly in respect of not only the office equipment but the records of the Deeds Registry. They are in a terrible state. We need money to be voted for those records in the Deeds Registry which are disintegrating at the present moment. They are flying all over the place. You go to the Deeds Registry, you go to the counter and you see the books and you see the pages all disintegrating, flying around the place. Very shortly there will be no records. The reconstruct those will be well nigh impossible and it may well be that if it is not impossible it may well be that it will take a hell of a lot of money to reconstruct them. I am making a plea once again, I did it while Mr. Fred Wills was the Minister, for money to be voted to get those records re-written to prevent them disintegrating and causing people to suffer as a result.

Item 22, Head 21 – Ministry of Home Affairs (Police), subhead 6 – Electricity and the legend says “increased charges”. I wonder, sir. There is a sum of \$50,000 requested for increased charges but I do not see anywhere else in the other Ministries any significant request for increased amounts for electricity charges. I wonder whether it is merely for increased charges or whether it is just for arrears, that I have talked so often about, that they wish to pay to the Electricity Corporation. If there were increased charges, they should be for every Ministry. I see increased charges for travelling all over the place but not for electricity. What is this \$50,000 for, is it for increased charges or is it for arrears of electricity bills?

The Chairman: Cde. Attorney General.

Cde. Dr. Shahabudeen: Cde. Chairman, I am sorry to have to disagree with my two friends with respect to the remarks which they offered as to the adequacy of the explanations concerning the item relating to uniforms for the establishment of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

In a document of the proportions of the one before the Assembly there evidently are certain physical limitations to the degree of details within which those who prepare the document can act. One assumes that this document, being prepared not for all land

sundry but for Members of the Assembly, some of whom are members of long standing and great experience, would be readily and easily appreciated by them in the context of the structure of the Estimates as they have been prepared from time to time over the years.

I am no great expert myself in these things but if one looks at other parts of the Estimates I believe one would see items appearing for uniforms without too much detail or explanation. For example, page 43, Head 20, Deeds Registry, one sees an item there which speaks very simply of uniforms. I do not see any legend which seeks to stretch out the explanation beyond that point. Everybody knows that an item concerning uniforms with respect to civil departments must relate to office assistants. If it related to the Police Force, then, of course, there would be some basis for assuming that the intent was that it should apply to members of the Force.

2:55 p.m.

So we have a context of experience and certain dimensions relating to the preparation of the Estimates and these things seem to give us a right to call upon the collective experience of the Assembly in assimilating and understanding and appreciating documents of this necessarily compressed nature. I submit, for the consideration of the Assembly, that the allegation of inadequacy of explanatory detail does not hold good but in case there still lingers any doubt in any quarter, I would like to say explicitly that this modest sum of \$610 relates to uniforms of the office assistants in the Chambers of the D.P.P. and not to any other members of that Establishment.

I would like to refer briefly to the remarks made by my good friend the Hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh. These are remarks which he has been made before in this Assembly and repetition does not spoil the virtue of those remarks. I would like to admit that. He is absolutely right. We need to take measures to preserve our records not only in the Registry, but in a number of other areas of governmental activity, for example, the Archives, the Medical Establishment, the Police Establishment, the Births and Deaths Registries and so you see when one lifts one's eyes up and above the particular department with which one is dealing, one sees that there may be a problem larger proportions, which will call for a more wholesale approach to its resolution.

The government is looking at this. I know for a fact that efforts are being directed to the resolution of the problem, for example, in the obvious departments such as those relating to the Births and Deaths Registries and the Archives, of course. Our efforts have not been without some degree of success, modest though that may be. I know for a fact, although the visible evidence may not be very conclusive, that progress has been made in the business of conserving and preserving the records of the Deed Registry as well as the Supreme Court Registry. What I admit is that these efforts have not gone as far as we ourselves would like to see them go but we undertake to redouble the efforts and see what can be done to expedite matters.

The Chairman: Cde. Moore.

The Minister of Home Affairs (Cde. Moore): Cde. Chairman, we live in a world which now and, indeed last year, 1980, is dominated by power and energy and the Ministry of Home Affairs is concerned primarily with security. The cost of security, like the cost of everything else, is increasing. The additional sum of \$50,000 therefore was to make good a shortfall in the Estimates for the original provision of \$300,000

which proved inadequate.

The Chairman: Page 3. Page 4.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud rose. Page 3.

The Chairman: I have finished with page 3. Don't tell me No. I say I have finished.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I was waiting to see whether you would name any item.

The Chairman: I was saying the whole page all the time. Page 4.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I crave your indulgence to ask on short question.

The Chairman: Page 4. Page 5.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, item 44, National Development Expenses of. The legend reads: "Previous provision inadequate." Previous provision for what? We would like to know because I think we have a right to know under all the financial regulations, particularly when the legend refers to inadequacy of funds. We would like to know for what purpose, how much has been utilized so far and what the remaining amount will be used for.

The Chairman: Item 44. No answer?

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud I want to protest.

The Chairman: What do you want me to do?

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I just want to record my protest as a Member of this Assembly. We come here prepared to discuss Estimates and we are expected to be alert. We pose questions and we get no answers. I think with so many Ministers occupying the Government benches, they owe not only this Assembly but the nation an obligation and responsibility to answer questions when they are posed from this side. To just walk out of the Assembly is not only discourtesy to us, but it is grave discourtesy to you. I would ask you, sir, to call upon the members of the Government to perform their functions.

The Chairman: Page 6.

Cde. Mohamed: Cde. Chairman, I wish to speak on item 54, subhead 27, (New) – Mass Games, Expenses, I note that it is a new subhead. I would like to ask the Minister if the sum here includes the sums spent for expenses incurred in the United States and Trinidad for the purpose of holding the Mass Games. If this is so, can the Minister say how much was spent in the United States in buying various things for this activity and how much was spent in Trinidad.

I wish to ask the Minister further if he is aware that this experiment has led to severe problems in the entire educational system and particularly to those students and pupils who have been to some extent coerced into participation in the Mass Games. The Minister, I am sure, understands because some instructions were given to the schools about how to treat those students who would have lost in their school work. It is creating a tremendous amount of concern among teachers and parents as they see students being affected through their participation in the Game.

Because of this I also want to ask the Minister whether, from the experience gained from this experiment and from what he has learnt, the Ministry will ensure that no conflict will arise should the Government pursue the question of Mass Games and that, should the Games be continued, the students will not be affected in their studies as they presently are.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister.

The Minister of Education (Cde. Thomas): Cde. Chairman, in relation to the first question, I am afraid I am unable to say how much money was spent for importation of material for costumes from the U.S.A. and from Trinidad. If the member wishes, he can give notice for such a question. I am prepared to answer it.

With respect to the problems which affect the educational system as a result of students' participation in Mass Games, I will say that we had some initial problems because a number of people, who were opposed to the idea of having children participate in this learning experience, attempted to criticize the whole exercise. As a result, we had some initial problems.

In 1980, you will recall, 2,300 students participated in these Games. In 1981 we were able to organize the Games on a larger scale and we had the participation of 4,200 students.

I must say that students were not coerced into their participation in Mass Games. Our records show that a far greater number than the 4,200 who participated in Mass Games expressed a willingness to participate in those Games, but the facilities which we have could not have allowed us to utilize more students in that programme.

3:05 p.m.

The final question has to do with our students not being offered extra tuition. I wish to say that that is a fallacy. The Ministry of Education has worked out a programme to ensure that those children who participated in Mass Games got extra tuition at no extra cost. Apart from that, we have been monitoring that programme and at one of the better primary schools we observed that two of the students who participated in those exercises ended up at the head of their class as a result of the attitude they developed during their participation in Mass Games. It is intended to ensure that students understand what it is to operate as a group, to co-operate with each other, to develop leadership potential which they have so that they can have an urge for initiative and to be tolerant and understanding. I think that answers the questions which the member asked.

The Chairman: Page 7. Page 8. Page 9.

Cde. Ram Karran: I have a small question on page 9, item 76 Head 73 – Ministry of Labour, subhead 23 – (New) – Remuneration of Trainees. You will notice that the explanation under the notes state “New subhead created.” One wonders if the Ministers or the Vice-Presidents feel, or what they feel. This is the Parliament you are addressing. Is there no other explanation? Why? For instance, we are starting out with a new subhead and then we have “remuneration of trainees.” Who are these trainees? Were are they attached? What is the course? How long will the course last? This is treating the Assembly and yourself with contempt and the Hon. Vice President ought to tell us what it is all about and not leave it for us to enquire of him what it is all about. Who are those trainees? Are they P.N.C. thugs? In what skill are you training them? This is ridiculous, Your Honour.

The Chairman: Cde. Vice-President.

The Vice President, Public Welfare (Cde. Green): It is a point with my good friend who has been attached to the labour movement to descend to such vulgarity in dealing with this matter. First, this is a matter that was attracting the attention of the public through the mass media last year and I am not responsible for his inability to either read or understand. This is an idea which surfaced after discussions with labor leaders and an examination of the present state of our skills in society. The idea is that we are paying a stipend to a number of young persons who are attached to a number of agencies,

Government and no-Government – it includes the private sector – to acquire a variety of skills while working on the job for periods extending from six weeks to six months. The programme has met with signal success and we propose to continue this programme. It will operate outside of the traditional G.T.I. and G.I.T.C. projects and if a man wants to be a boat-builder or a tailor, we will be able to identify those persons to work with people in the public and private sector in order to acquire those skills.

The Chairman: Page 10. Capital Estimates, Page 1, items 3 to 6. Page 2.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Item 10, Division XIX – Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, subhead 21 – Hydropower Division. The legend states “Voted provision inadequate to meet work programme for the year.” This is dealing with the hydropower division. We know all that is involved and I do not have an intention to recount.

The Chairman: Cde. Persaud, as you rightly pointed out, you are wasting time. Who will answer the question? Cde. Clarke, will you give me some indication whether there is somebody who is prepared to answer this question.

The Minister of Regional Development (Cde. Clarke): I will answer.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: We would like to know what work is going on. I am dealing with items 10 and 11 at the same time. What is the stage of this project? What is envisaged in view of all that is read in the press about economic problems and the influence of outside sources? We would like to know because we are voting money. Our complaint has been that we are throwing a lot of money down the drain in these areas. Dealing specifically with item 11, subhead 25 – Capital Contribution to Upper Mazaruni Development Authority, the legend states “To meet liabilities owing to BIDCO for Services rendered to UMDA.” The original provision was \$500,000 and now we are asking for \$1 million. I cannot understand the planning here. Surely, those who constructed this figure would have been in a position to know what was required and what had to be the expenditure. What were the liabilities when those Estimates were prepared? To come now to ask for double the amount provided is ridiculous bearing in mind our charges that machinery and what have you are wasted, put to rot, in this area. I think the Minister owes us an obligation to tell us what is really taking place, how much more indebtedness we have or if this sum will complete all the liabilities.

The Chairman: Cde. Naraine.

The Vice-President, Works and Transport (Cde. Naraine): Cde. Chairman, in relation to item 10, this expenditure was for some micro hydro-power projects which were attracting CIDA assistance. Investigations took place on a fall in the North West District and another one in the Rupununi. These projects were as a result of a much larger programme which was done by the United Nations and out of that, these two falls, one in the North West and one in the Rupununi, were identified for further investigations. The more detailed work started later in the year and this resulted in some additional expenses and so the supplementary provision was sought.

In relation to item 11, the Upper Mazaruni Project, you will recall that it was during last year, the later part, that this project was reviewed by the World Bank and it was considered as a good and viable project. We therefore had to get updated the reports, which were done some years earlier by SWECO, so that the economic feasibility of the project could have been reviewed by the World Bank.

(Cde. S.S. Naraine continues)

03:15 p.m.

BIDCO was used as the agency for doing that initial financing for the updating of the project. BIDCO itself did not do it. It was done by a Consulting firm and the Ministry had to reimburse BIDCO with the funds that had been expended on the Government's behalf. And so, this million dollars is principally for updating that report. I think it was well spent.

The Chairman: Page 3. Hon. Member Mr. Singh.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, item 13, Division XX – Ministry of Economic Development, subhead 14 – Cotton Textile Mill. I am just wondering what the position really is. In Paper 1 which we have gone through already, we noted that the voted provision was \$5 million, \$3.5 million, \$3.5 million Supplementary, then \$2 million, and that is reflected here. Cotton Textile Mill \$5 million; Supplementary Provision \$5,500,000; further Supplementary Provision is now sought in the sum of \$9,970.00. The legend says “Voted provision inadequate to meet construction and other costs on the Project.” But every one of these Financial Papers has additional money for the Cotton Textile Mill. I am merely wondering where will it all end. Paper 3, which I will not speak on, shows that there is an additional sum being asked for in the sum of \$3,731,539 to meet payment to GUYCONSTRUCT for work done on the Sanata Textile Mill.

What is the present position? Could the Hon. Minister bring us up-to-date on what the position is? How much is it costing us? Are we finished spending? Perhaps I can ask this question now, the question of working capital. Have we got the cotton? Are we getting the cotton to operate this mill? Are we buying cotton from somewhere else? Is the National Service really producing cotton for this mill or do we have to buy from somewhere else? I see that there is supposed to be cotton on sale on the streets produced by the Textile Mill. I just wondered whether the Hon. Minister would bring us up-to-date on this cotton textile mill. Are we going to be asked to vote any more money in respect of the construction? Are we going to be asked to vote any more money in respect of the actual working capital of the cotton textile mill? Is the National Service producing enough cotton to really keep the mill going?

When we consider all these costs that have been spent on the Cotton Textile Mill, working capital provided, money provided to the National Service for a cotton gin and

cotton-picking equipment, and also the capital input for producing cotton, I really would like to see a cost benefit analysis. I really think it would be useful to this honourable Assembly to see exactly what this whole cotton business has cost us, the cotton production, the cotton gin, the cotton textile mill and all the details of it. I think it really would make interesting reading if we could have a comprehensive presentation of this whole cotton production business that Guyana has embarked on, to see how much money we have spent, what has been the input, and what we have got out of it, as compared with perhaps if we bought cotton from outside.

I know it will be said that we have created jobs, etc., and we want to stand on our own feet. There are times that one wonders whether it may not be to our advantage in the final analysis to get it from outside rather than to try and do it ourselves. I think the Government has in fact tacitly admitted this by bringing in Green construction Company to do work at Guymine. Green Construction Company is a private enterprise, it is a capitalist company that has been brought in to do work at Guymine. It started with primary stripping and now we are ahead of schedule and I understand the company is being given additional work and will be actually going into the mining field.

The Chairman: Let's come back to the topic.

Mr. M.F. Singh: One wonders whether that kind of operation may not be more flexible than our spending millions of dollars on a cotton mill which in fact, in the final analysis, will be more expensive than if we had bought the cotton from outside. That's the point I want to make. It is relevant, Mr. Chairman.

Going to item 14, subhead 25 – Guyana Glass Works, again, we may have started producing cotton but certainly we have not started producing glass. Every Financial Paper that comes up shows additional expenditure being requested in respect of the Guyana Glass Works. My information is that the Guyana Glass Works will not get off the ground at all until electricity can be provided. The Guyana Glass Works will not get off the ground unless there is an adequacy of electricity supply. When will we be able to have enough electricity to supply the Guyana Glass Works so that we can produce glass?

What has been happening at the Glass Works? I understand that we are pouring millions of dollars into it? We took an Engineer out of the alumina plant at Guybau; we brought him to be in charge of the machinery and plant at the Guyana Glass Works. He had nothing to do except to fire people. That's all he had to do. There was no production to be done because there was no electricity. Eventually, I understand, he just

quit the job and has now joined private enterprise in their production. What is the position with the Guyana Glass Works? After having spent all this money, is it going to be left lying down there as a white elephant?

Money lying down idle is money that is unproductive. If you put it in the bank it will earn interest particularly in these days of high interest charges and high interest rates for your fixed deposits, etc. Money lying down unproductive is money that the taxpayers will eventually have to subsidize. When will it get off the ground? How many people are we employing there? What is the salary/wages bill there and what are the returns we are getting from it?

Item 16, subhead 27 (New) – Working Capital-Textile Mill. The sum of \$2,128,000 is sought under this subhead. Is that to buy cotton from abroad?

Item 17, Division XXI – Ministry of Regional Development, subhead 9 – Matarkai Development Authority - \$275,000 is being requested to meet short-fall in expenditures incurred by the Authority. This used to be the Union Carbide. They folded up. It was the African Manganese Company. We know that they cleared out. We took over; we set up State farms.

[Cde. Feilden Sngn continues]

3:25 p.m.

They did not work but we are pouring millions of dollars into this area. It was just one area but now Matthews Ridge and Port Kaituma are blended together to form an Authority and we are pouring millions of dollars into it. Apart from the fact that we may be subsidizing people, what are we getting out of it for the taxpayers' money that is being put into it? I would like to get a Progress Report on the Matarkai Development Authority.

In respect of item 19, subhead 12 – Cooperative Development, the voted provision was \$115,000. The supplementary provision now sought is \$200,000. The Legend reads: "To meet Co-op week celebrations and the auditing of Co-op Societies." I think something may be radically wrong if, after sane, sensible and deliberate thought, it was felt that \$115,000 would be adequate. Why are we now voting an increase of nearly 200 per cent and the legend merely says: "To meet Co-op week celebrations and auditing of Co-op Societies." Somebody must have realized that co-operative societies needed to be audited and therefore provision should have been made for auditing the co-operative societies. Why should we have to vote an additional amount unless there has been a tremendous increase in the number of co-operative societies. Somebody must have realized that co-operative week celebrations would have cost some money. Why did we not budget for it at the very beginning instead of coming here at this time of the year, and asking for approval for money which was spent since last year?

The Chairman: Cde. Vice-President, Economic Planning and Finance.

Cde. Hoyte: Cde. Chairman, in answering similar questions on the cotton textile mill, I was at great pains to present the position. Cde. Ram Karran was the author of those questions. I am sorry that the Hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh was not here or was not following the responses I gave. [Cde. Feilden Singh: "I was not here. My apologies."/] I have tried to explain that the cotton textile mill is a complex. It has several facilities for doing different things. The complex is being continually developed. For example, in course of time we hope to complete the administrative building. That building is not yet completed. At present, the management is operating out of temporary buildings; but the time will come when we will have to put down proper administrative buildings to enable the management to manage the place effectively with all the proper conveniences and appurtenances.

I also pointed out that we are moving from the stage of merely producing grey cloth and printed cotton fabrics to producing synthetic fabrics. The work is going on in connection with the necessary studies and the design, and in collaboration with friendly countries, we are working on the establishment of this additional facility. I would repeat: the invitation I gave to Cde. Ram Karran is extended to the Hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh to visit the place. I don't think that one can understand the extent, the complexity and the magnitude of the operations and the scope for further development, unless one visits by Members of this honourable Assembly.

In connection with the Glass Works, I would also like to repeat what I said: the factory is finished. There have been problems with the supply of electricity. The people we pay to do these things, the managers and economists and consultants, have been arguing as to whether the best course is to put in a generating plant for supplying power to the factory or wait until, hopefully, G.E.C. is in a position to guarantee power. I understand that there has been a decision to adopt the former course, that the equipment is here and that in the course of this year this Glass Factory will actually go into operation. Somebody has told me in September, but I don't want to adopt that statement. The most I would say is that later this year this facility will be in operation. I understand that my Hon. Friend's colleague, Mr. Abraham, visited both facilities and I am sure that he will be able to share his experience with his leader.

/Mr. M.F. Singh: "I would like to go too."] Let me know and I will arrange it.

One can argue at great length as to whether one should go along with the theoretical argument of comparative costs and therefore buy fabric rather than attempt to produce your own fabric here. I don't want to get into that technical argument: that is for technical people. I would say that, as far as our strategy is concerned, we would prefer to depend on the development of indigenous resources.

The Chairman: Cde. Clarke, I think you have to answer item 17 and probably item 19.

The Minister of Regional Development (Cde. Clarke): Cde. Chairman, with respect to the question asked on Matarkai Development Authority, as the members of this Assembly well know, the Matarkai Development Authority has been established to ensure that the agricultural potential of this area, Matthews Ridge/Arakaka/Kaituma area, could be systematically and sensibly exploited for the benefit of this country. As a result, the Authority has been proceeding with its work of developing the agricultural

potential in that area and, over the years, outlays have been made, as the Hon. Member indicated, to facilitate the production process in that area. Last year, for instance, the Authority was able, through its agricultural activities, to realise revenue to the tune of over \$1 million, close to \$1½ million, and therefore it can be seen that progressively this Authority has managed to so operate as to ensure that progressively the land and other resources of that area are developed. This expenditure is important. It is important from the point of view that people are kept on the land in the area in a very planned and programmed manner so that we can achieve the total development of that area in the long term.

With respect to item 19, Co-operative Development, the Hon. Member wanted to know whether we could not anticipate these additional expenses. As you know, the auditing of co-operative societies is provided for in the Co-operative Societies Act and this should be done on a yearly basis. During last year there was a significant upsurge in this area in the sense that many more auditors came forward, because we not only use Government auditors but private auditors as well. Many more came forward and audit fees as well went up so that the auditing aspect cost around \$120,000 more. Co-op Week Celebrations were expanded last year from what they used to be previously and they have taken on a countrywide scope. Therefore, these additional funds - \$80,000 – had to be used in this regard.

3:35 p.m

The Chairman: Page 4,

Cde. Mohammed: Item 25, Division XXVII – Ministry of Educational Social Development and Culture, subhead 11 – Provision and Distribution of Text Books. An exorbitant sum is shown here. I really believe that the legend is particularly vague. I would like the Minister to give some clarity as to what this money was used for. It leaves many things open. I do not know whether the money was used to take care of expenses incurred by a committee set up some time to regularise the distribution of textbooks, to buy more books, and maybe the Minister can give some clarity as to the use of that money. Moreover, I wish to draw also the Minister's attention to the fact that though money has been spent, and an exorbitant amount of money in this direction, the distribution of textbooks remains erratic to a large extent and many schools still suffer

from inadequate supplies of basic textbooks.

There are different problems in different schools and, in fact, there has been the situation where textbooks have arrived later for exam and have become useless because of their late arrival. I would like to ask the Minister to explain what is being done to rectify this continuing problem with respect to textbook distribution.

Cde Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, I want to ask a few questions on item 20, Head XXI - Ministry of Regional Development, subhead 19 – Expenses related to Government’s presence in Jonestown Agricultural Complex. I want to ask the Minister concerned what is meant by Government’s presence in Jonestown Agricultural Complex. Who owns this complex? What is happening there? If it is an agricultural complex, what is being grown there? Who is growing it? Where are the crops taken? The other thing I would like to know is what has become of the assets of this place. Was there an inventory? What are those assets? Sometime ago I recall asking that whatever may be the outcome of investigations, this Parliament ought to be supplied with all the information by way of documentation. I would be failing in my Parliamentary duty if I did not on this occasion seize this opportunity to enquire of the Minister as to the truth about this so-described complex. This is hiding behind words – Government’s presence. What are you doing there? Who owns it? Are you working there? Is it still owned by Jim Jones? Is it still being operated by people in America? What is the true position? Tell this Assembly and tell this nation.

Cde. Clarke: Cde. Chairman, the Comrade spoke in a very impassioned manner. I would merely like to say that during last year the amount of money spent to look after the upkeep of the property which remained at Jonestown was increased by \$5,000. This upkeep includes, of course, security and also ensures that whatever assets remain there are properly looked after.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, I would ask what property, whose property. We are spending money and we want to know. What constitutes the property?

Cde. Clarke: Cde. Chairman there are buildings there, there were agricultural crops there during last year and, generally speaking, there are other items there supportive of the agricultural activities which were going on there. There is, as you know, Cde. Chairman, litigation in this matter which is pending and certainly it would not be right for me to say anything about it.

Cde. Thomas: Cde. Chairman, the legend is accurate and it can be clearly understood. The additional incurred expenditure of \$349,569 results from increased costs. Local production of textbooks last year, I understand, went up by some 17 per cent and the cost of acquiring textbooks imported from overseas went up by a degree beyond our expectations. As a result, this sum had to be utilized.

With reference to the comment made by Cde. Mohammed, I wish to state that books cannot arrive late for an examination. Books are not ordered for an examination. Books are ordered for a particular course of study and at the beginning of the school year we ensure that the books are in place and that the teachers have those books. We are isolating the instance where a particular book, particularly the type used at overseas exams might arrive late on occasions. It is not true to say that the distribution process is going erratic, whatever that might mean. As of this year, we propose to decentralize distribution of school supplies generally and that will include the distribution of textbooks. I want to point out that with Regional councilors now in place, we are sure that the system will improve to a near perfect situation. Those are the comments I would like to make on those questions.

The Chairman: Page 5.

Cde. Mohamed: I have two small questions on item 26, subhead 16 – Other Equipment. I notice here that the sum of \$32,602 has been spent for a duplicating machine. I wonder if the Minister could give some explanation here because the sum looks a little high to me for a duplicating machine. I wonder if it is a particular type of machine.

Item 27, subhead 28 – Netherlands Aid Projects. Maybe the Minister will be able to refresh my memory about the Netherlands Aid Projects and say whether the St. Lawrence Primary School at Hampton Court has been identified by this Project as one of the schools needing sanitary facilities for the children. If it is so, may I inform the Minister that that school is suffering tremendously, at least up the close of the term. If it is not so, I would like to draw to the Minister's attention that the St. Lawrence Primary School at Hampton Court badly needs some attention with respect to sanitary toilet facilities and water facilities.

Cde. Thomas: It is true that we did import a particular type of duplicating machine which was needed by our Examinations Division papers. As you are aware, as of this year, we have introduced a new examination to replace those held by the City and Guilds of London Institute.

(Cde. Thomas continues)

The workload became greater and as a result we needed to improve our duplicating facilities to cope with that new situation.

03:45 p.m.

St. Lawrence Primary School Sanitary Block, if that can be described as a project, is not under the Netherlands Aid Project. We know of their problem which is one affecting not only that school but a number of other schools and, at the present moment, our Regional Executive Officers are involved in the preparation of all the data needed so that we can really arrest these deteriorating conditions in so far as sanitary facilities for some of these schools are concerned.

The Chairman: Page 6.

Cde. Ram Karran: May I raise a small question on item 35, Division XXXIII – Ministry of Finance subhead 27 – Capital Contribution to G.E.C., and to observe here that all three columns are filled with figures, \$5,000,000; \$650,000; \$9,150,000 and to observe also that for the year 1979 we had appropriated \$4,900,000 bearing in mind that a sum of \$20 million rests on the 1981 Estimates. The total figure comes up to nearly \$40 million - \$39,700,000.

Reverting to the Luckhoo Report when one considers that Sir Lionel Luckhoo is very closely associated with the P.N.C. but yet is making very volatile criticisms against the administration, it would seem to me that this expenditure outlined by me, and the massive, cruel increases in light bills to the ordinary taxpayers, cruel, are an indication that the taxpayers in this country are subsidizing, to a very large extent, inefficiency, corruption and all the evils one can associate with the Government and its employees. I would like the Minister at some time to direct an examination, and take part, to white-wash their own position, to show us to what extent people are paying money that other people ought to have been in *gaol* for. It is a public utility, but if it had been run by a private concern, in any other country in the world as it was run in this country, there would not be, willy nilly, arbitrary increases in rates as we have seen. I remember some years ago when the bus companies were being run privately and wanted an increase in their fares, a thorough examination had to be done by the Ministry of Finance to justify that increase. Such an exercise is never done because the Government can hide behind the fact that it does not run the thing as a private utility in which both sides of the fence are represented. The consumers are represented and they have a voice, or the

Parliament, or the Opposition is represented and it has a voice, but the Government can do anything and in doing this thing, sir, we are paying through our noses. And the people who can least afford to pay are being made to pay.

This sort of thing cannot go on forever. The Government must give a proper account. Merely putting money on the Estimates and passing them because of the bulldozer which it has over there is not justified. And somebody ought to develop some decency and examine the thing with a view to showing the people to what extent they are being ripped off. I hope that that will be done one of these days.

The Chairman: Cde. Sallahuddin.

Cde. Sallahuddin: Cde. Chairman, I find myself in a rather difficult position having listened to what Cde. Ram Karran has said by way of observation. I really am not sure that there is anything I ought to reply to because I do not recognize a question in what he said. Nevertheless, I think I want to respond by saying that we recognise that there is need to rehabilitate and because we recognise that the G.E.C. has an important contribution to make to industrial development and to the basic comforts of the people who live in this country, it is not without due concern and examination that we make capital contributions to this public corporation.

Surely, Cde. Ram Karran would not even attempt to suggest that we ought to abandon that public corporation and we would want to invite him to offer alter on if he has any thoughts and ideas, which, unfortunately do not have a tendency to emanate from that source. But wish to assure the speaker that it is after due consideration of all the factors that we keep making contributions to the G.E.C. so that that Corporation could improve the quality of its service. There is no doubt in my mind at all that every Guyanese is interested in the rehabilitation of that enterprise. I am not too sure that the reference made by Cde. Ram Karran to the question of the examination in relation to the increase in public utility charges is correct. I know for a fact that we do not just sit down and determine increases in public utility charges. After all, we have a process and a system through which representation is made before the final determination is made and announced.

The Chairman: This completes consideration of all the items.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL PAPER NO. 3/1981

“Be it resolved that the Committee of Supply approve of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 3/1981 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates (Advances made from the Contingencies Fund for the period ending 15th July, 1981), totaling \$8,710,045.” /The Vice-President, Economic Planning and Finance./

The Chairman: We will now consider Financial Paper No. 3 page 1.

Cde. Narbada Persaud: Cde. Chairman, page 1, item 7, Head 84 – Customs and Excise, subhead 16 – Refunds of Revenue. The legend says “To provide for refund of consumption tax to Guyana Refrigerators Limited.” My information is that the additional consumption Tax of 8 per cent passed in this Assembly, I think it was in May last year, was imposed on manufacturers in this country, among other people. After some discussions, the Government finally agreed to rebate these people the consumption tax. But the decision having been taken, the Government continues to allow the manufacturers to pay the 8 per cent consumption tax. My point, on which my question would be based, Cde. Chairman, deals with the question of the export of manufactured goods.

(Narbada Persaud continues)

03:55 p.m.

The Government still continues to impose the 8 per cent consumption tax. It requires the local manufacturers to pay the 8 per cent consumption tax on exports. The goods are sold overseas at a higher price which makes them uncompetitive and then the Government collects in foreign exchange that price which is fixed for the commodity but refunds here in Guyana dollars to the local manufacturers. I would like to find out whether my information is correct. If that information is correct, then obviously I would think it is immoral to do such a thing. Maybe because of the financial position, because of the foreign exchange problem, the government might have considered it necessary. But if it is so – and that information was given to me only today and it affects not only Guyana Refrigerators Ltd. for which we are being asked to vote the sum of \$490,000 as expenses incurred as refund for last year; it involves all the local manufacturers who export their goods.

I would like to enquire whether that is so and, if it so, may I ask whether the Government has any intention of stopping that practice, whether it is going to remove the 8 per cent completely and let the goods go at the cost less the 8 per cent.

The Chairman: Comrades, it is two minutes to four. I wonder whether it is proposed that we should complete this Paper.

/Members indicated in the affirmative./

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Singh.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, as I am sure you know, in my years in the Assembly it has not been my habit merely to criticize for the sake of criticism. When credit is due, then we must give credit in this Assembly and I would like to speak on item 2, Head 46 – Ministry of Works, subhead 36 – Grant to National Parks Commission. The vote provision was \$260,000. The additional provision now sought is \$390,851. Admittedly, it is more than the voted provision. Why is this so? One many well ask the question, but I think one can find the answer when one visits the National Parks of this country and one sees the standard that has been maintained in our National Parks.

I would like to place on record here my sincere appreciation to the National Parks Commission for the very, very high standard which they have maintained over the years in respect of the National Parks. Not only have they to keep these parks at a very high standard, they have to provide other things like seating accommodation, etc., and I know

that they have exercised tremendous initiative by putting on fund-raising events which have helped the taxpayers of this country to keep the cost down in respect of our national parks. I have heard very favourable comments from visitors to this country in respect of Guyana's parks, Guyana's entertainment areas, Guyana's showpieces and I would like to say that I heartily endorse the additional provision now sought. I would like to commend the National Parks Commission, particularly the Chairman who, I understand, does his work free of charge and, in fact brings into the operation of the National Parks Commission the free services of his company in order to maintain the very high standard at which these parks are maintained, so please, sir, allow me to place on record our deep appreciation to the National Parks Commission for the job they are doing at a time when money is scarce and at a time in which there is so often a tendency to say that we don't have the money so therefore Guyana will have to remain a garbage city instead of a Garden City. That is so often the contention. "We don't have the money and therefore we can't do the job." These people have been able to do the job in spite of all the constraints. Good luck to them.

The Chairman: Cde. Sallaluddin. [Pause.] Cde. Hoyte, Item 7.

Cde. Hoyte: Cde. Chairman, my friend Cde. Narbada Persaud was wholly misinformed by whoever his information was when he said that the Government has agreed to remove the 8 per cent consumption tax. That is not so.

Cde. Ram Karran: The newspapers said it.

Cde. Hoyte: Do you hold me liable and guilty for the newspapers in this country? The facts are that, after the Budget Speech last year, there were representations made to me by members of the manufacturing community and I met a joint Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and Guyana Manufacturers' Association team to discuss this matter and to listen to their representations.

The main point made by those representatives was that the 8 per cent tax would make them uncompetitive. I suggested that they should present documentary evidence to this effect. To date that has not been done. I myself do not accept the argument that the 8 per cent consumption tax would make any and every manufacturer and exporter uncompetitive. I do not accept that but to the extent that a manufacturer is able to prove that this is so, to the extent that a reasonably efficient manufacturer is in a position to prove that this consumption tax takes the edge off his competitiveness, I am sure that the Government would be willing to give careful consideration, favourable consideration and sympathetic consideration to any representations he may make.

I find myself a bit perplexed by the second question raised by Cde. Persaud. As I understand him, he is saying something like this: that the Government receives the foreign exchange earned by a manufacturer, but if the Government makes a refund of consumption tax, that refund is made in Guyana dollars. That is how I understand him. If I am wrong he will correct me. But I do not see how it could be otherwise. I do not understand what is the ground of his complaint or how he expects the Government to make a refund in foreign exchange. I do not know which country in the world will do that or has done that. In any case, the consumption tax is paid in Guyana dollars initially and therefore any refund of consumption tax must be in Guyana dollars. If I am mistaken in my apprehension of his question, I am sure that he will explain.

The Chairman: Page 2. *[Pause.]* Page 3.

Cde. Narbada Persaud: Cde. Chairman, on page 3, the legend against item 9, Transport and Travelling under Head 80, Manufacturing Industry, deals with items 9 to 17 and states:

“Items 9 – 17 are new subheads to provide for expenses of the new Ministry.” If further states:

“These amounts were not advanced from the Contingencies Fund.”

I would be very grateful if the Minister would kindly state if the amounts were not taken from the Contingencies Fund, what fund was the money advanced from?

The Chairman: Minister Hope.

The Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection (Cde. Hope): These funds were not advanced. We can advance money only from the Contingencies Fund. What is implied by that statement is that it is a new provision and it is a new request which is before the Assembly to be voted on. It is not any money that has been spent already and we are seeking confirmation now. It is new money which is being requested now and which the Assembly is required to vote on.

4:05 p.m

The Chairman: Cde. Narbada Persaud was saying that you look at the schedule you will see that supplementary funds were advanced from the Contingencies fund for the period ended 15th July, 1981, so that when it comes here he wants to know if the funds were not advanced from that, how do you explain it.

Page 4. Section “B”.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, I want to make some enquiries with respect to item 1, division XII – Ministry of Agriculture, subhead 38, in which the sum of \$1.5 million is provided for the purchase of Pln. Hope cum annexis, and to ask certain questions based on an Order which I have. Has the Government agreed to pay the sum of money? Is this the total sum for the purchase of Pln. Hope and is that the money required to be paid to the vendor for the purchase of the property? Probably put more simply, is this the purchase price for Pln. Hope?

I have asked the question in that way to refer to Order No. 23 of 1981. Probably there is an explanation. When I read the legend on the estimates and I look at the Order, apart from naming the company and so on, I want to specifically refer to section 4 of the Order which says “No sum shall be paid to the Vendors under the agreement pursuant to section 6 of the Act.” As a layman I interpret that to mean that no sum shall be paid. If that is so, why is it? There might be an explanation as I said. But looking at it as a layman, the Minister who is concerned and who is not answerable in this Assembly has made an Order that no sum shall be paid, and then the supplementary estimates makes provision for a sum. There could be some legal jargon down the road. But I would like to have it clarified because in my opinion – and you are a legal mind, sir, I am sure if you look at it you will see the position.

The Chairman: It is perplexing, indeed.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Very nicely put and I would like to know because if this means what it says, without any serious legal jargon, looking at the section, looking at the Supplementary Estimate and looking at the Order, it does appear that the government acquired this property by Order No. 23 of 1981 and according to section 4, it becomes the property of the State. According to section 6 of the Order, no sum was to be paid. If that is correct I think we need an explanation to clarify the position so that this inconsistency, if there is one, can be cleared.

The Chairman: Mr. Abraham.

Mr. M.A. Abraham: Mr. Chairman, item 2, Division XXV – Ministry of Transport, subhead 12 – Purchase of Aircraft. An additional provision is being sought in the sum of \$1.013 million and the legend states: “To meet the down-payment of 20% of the purchase price of a new Skyvan Aircraft.” We have no row about that. In fact, we need more aircraft but my problem is on the question of maintenance. That has always been my grouse in this Assembly. How very effective is our maintenance system in this country?

A little over a month ago there was a near accident at the Timehri Airport when one of our Hawker-Siddley aircraft was on the point of taking off, full rev, at the beginning of the tarmac when the under carrier under the nose collapsed at the point of take-off and it came down on its nose. An Hon. Member of this Assembly was also on that flight and the passengers were all terrified and had to leave. We are purchasing aircraft. Fair enough, that is all well and good, but how well are these aircraft being maintained?

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Abraham, we are merely dealing now with the purchase of an aircraft. Whether Parliament will pass 20 per cent of the purchase price of the aircraft is what we are dealing with. The question of maintenance is another story.

Mr. M.A. Abraham: I agree, but we should not purchase an aircraft if we are not going to maintain it. That is the point.

Cde. Narbada Persaud: Cde. Chairman, item 6, division XXXI – Ministry of Finance, subhead 26 – (New) – Capital contribution to Guyana fisheries Limited. The sum of \$855,780 is now being sought as supplementary provision for this year to meet equity contribution to Guyana fisheries Limited. I have four questions: Can we be told first, the total amount of shares, money-wise, secondly, the percentage of shares the Government has invested or hopes to invest, thirdly, who are the other shareholders, and fourthly, whether this sum of \$855,780 is all the equity contribution the Government hopes to put into the venture.

The Minister of Agriculture (Cde. Tyndall): Cde. Chairman, my good friend on the other side has asked three questions. The answer to the first is, Yes, the answer to the second is, Yes, and the answer to the third is, Yes. He did refer to the Vesting of Property Acquisition by Purchase Act No. 23 of 1981 and it appears to me that the mysteries of the law have really eluded him. This Act provides, as my good friend opposite can see in the fourth margin of the note, for the remission of duty. It does not provide for the purchase of, and such like. The price provided for is in the agreement between the vendor and purchaser referred to in the Act. In case the concept of acquisition and vesting eludes the understanding of my good friend opposite, I would be happy to refer him to my good neighbour for an exposition.

4:15 p.m.

The Chairman: Cde. Sallahuddin

Cde. Sallahuddin: Cde. Chairman, here again I have to say that the question deals with very very specific details and therefore one must appreciate that it takes time to find out those intricate details. We are not unwilling to respond but at this point in time we surely would want time to research those details to answer as accurately as we always do.

The Chairman: This completes consideration of all the item.

1981-08-06

04:05 – 04:15 p.m.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

Assembly resumed.

The Speaker: There are three separate Motions you will have to put.

Cde. Hoyte: Cde. Speaker, I beg to report that the Committee of Supply has approved of the proposals set out in Financial Papers No. 1, No. 2 and No. 3 of 1981 and I now move that the Assembly doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolutions.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motions carried.

FIRST MEETING OF GUYANA NATIONAL GROUP OF INTER-
PARLIAMENTARY UNION

The Speaker: comrades, and Hon. Members this ends our business in the National Assembly for today. Before we take the Adjournment I would like to remind all Members of the National Assembly of the meeting of the Guyana National Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union which will be taking place immediately after this Sitting, that is, before refreshments. Would members kindly remain for that meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

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

/The Vice-President, Parliamentary Affairs and Party/State Relations./

Adjourned accordingly at 4:20 p.m.