



REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Debates of the House of Representatives

1st Session – 11th Parliament (Rep.) – Volume 1 – Number 7

**OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)**

THE HONOURABLE BRIDGID ANNISETTE-GEORGE
SPEAKER

THE HONOURABLE ESMOND FORDE
DEPUTY SPEAKER

Wednesday 14th October, 2015

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JSC (Appointment of)

Wednesday, October 14, 2015

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 14, 2015

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

PRAYERS

[MADAM SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEES

(APPOINTMENT OF)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, the period for the appointment of certain joint select committees pursuant to section 66A of the Constitution will expire on October 22, 2015. In light of the fact that Parliament would likely still be engaged in the budget process by that date, I propose that at the appropriate time before the conclusion of the budget process in this House, the necessary procedural step be taken to invoke the constitutional provision that allows for the appointment of such committees at a later date.

I wish to suggest that the appointments to the joint select committees take place no later than Friday, November 13, 2015. I do hope that all Members are amenable to this arrangement.

APPROPRIATION (FINANCIAL YEAR 2016) BILL, 2015

[Sixth Day]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question [October 09, 2015]:

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question again proposed.

Madam Speaker: I now call upon the Minister of Finance who has 10 minutes extended speaking time within which I expect him to wrap up. [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. C. Imbert: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, you would have noticed a certain level of outrage on my part last night in the first part of my winding up. This, Madam Speaker, was as a result of my astonishment at the boldfaced denial on the part of the former Prime Minister and the Members opposite with respect to their knowledge of the true state of the country's finances; that the Member for Siparia could come into this House and claim to be unaware of the \$7 billion deficit that they incurred in 2015—not \$7, Madam Speaker, not \$700, Madam Speaker, but a deficit of \$7 billion; that they

Appropriation Bill, 2015
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could claim to be unaware that they had maxed out the overdraft at the Central Bank to such an extent that funds in the Green Fund and the Unemployment Fund are no longer available to the citizens of this country; that the former Prime Minister could claim to be unaware that they took our cash balances from \$6.5 billion in credit in May 2010, to \$8.5 billion in deficit in September 2015, thereby squandering \$15 billion in cash reserves; that they could claim not to know that they paid \$1 billion in legal fees to friends and supporters when the whole country knew of this disgrace; that they could claim to be unaware that in addition to squandering \$15 billion in cash balances, they also increased the public debt by over \$30 billion during their tenure, when the public just had to turn on the television during the run-up to the election and see with their own eyes, millions of dollars of taxpayers' money wasted almost every day on government propaganda, when the whole country knew that they were engaging in reckless and irresponsible spending.

That they could so easily try to throw a public servant under the bus in order to shift the blame for their decision to spend over \$500 million on five more helicopters of dubious value when in reality, the records show it was the National Security Council, headed by the former Prime Minister, who authorized this questionable purchase; that they could tell such blatant untruths so easily about the use by the new Prime Minister of the Government's helicopter in an effort to deflect justified criticisms of the fact that the previous Prime Minister used the helicopters like a private taxi, when it is a matter of public record that Prime Minister, Dr. The Hon. Keith Rowley has not travelled to Tobago since the general election, whether by air or by sea and has not set foot in a Government helicopter since assuming office; that they could so easily accuse us of trying to bribe the trade unions with our allocation of \$15 million for institutional strengthening and training for the entire labour movement which currently comprises over 500 registered trade unions, with almost 100 of these trade unions being active, when they secretly gave a single trade union, the PSA, \$10 million in 2014, and when caught with their pants down, all they can say is "So what?"

That is what I had to listen to last night, Madam Speaker. When they are caught telling untruths, all they can say is, "So what?" When their extravagance, waste, deception and mismanagement is revealed, all they can say is, "So what?" When the fact is revealed that they have committed this country to billions of dollars in questionable contracts of dubious value, without any source of funds, without any proper financing in place, without Cabinet approval, all they could tell us is, "So what?"

So you will forgive me for my outrage, Madam Speaker. [*Desk thumping*] I just could not believe that the Members opposite could be so divorced from reality and so willing to mislead the population.

Now, Madam Speaker, in the five minutes and 21 seconds that I have left, let me look forward. Madam Speaker, I have in my possession a crude oil price forecast, long-term 2015 to 2025—forecast done by the World Bank, the IMF and the Economic Intelligence Unit, also the OECD. And the World Bank projects that oil will reach approximately \$61 in 2016 and \$64 in 2017. The IMF projects that oil would reach \$60 in 2016 and \$63 in 2017. The Economic Intelligence Unit projects \$69 in 2016 and \$80 in 2017, and the OECD projects \$65 in 2016 and close to \$70 in 2017.

So that assuming that all of these analysts—these are the world experts in oil forecasting, and these are current forecasts. So assuming that these world analysts are correct, we should expect to see a recovery of oil prices by 2017, of somewhere in the vicinity of \$65 a barrel for West Texas Intermediate. And \$65 a barrel is quite similar to the average price received—I think they actually got approximately \$60 a barrel for the fiscal year 2015 because it started at \$80 and it went to \$45. And with a \$65 barrel of oil, our revenues should be significantly enhanced. We should earn at least another \$10 billion when the multiplier effect comes into play.

So in addition to the improvements in revenue collection—and as I said last night, Pricewaterhouse—not me—has estimated—and quite correctly so, in my opinion—that with proper revenue collection in Trinidad and Tobago, with a revenue authority, with proper information-sharing between the Customs, between the Board of Inland Revenue, between the persons who collect VAT, proper communication, coordination, collaboration, streamlining, and institutional strengthening, that we should be able in Trinidad and Tobago to collect an additional \$5 billion in revenue, Madam Speaker. [*Desk thumping*]

So looking forward, if oil prices recover and we get that additional \$10 billion, and if we can reach our targets in terms of revenue collection of another five, we should have enhanced revenues by 2017, of \$15 billion which should be able to allow us to continue on our path to growth and recovery.

So this is the plan going forward. Of course, we will have to monitor it. If, in fact, oil prices continue to be in a slump, we will have to look at other fiscal measures. We will have to look at other policy. But we are reasonably confident, in terms of

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revenue collection reform, in terms of having a national dialogue with the country on the fuel subsidy and so on, in terms of efficiency in the VAT administration, that we will be able to bring this country back onto a sustainable path by the year 2017.

Why do I say the year 2017, Madam Speaker? Because it is in that year that if it becomes necessary, we would have to avail ourselves of the last significant asset from the repayment of advances made to the CL group with respect to the Government's bailout of the CL group.

So, Madam Speaker, as I close, again I must express my astonishment at the behaviour of Members opposite. One would think they were not living in this country in 2015. They are certainly in denial, and I am proud to be given the responsibility on behalf of our team, on behalf of the PNM Government, to be able to level with the population, to bring the population into our confidence, to let them know what is happening in this country and to let them know that there is a future, there is growth, there is recovery. We will rebuild confidence under the People's National Movement Government.

I beg to move, Madam Speaker. [*Desk thumping*]

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a second time.

Hon. C. Imbert: Madam Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 81(8), I beg to move that a Bill entitled an Act to provide for the service of Trinidad and Tobago for the financial year ending on the 30th day of September 2016, be referred to the Standing Finance Committee for the consideration of the Bill together with the estimates.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

House resolved itself into Standing Finance Committee.

1.45 p.m.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, the Prime Minister has requested to be excused from today's sitting due to ill health.

APPROPRIATION (FINANCAL YEAR 2016) BILL, 2015

Madam Chairman: The documents referred Hon. Members, in accordance with Standing Order 81(2) and (8), the estimates containing the details of the financial requirements along with the Appropriation Bill have been referred to this

committee for consideration. The documents before the committee therefore include the Draft Estimates, details of Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure, the Draft Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of the Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies and of the Tobago House of Assembly, the Draft Estimates of Development Programme.

In accordance with Standing Order 85(1), the consideration of the clauses of the Bill will be postponed until after the consideration of the Schedule which lists the Heads of Expenditure to be approved. The Heads will be considered in the order submitted by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. I wish to now discuss with the committee the proposed work schedule.

Hon. Members, there are 41 Heads of Expenditure to be considered over a five-day period, and I propose that the committee sit on each allotted day until 8.00 p.m. The speaking time will be as follows: hon. Members, in accordance with Standing Order 45(1), the speaking time in Standing Finance Committee shall not exceed five minutes on each intervention. Each Minister will be given the option to make an opening statement on the Ministry's priority areas for the upcoming year for no more than five minutes, and the procedure for the consideration of each Head I propose shall be as follows. Hon. Members the procedure for each Head of Expenditure will be as follows:

1. The Head and the amount to be appropriated will be announced by me as Chairman;
2. The Minister will then be given the option to make a brief opening statement not exceeding five minutes;
3. The Chairman will then propose the question that the sum proposed stand part of the Schedule;
4. For each Head of Expenditure, the Chairman will call the Sub-Head followed by the item. The Sub-Items will not be called. Members will be allowed to seek clarification on the item called and its Sub-Items. The Chairman will then repeat the procedure for the development programme;
5. Once this is concluded, the Chairman will then put the question that the sum stand part of the Schedule;
6. The procedure will be repeated for each Head of Expenditure.

Members will note we have invited the accounting officers and technocrats to arrive at specific times during the day so we have to try to stick to the Schedule. I wish now to give notice of certain additional agenda items. Firstly, the deferral of

the Office of the Prime Minister. Due to unavoidable absence of the Prime Minister, has there been any agreement to take the Office of the Prime Minister tomorrow?

Dr. Moonilal: Chairman, bearing in mind that the Prime Minister is unwell, we wish him, of course, a speedy recovery and we will be prepared to defer that item to tomorrow if he is feeling better depending on his own health.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, hon. Member for Oropouche East.

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: Madam Chairman, we did indicate that we were requesting the deferral given the situation, and I am happy we asked for it to be deferred until tomorrow. So I am happy that the Member has agreed.

Dr. Moonilal: Could I for the record indicate that when this was asked of us we were unaware that the Prime Minister was indeed ill. We were not aware of the reason for his absence, but in the context of his illness we would be happy to defer and wish him a speedy recovery.

Madam Chairman: I thank you, Members.

Secondly, the consideration of the Tobago House of Assembly. Hon. Members, I crave your indulgence to have the committee agree on the time for examination of the Tobago House of Assembly in order to allow the representatives of the Assembly to make arrangements to come to Trinidad. May I suggest that given the order submitted by the Leader of the Opposition, the Tobago House of Assembly be examined first tomorrow?

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: We certainly have no difficulty with that, Madam.

Madam Chairman: I am grateful to you both.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Madam Chair, in the circumstances where two Heads are being deferred for tomorrow and there are other items starting from one going down, are we to also agree that should Heads be moved up to make up the spaces for where the Prime Minister is ill and cannot come, where the THA cannot come today, so that we proceed to other Heads that are lower down in the order of business to be dealt with?

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member for Siparia, I am guided by your suggestion. It was my understanding though that the Tobago House of Assembly would have been making their presence here tomorrow in any event. The only matter that is really being asked to be considered under the announcement that I

made was rather than leaving Tobago House of Assembly at-risk at later in the evening tomorrow, that they be taken first to allow for them to plan for their coming and allow their departure tomorrow.

As regards your observation with respect to the Office of the Prime Minister, even though it may not have been expressed, I think what the Chair intended is that we would proceed with the order as had been indicated, except that three would be substituted by four and we just continue with the order as set out by the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Members, at this time the sitting of the Standing Finance Committee will be suspended for five minutes just for us to make the physical arrangements for the technocrats and the accounting officers.

1.54 p.m.: *Standing Finance Committee suspended.*

2.02 p.m.: *Standing Finance Committee resumed.*

Madam Chairman: Members, the meeting of the Standing Finance Committee will now resume. The first Head to be considered is Head 22, the Ministry of National Security.

Head 22

Madam Chairman: I will now invite the Minister of National Security to make a brief opening statement not exceeding five minutes.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. Let me first of all express my sincerest thanks and appreciation for giving me the opportunity to be part of this Standing Finance Committee to deal with the issues pertinent to the Ministry of National Security.

Madam Chairman, it is recognized that in order for a sustainable development to take place, it must be done in an environment that is facilitated by security. It is important for us to recognize that security environment must be so positioned, that not only economic development can take place, but we can create an environment where our citizens can live peacefully, enjoy a good standard of life. And so, in recognition of this, the Ministry of National Security also recognizes that we are in trying economic times and we understand that there is a gap between strategy and resources.

We want to also compliment the Minister of Finance for the budgetary allocation that he has provided to the national security, because I believe it is an understanding that for Trinidad and Tobago to treat with the many issues in the national security

environment, there must be some kind of allocation. And so, Madam Chairman, I want to assure this House, once again, that as the Minister of National Security the allocation would be done with astute financial management to ensure that the allocated budget would redound to the benefit of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

I thank you very much.

Question proposed: That Head 22 stand part of the Schedule.

2.05 p.m.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Members, the sum of \$4,656,513,910 for Head 22, the Ministry of National Security, is comprised of moneys proposed for expenditure under six Sub-Heads to be found in the Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure and the Draft Estimates of Development Programme.

I would like to suggest and for the purposes of order and arranging for the free flow of this process that we consider all items under the particular Sub-Head or entertain all questions under the particular Sub-Head and Head before we move on to another Head. *[Interruption]* Yes, but we are starting with the Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure.

So we are at page 120 and we are calling Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure, which is on page 121, Item 001, General Administration.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Madam Chairman, thank you. On page 120, under Head 22, Sub-Head 01, we are given the total for recurrent and at the very start which is Personnel Expenditure 01, we are shown on page 120 that there has been an increase in Personnel Expenditure as shown under the column under Net Increase/Decrease of \$2.542 billion, and I would like to address the total before I get into the specific Items, if I may, please.

Madam Chairman: You may.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: And to ask the question to the hon. Minister of what is this increase of 2.542? What is it composed of? Does it mean more staff? More salaries? How is it composed? The 2.542 increase in Personnel Expenditure under Head 22, Sub-Head 01.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: The increase is due to a number of factors, one being there has been merger of different Ministries. They have returned prisons, for instance, forensics and others, back to the Ministry of National Security. There is also an increase in responsibilities; there is an increase in salaries and there are also arrears that are due to be paid off.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Thank you, Minister. Would you kindly share with us when you say an increase in responsibilities, what do we mean by that?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: The increase in responsibilities to the Ministry of National Security has come about because of the return of prisons, for instance and forensics, for instance, and we now have the NOC under the Ministry of National Security. So based on that, we have increased responsibilities in the Ministry of National Security.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Thank you, hon. Minister. But you said it was due to three factors—

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: No, I said several factors, I only named three.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Merger of several and you named three. So you named a merger of heads, salary increases and responsibilities.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: And arrears.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: But you are now saying the responsibilities fall under the mergers of bringing other items of expenditure, like NOC, prison services and so on.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: I said the arrears also. I said there is increased responsibilities based on the return of other departments institutions to the Ministry of National Security and of course, the arrears.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: So that is a subset of the merger of the heads?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Yes, of course. Yes, it is.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Okay. Under that item, if we go to that same page 120 under Personnel Expenditure, there are two Sub-Items, well, Salaries, it says Direct Charges. Have you found that line on page 120 under Personnel Expenditure: Salaries, Direct Charges and Allowances, Direct Charges? Would you be so kind as to share with us what these are, these direct charges?

Mr. Imbert: I will respond on behalf of the Minister of National Security. If you look at the Appropriation Bill in toto, you will see the total appropriation is \$54 billion and with respect to Head 22, the Ministry of National Security, the appropriation is \$4.6 billion. However, when you look in the estimates that we are perusing, you will see the 2016 estimate for recurrent for national security is 5.7.

The reason being there are a number of direct charges under the Consolidated Fund that do not need to be appropriated. Okay? So that Direct Charges, in this particular case, do not need to be appropriated. So they will not form part of the appropriation of \$4.6 billion. That is what it is. There is about \$11 billion in

Direct Charges within this year's budget which is typical for any budget. It is normally 9, 10, 11, 12 billion. These are things that are paid first, you know, salaries of judges and so on. These are all paid first. They are not appropriated, they are a first charge on the Consolidated Fund. The rest of us get paid afterwards. After all these direct charges are paid, then the rest of the allocation is the appropriation. So this direct charge is something that is not required to be appropriated.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Minister, I appreciate your attempt at an explanation, but we are seeing in the estimates here—you are saying it is not in the Appropriation Bill, but we are seeing in the estimates, an increase of \$633.965 million for Direct Charges and my question was what are Direct Charges composed of? What are these Direct Charges where we have an increase of \$633.965 million and then \$324.729 million? We are looking at six and three, nine; almost a billion dollars increases on Direct Charges and I am asking: what are these Direct Charges? You said they would not be appropriated, but I did not get from you what do we mean when we say Direct Charges.

Mr. Imbert: Salaries and Allowances. If you wish further details, I would refer to the Director of Budgets who is here with us and get further details for you in a short while, but these are salaries and allowances as you can see.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: You are saying in the estimates, they do say Salaries and Allowances and then they say—Direct Charges. What are the charges? And if you can get it—

Mr. Imbert: If you require that level of detail, I will get it from the Director of Budgets for you.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: I think that is the purpose of this committee, Sir.

Mr. Imbert: No problem.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Thank you. And you see, it is repeated throughout on page 120. You have Remuneration to Members, Direct Charges; Vacant Posts, Salaries, COLA, Direct Charges. So you have at least one, two, three—four Items of these—

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Can I provide you with another example?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Please.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: In terms of, let us say, the Regiment, for instance, you have both Salaries and Allowances; Coast Guard, Salaries and Allowances. I can give you some figures if you wish.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Sir, I would appreciate, but if you look at it, again, page 120, Sub-Head 01, the first Item is Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance, then you have it broken down. Give us some examples of these Direct Charges if you can.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: The Salaries, Direct Charges, for instance, with respect to the Regiment, you have, for 2015/2016, you have \$758,479,000; Allowances for the Regiment, for the same period, \$354,790,000 and I can go on: Coast Guard, Air Guard, the public service—

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: All the protective services?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: All of them. A combination of those would—

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: And how then do we explain the first Item under Sub-Head 01, Personnel, Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: What you have is the first would be civilians basically—the civil servants or civilians—and the second one is the Defence Force and others.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Okay. Anybody else?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Madam Chairman, may I be privileged to ask the hon. Minister of National Security, the Overtime Allowance for Monthly Paid Officers moved from 2015 Revised Estimates of \$18,860,000 now to 2016 Estimates \$112,919,000, with an increase of \$94 million for Overtime for Monthly Paid Officers. Is there a new strategy or have you increased the amount of monthly paid officers or are you anticipating increased overtime to account for \$94 million increase in Overtime for Monthly Paid Officers?

Then, also under Vacant Posts, you have a large increase of \$367 million from 2015 to \$469 million in estimates for 2016 of Monthly Paid Officers—again, but these are under Vacant Posts. Are you intending to fill these positions? And if these are vacant posts, how many posts are vacant that will account for an increase of \$367 million? Because you will take some time to fill those positions.

And also, I would like to ask, the Remuneration to Auxiliary Fire Unit increased by \$23 million—I am asking about three questions there because I used my five minutes to ask that. And Settlement of Arrears to Public Officers under Sub-Head 01, you have no amount for Settlement of Arrears to Public Officers. It means then that the public officers have been paid all their arrears already?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: They have been paid last year. They were paid last year.

Dr. Gopeesingh: So that answers the last question. Could you answer the first three if it is possible? Not all.

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman, I have some information for the Leader of the Opposition with respect to the question asked earlier. With your permission, could I elucidate?

Madam Chairman: May I just suggest then that we allow the hon. Minister to answer the questions of the Member of Caroni East and then we will take.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: With respect to the first question, all the arrears have not been paid and there are still some arrears to be paid in this fiscal year.

Dr. Gopeesingh: But the estimates has \$10,000. That is arrears to public officers.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Yeah.

Dr. Gopeesingh: So it means the public officers have been paid with the exception of you needing \$10,000 to pay the rest.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: To pay the remainder.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: But the arrears would be paid.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Could you give us an idea what was paid already? Could you tell us what arrears?

Madam Chairman: The last item on 01, page 120.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: In an effort to make the best use of time, could I just ask then that the hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East responds because he has his information while the hon. Minister of National Security—you may proceed.

Mr. Imbert: Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. As the Leader of the Opposition would note, if you go to the other book which says Draft Estimates of Expenditure for the Financial Year 2016—this book—and you go in that book to Roman 20.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Roman what?

2.20 p.m.

Mr. Imbert: Roman 20—XX—and you will see, and this follows for every single Ministry, which you should know.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: No, I do not know everything like you, you know. You know everything.

Mr. Imbert: You assume they would know, having done this at least five times already when you were Prime Minister. Under Ministry of National Security you would see:

“Direct Charges
 Personnel Expenditure
 Remuneration to Members
 Regiment
 Salaries –
 Officers and Other Ranks
 Coast Guard
 Salaries and Other Ranks”

It goes down.

“Air Guard
 Allowances - Direct Charges
 Coast Guard
 Air Guard
 Regiment
 Vacant Posts
 Air Guard”

And it comes all the way around:

“...Contribution to NIS”.

So all of the direct charges in the Ministry of National Security are listed there and the total is \$1.86 billion. And as I pointed out, this expenditure is charged on the Consolidated Fund and does not require to be appropriated. So that is the explanation for the various increases and the statement about direct charges, and that would apply to every single Ministry. It is all in here.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: I appreciate you sharing this with us Hon. Minister. But, again, what this does is to give us the same thing. It says: “Salaries Direct – Charges”, “Salaries Direct – Charges”. What it does is to give us the amounts for each of these direct charges but still does not say what exactly these direct charges are composed of.

Mr. Imbert: It is very clear, regiment salaries, allowances, national insurance and similarly air guard, coast guard. It is all there.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: No.

Mr. Imbert: It is very clear.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: No., we could come back. If you want to cross back to page 120, we have Salaries Direct Charges, Allowances Direct Charges. What this does on page 120 is to bring all the regiment, bring all the police, “blah, blah”, which is the ones you are showing us, coast guard and so on, into a total for this Head 22. Yes?

On page XX, which you have now asked me to look at, what this does is to itemize each of these direct charges, in terms of the quantity, but it still does not say what a direct charge is.

Mr. Imbert: I do not understand what more explanation you want. A salary is a salary, an allowance is an allowance and national insurance is national insurance, travelling is travelling. What more do you want? You want to know how much the travelling is for each rank?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: No, no it is here. That is on page XX and XXI.

Mr. Imbert: What do you want to know?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: The quantities are there.

Mr. Imbert: I mean, you have in this book a breakdown for every unit in national security, the head office, the regiment, the coast guard, the air guard, their salary, their wages, their NIS, their travelling, their allowances. They are all direct charges and as I said, direct charges are charged to the Consolidated Fund without the need for an appropriation. What more do you want to know? There is no more to know. These are facts.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Are they salaries? You said that the direct charges do not—
[Interruption]

Mr. Imbert: They are not appropriated. They do not form part of the Appropriation Bill. You only appropriate the items that are not direct charges on the Consolidated Fund.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: That is not the issue.

Mr. Imbert: What is the issue Member for Siparia?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Direct charge for the regiment. Look, they are here, direct charge for the coast guard. They are here, they would tell me, through you.

Mr. Imbert: It says salaries. What more do you want to know about salaries?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Yes, but you have salaries and cost of living as item 02 under “personnel expenditure.” What is the difference, where you have salaries and direct charges? There must be an answer.

Mr. Imbert: Salaries - Direct Charges, the total is \$1.18 billion.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: We are not asking the amounts. It is \$1.4 billion.

Mr. Imbert: \$1.18 billion in salaries and there is a breakdown here: Regiment, \$758 million; coast guard, \$338 million, air guard, \$89 million. It adds up to \$1.18 billion. Madam Chairman, I do not know what more to say.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Minister of Finance, if I understand the question from the Member for Siparia, I think it may assist if one explains how, under, say, the regiment there can be Salaries and there can be Salaries - Direct Charges.

Mr. Imbert: No, Madam Chairman, when you go to XX it is crystal clear. The wording is Salaries - Direct Charges. In other words, the salaries are the direct charges. So what more is there to say? I mean in this book it says Salaries - Direct Charges. In this book it says salaries direct - charges. This is a breakdown. This is an aggregate. What more is there to say? Do you want to know the salaries of every single rank in the regiment?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: No. No, we have the quantities.

Mr. Imbert: So what do you want to know?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Again, on page 120:

“01 Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance”

You have salaries there. Then you come lower down and you have Salaries - Direct Charges. Madam Chair, I think your explanation—I think we would move on. The Minister does not appear to see that there is a difference.

Mr. Imbert: I think you know exactly what is going on. You know exactly what is going on.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: He is not prepared to answer further.

Madam Chairman: You vacate this question?

Mr. Imbert: Yes. The Member knows exactly what is going on.

Madam Chairman: Therefore, is the hon. Minister of National Security available to answer the questions of the Member for Caroni East?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: The question, with respect to the monthly and daily-paid, based on increase in salaries and overtime. We have the additional people such as the life guards, probation services, daily-rated and monthly-paid officers. You asked a question pertaining to the monthly-paid.

Dr. Gopeesingh: What part of the question are you answering for us?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: The one that you referred to with respect to the charges, in relation to the monthly-paid officers.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Is that overtime?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Overtime, yes. It has to be the overtime. It has to do with the additional entities that came to the Ministry of National Security such as the life guard and so on, and, therefore, we do have overtime based on that.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Could you just help us a little bit in determining what are the areas that came in that would necessitate the overtime?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: I can provide you with those details later on.

Dr. Gopeesingh: And the increases?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Yes, sure.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Could you help us with that?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: I can do that. I can provide you with that.

Dr. Gopeesingh: If you can, get the answer meanwhile. And then the allowance for monthly-paid officers. You have it under vacant posts. If these are vacant posts you would have to fill them to be able to pay the allowances for these monthly-paid officers because you have an increase of \$367 million here, but it comes under vacant posts allowances—allowances monthly-paid officers. Could you help us with that, for the massive increase from \$100 million to \$469 million?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Sorry, could you repeat the question?

Dr. Gopeesingh: You have an increase of about \$367 million for allowances for monthly-paid officers, could you help us to indicate who are these to be paid and how many monthly-paid officers?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: What is that item comprised of? We are not asking you to give us names of these officers, but what is it comprised of, monthly-paid officers? Like whom? Give us some examples and about how many persons? Is it that there is going to be an increase in those numbers to bring up this increase in the allocation?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Of \$367 million.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: We have monthly-paid officers in the general administration in the Ministry. We have those who came back from the probation services and we have also in life guard also and the probation services, messengers and those kind of people. So it makes up a number of different people.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: So that increase, if I am to understand correctly, does not mean that there will be more staff, more monthly-paid persons employed? It is just a question of the transfer of more officers from another Ministry, which was a former Ministry into your present Ministry.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Yes, it means that somewhat. Yes it does.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: So we are not getting any new monthly-paid officers, am I to understand correctly?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Well, if there are vacant posts we would have to fill them. But what we are talking about is a combination of whether those who have come back to the Ministry and the new ones that came into the Ministry.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: This increase would account for their increases?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: That is right.

Dr. Gopeesingh: And the last one, hon. Minister. The arrears to public officers, in 2015, nothing was paid and, in 2016 you only have a \$10,000 estimate. Does it mean then that the public officers—what is the issue now, in terms of arrears for the public officers? Were they not paid last year? Are they not going to be paid this year? Because nothing is in the estimates for last year and only \$10,000 in it for this year. Those are the public officers of the Ministry of National Security.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: They would be paid from salaries and COLA and not from that particular vote.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Minister, does it then mean that, in terms of arrears to public officers, that you have not inherited any in this Head 22? You remember the Minister of Finance said the Government inherited a \$5 billion bill from the previous year, 2015? So if there is only a \$10,000—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: No, it is not the \$10,000. It is under the salaries and COLA. That is where the figure is.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Sure.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: It is under salaries and COLA.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Am I to understand that settlement of arrears to public officers, there is only \$10,000 outstanding to be paid in 2016?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: No, that is not correct.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: But that is what the estimates are showing. Is it wrong here?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: The arrears is—[*Interruption*]

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Is that wrong here, Sir?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: That arrears is being paid from salaries and COLA.

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman, may I come in here?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: So is this wrong?

Mr. Imbert: May I come in here, Madam Chairman? Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: To assist on the same question.

Mr. Imbert: Certainly. As the Leader of the Opposition will know, arrears are included in the line item for salaries. This has been the case in this country for 30 years, including the five years of the Partnership.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Thank you very much, hon. Minister. So what is “settlement of arrears to public officers”, which is a separate line item of \$10,000, to pay whom? How is this different from the arrears you are saying you have included up on top under salaries? That is two items.

Madam Chairman: I recognize the hon. Member for Tabaquite.

Dr. Rambachan: Thank you, Madam Chairman. I just wanted clarification for my own interest and the interest of the public who is viewing this. In the Appropriation Bill the amount that is being appropriated is \$4,656,513,910. But in

the Draft Estimates of Expenditure document the amount that was referred to by the hon. Minister of Finance as stated here under item 22 is \$5,704,747,960. What the hon. Minister tried to explain is that the difference between what was being appropriated what was in this document is the direct charges.

I just want something to be made clear, that while this entire document, the Appropriation Bill says \$54,762,000,000 being appropriated, the real expenditure is really what is given here as \$62,990,037,305, compared to what might be mistaken by the population to believe that it is only \$54.7 billion. But the total expenditure given in this document, Draft Estimates of Expenditure, where the \$5.7 billion is referred to and not the \$4.656 billion is really \$62,990,000,000. So is this the real expenditure in total, which includes the \$5.7 billion, compared to the \$4.6 billion? In other words, this gives the impression that what is being appropriated is the expenditure, but in reality it seems that this is not the expenditure. The expenditure is really \$62.9 billion and not \$54.7 billion. Am I right to say that the real expenditure is \$62.990 billion?

2.35 p.m.

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman, as the Member knows, direct charges are not part of the appropriation, and I have made it crystal clear on a number of occasions that the expenditure for this year is \$63 billion.

Dr. Rambachan: So that the real expenditure is \$63 billion?

Mr. Imbert: But I have said that about 10 times.

Dr. Rambachan: Not 54.

Mr. Imbert: Would you like me to say it an 11th time? But let us deal with this matter of settlement—

Madam Chairman: Do you have the response?

Mr. Imbert: Yes. What this means, and the reason why it is so small, is that this has nothing to do with collective agreements settled in 2015. There are a few public servants, a handful, who would have benefited from collective agreements settled many, many, many years ago and this small number is intended to deal with them.

The inclusion of arrears, back pay within the salaries head, has been the practice for many, many years. This refers to past years going back many, many years ago. There have been one of two public servants who still have not received

their arrears from say, 20 years ago, and this what this is for. It has nothing to do with 2015. The arrears, just for the record, in each head, the arrears will be under the salaries item, okay?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Madam Chair, can I just then ask if the arrears are not included under that item we just looked at, and I am to understand it is under Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance, how much out of that \$1 billion or \$2.5 billion constitutes arrears to public servants or public officers?

Mr. Imbert: In order to assist the Parliament and Members opposite, what I will do is get the breakdown for you for all, rather than the question being asked for every, single Ministry. You will get the breakdown, to see how we came up with the—it is actually \$4.95 billion. We will get the breakdown for you, okay?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Sure.

Mr. Imbert: And provide that information to you. I would not want to put a time frame on it, but within a reasonable time you will get it.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Minister of Finance, we will have to put a time frame on it. I would say, if before the end of the budget debate, if that could be done?

Mr. Imbert: I will try my best.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Dr. Moonilal: Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. Hon. Minister of National Security, I am at Remuneration to Board Members. There is an increase here to \$1.677 million, a \$777,000 increase, and I wanted you to just explain for us briefly what would constitute this increase for the board members?

Madam Chairman: We are on page 120 and it is the third to last item in 001.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: This has to do with new boards that would come to the Ministry of National Security, from the Ministry of Justice such as the Mercy Committee and so on.

Dr. Moonilal: What?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Mercy Committee.

Dr. Moonilal: Not a board?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: No, not a board. That is correct.

Dr. Moonilal: Mr. Minister, in the budget we heard of the joint patrol initiative and border patrol and so on, is that also factored in here as a board that you will be appointing? And what would be the nature of that vis-a-vis boards, agency and so on?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: That would not be included in this. It would come out of the Development Programme as a new project. I believe that is correct.

Dr. Moonilal: As a new project?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Yes. It would not be under this—

Dr. Moonilal: Would that establishment require legislative change?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Perhaps it might.

Dr. Moonilal: It might, and do you—okay, you are not sure at this time.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Not sure as yet.

Dr. Moonilal: Is there a time frame within which—because it is a very interesting proposition you made in the budget and in your contribution. Is there a time frame on the establishment of this joint-patrol enterprise of some kind?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: It is based on consultation to determine the time frame—

Dr. Moonilal: So the consultation that would take place would determine a time frame and whether or not legislation is required.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Of course, that is correct.

Dr. Tewarie: Yes, Madam Chair, thank you very much. I just have one question. Based on the responses by hon. Minister of National Security, as well as the Minister of Finance, under Personnel Expenditure, I am understanding the Ministers to mean that the only additional cost that might accrue under Personnel Expenditure for new recruitment, that is to say new employees, is if the vacant posts are filled to the tune of \$19.4 million. Is that correct? And that everything else covers existing employees in the system, and the increase is simply because of the amalgamation of institutions under the Ministry of National Security? I just want to have that clear.

Mr. Imbert: I am know sure what Head the Member is on.

Dr. Tewarie: I am looking at page 120, 01, Personnel Expenditure. I am seeing the increases under various Heads and Sub-Heads, right?—and the explanation given is that these relate to existing employees and have to do with certain things, whether it is back pay, whether it is the rate of salary or whatever, but there is one item

here which is \$19,440,000 under Vacant Posts, under 01. So I am asking if the only additional, new employees that we can expect, based on this expenditure estimate, are those that might be recruited under that vacant post Sub-Head?

Mr. Imbert: And that was why I asked, I was not sure what Head the Member was on, because the Member has been a Minister in two different administrations and will know—and I am certain the Member knows that the employment of personnel is catered for under at least two Heads under Personnel Expenditure, Head 01. But if you also go to page 127, under Goods and Services 02, 16 as the Member knows, you also have a provision for Contract Employment. So if you want the answer to that question, you would have to look at both the provision for contract employment and the provision for vacant posts, and therein you get your answer.

Dr. Tewarie: Well, that makes it clear.

Mr. Imbert: Good. Thank you very much.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I have really a follow-up in terms of how many vacant posts exist within the—or what led to—in terms of numbers, this allocation of \$19,440,000? And how many vacant posts this catered for and could we get a breakdown in relation to the various areas within the Ministry of National security?

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member, it appears that that information, the detail of that information is not available today, but the Government has given an assurance that we will get it before the end of the budget debate.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Charles: I would just like to find out, under Remuneration to the Auxiliary Fire Unit, I see it is almost double. The proposed expenditures are almost doubled.

Madam Chairman: Member, are we still on page 121?

Mr. Charles: Oh, we are on 121? I think it is 120.

Mr. Imbert: We are on 121.

Madam Chairman: Oh, you are on 120, 01. You are under the big head? Yes, sorry.

Mr. Charles: Remuneration to the Auxiliary Fire Unit and it moved for \$18 million 2015, the revised estimates, to almost double, \$41.4 million. Does this represent an increase in remuneration? Or an increase in the numbers and

therefore an increase? And if you could just, perhaps not now, but give us an idea of the numbers that exist and the numbers proposed?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: I cannot give you the numbers now, but—the increase due on remuneration, and also a restructuring of auxiliary services at this point in time. There is an additional strength in the auxiliary service at this point in time, but I cannot give you the exact numbers; that can be provided at a later date.

Mr. Charles: I anticipate this.

Madam Chairman: And again, hon. Minister, if it could be provided by the end of the budget debate.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Yes, Madam Chair.

Mr. Paray: Thank you, Madam Chairman. It is just a follow-up question to the Member for Naparima. It was a similar query in terms of the fact that there has been a 100 per cent increase in terms of the remuneration to the auxiliary fire officers. Again, I think you have answered part of it. The context that I was phrasing that question would have been the fact that in my constituency there are quite a few auxiliary fire officers who have not been given postings for quite some time.

So my question would have been, is this increase going to mean that a lot of those auxiliary officers who are now at home, will be posted at fire stations more so in our new fire station in Mayaro? Perhaps you can give me some indication if that increase will mean those auxiliary officers can look forward to some postings very soon. Thank you.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: There is an examination process being conducted by the Acting Chief Fire Officer, and I am sure he would take that into consideration in terms of staffing throughout Trinidad and Tobago wherever that is required.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: The question was asked about the auxiliary fire fighters. I note that there is a concern on the ground for persons who wish to be made permanent, because there are a lot of openings and if at all they will be considered. So thank you.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Just to take us back to the questions raised by my colleague from Oropouche East on the joint border patrol. It is not mentioned either in the recurrent estimates nor is it mentioned in the DP. I know we are not at the Development Programme yet, but just suffice it to say from my reading of it, there is no allocation being made whatsoever for the joint patrols.

Now, I have hear the hon. Minister say, that you have to have review, consultation, develop a policy and then come to the Parliament. So if I am to understand that, is it that this new entity that the hon. Minister plans to put into place to fight crime, is it that there is no allocation for it in these estimates, because I have found none, whether in recurrent or in development programme?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: We are in the planning stage and therefore we are looking at conceptual clarification at this point in time. Therefore we will come up possibly by the mid-term review. So it is no cost right now in terms of the planning stage.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: So by the mid-term review we would be seeing a further increase in this allocation?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Perhaps or probably a reallocation.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: The other item which I have searched diligently—mentioned, and again, I see nothing under recurrent for Personnel Expenditure, Goods and Services, transfers and so on, which come under recurrent. Again, I am sorry I have to go also to the DP to look at an initiative mentioned in the budget statement and, I think by your good self and in the run-up to where we now, about the local constabularies. What exactly does this entail? And again, is any allocation made here for local constabularies in the recurrent or the DP? Or is that also for review and consultation and so on?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: The concept is actually to have police at the local and municipality areas, but that is under the Commissioner of Police. So you will see that line item under Commissioner of Police.

Dr. Rambachan: Thank you, Madam Chairman. I just wanted to go back to something the hon. Minister of National Security said, that they were restructuring the auxiliary fire officers, division or what have you. In restructuring is it that you are going to be recruiting new auxiliary fire officers? And if so, what is the process you are going to be using for recruitment, because I cannot recall seeing an advertising out for auxiliary fire officers.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: The restructuring may lead to an increase or may need a different kind of organizational structure. So that you may not have seen an advertisement as yet, because it may not have reached that stage as yet, but there is a—

Dr. Rambachan: But what is the process normally for recruiting auxiliary fire officers? Are there advertisements that are put out for these fire officers?

2.50 p.m.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: To the best of my knowledge there are advertisements, but I can confirm and provide accurate information for you at a later stage.

Dr. Rambachan: Thank You.

Madam Chairman: May I call upon the hon. Member for Caroni East?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. Hon. Minister and probably this is for the Minister of Finance as well—

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member, I am sorry, could you kindly talk into the microphone? Thank you.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Sorry.

Madam Chairman: That is all right.

Dr. Gopeesingh: I thought I usually have a loud voice, but all right. We noticed under this book, the draft estimates of the expenditure, but it is under Personnel Expenditure which is related to—page 120. We have the Personnel Expenditure as \$3.937 billion and the total head for national security is \$6.62 billion at the bottom. That is page 92, the one on Personnel Expenditure.

Madam Chairman: On page 92?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Page 92, Head 22.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much.

Dr. Gopeesingh: That is the total.

Mr. Imbert: Member that would include the charges, direct charges, so that is how you get the total. Okay? Since we are having trouble with the charges, you have to add the two.

Dr. Gopeesingh: I just wanted to confirm, hon. Minister and Minister of Finance that the Personnel Expenditure of close to \$3.9 billion out of the \$6.6 billion allocated for national security is possibly more than about 55, 60 per cent of the total expenditure for national security. So, Personnel Expenditure is about roughly approximately 60 per cent, and so therefore it would seem across—I do not know if I can extrapolate, but I know from the Ministry of Education as well, Ministry of Education Personnel Expenditure was about 60 per cent as well. So can we say across the board—Hon. Minister of Finance, you may enlighten us

more on it—that out of the budgets generally, nationally, for Personnel Expenditure and personnel emoluments we would be looking at about 55, 60 per cent of the expenditure, because this is national security, and I could speak firsthand from education, and these are two large Ministries.

So if we are looking at 60 per cent Personnel Expenditure in national security and 60 per cent in education, which are the two largest budgets of \$20 billion over a period of time per year, we are looking at approximately \$12 billion per year in just these two Ministries alone. So for five years we would have probably looked at \$60 billion in expenditure for the Ministries in Personnel Expenditure. Am I on the right track, hon. Minister of Finance?

Mr. Imbert: Okay, the percentage between Personnel Expenditure, Goods and Services, Transfers and Subsidies and other Heads of expenditure would vary from Ministry to Ministry, but there is absolutely no doubt that Personnel Expenditure is a large proportion of the budget, and that would explain whenever you increase salaries that is why you get such a large hit on the budget in terms of increased emoluments and also back pay. So it is a very significant component of expenditure, no two ways about it.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Seeing that we have taken the entire Sub-Head of 01 as a whole, can I then suggest we move on to Sub-Head 02, which is, Goods and Services?

Mr. Imbert: I believe so, that is a good move.

Dr. Moonilal: Madam Chairman, I am not sure if we have exhausted the entire ambit.

Madam Chairman: Well, hon. Member for Oropouche East, I waited a while, there were no further questions. So, that is why I—I may have been erroneous in my assumption.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Madam Chair, you were not erroneous, perhaps we did not fully appreciate what you were trying to tell us. We have dealt with items under page 120 which deals with the totals for each of these Sub-Heads, but that does not stop us, with due respect, from going on to 121 and page 122, which drills down into each of these items.

So, we may want to, as you are suggesting, go to 02, which is Goods and Services, we can talk generally, minor equipment and the current transfers. So we will deal with all on page 120 and then we proceed with your leave to page 121.

Madam Chairman: All right. So might I ask for my own clarification, hon. Member for Siparia, therefore now we are going in to the Sub-Items, Items, Items 01, 02 and 04 as outlined? Yes?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Yes, Ma'am.

Madam Chairman: All right. So can I call then Item 001, General Administration?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Okay, which is on page 121, yes?

Madam Chairman: Yes, please.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Having dealt with it under page 120 with the main Heads, we come now under Personnel Expenditure, general admin, overtime, monthly-paid officers for general admin. We see an increase of \$6,000 which is not much in the scheme of this large budget, but I would still like to know with respect to that, how many persons would this money be used to service, to pay? How many persons under monthly-paid officers? Do we know?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: This is made up of messengers and drivers.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Do we know how many persons?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: I do not have the number, but it is made up of messengers and drivers.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Minister of Finance, might I suggest that you may be able to assist? I do not know if page 93 may assist.

Mr. Imbert: Could I get some clarity on the question please? This is just in one department, general administration. One would assume there would not be much overtime there, there might be. You are talking about overtime to monthly-paid officers.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Yeah, monthly-paid.

Mr. Imbert: You want to know who they are?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: No, I did not ask who they are, I said how many.

Mr. Imbert: Now, listen, you should not just look at the increase, you should look at the allocation.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:—706, I am looking at it.

Mr. Imbert: Yes, but the allocation in 2015 was \$700,000.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Sure.

Mr. Imbert: So the budget analysts have estimated that the overtime paid in 2015 and what will be paid in 2016 will be more or less the same. If you want further details you want to know the categories of persons who would have taken overtime?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: No, no, I did not ask for the categories. I am looking at the numbers.

Mr. Imbert: What I am saying is that they have simply indicated that they expect overtime to be approximately the same in 2016. Do you want to know the total number of persons who will be receiving these payments? What exactly do you want to know?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: The number of officers.

Mr. Imbert: The number of people.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: The number of officers.

Mr. Imbert: Yeah, the number of officers in GA, in general admin.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Whether the officers would be the same, whether it would be more, would it be less.

Mr. Imbert: Right. Whether it is the same number of people, because it could be a combination of more people, less overtime, less people more overtime. So I would get the information for you.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Thank you very much.

Dr. Rambachan: Following on the question of the Member for Siparia, Madam Chair, if you look at overtime as a whole, overtime for daily-rated and monthly-paid and you add the two, you get about \$121 million for 2016, which is an increase.

Mr. Imbert: What line are you on?

Dr. Rambachan: Sorry, sorry. I am looking at page 120, overtime, daily-rated and overtime monthly-paid, and the total amount of overtime for 2016 is \$121 million if you add it up.

Mr. Imbert: I thought we had gone on to general admin.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member, in setting our procedure we had asked that we exhaust the particular—

Dr. Rambachan: But you see the question was raised, Madam Chair, with due respect, because now we are looking at overtime and the Minister of Finance talked about prudent management, about efficient management, about cost savings and my question is: has the Ministry decided upon doing an analysis of whether this level of overtime is justified and whether efficiencies in terms of administration can be implemented to cut down on this level of overtime and save the country money?

Mr. Imbert: Yes.

Dr. Rambachan: Well, I will come next year and ask you why it is you did not save or save.

Mr. Imbert: Well, you are speculating.

Dr. Rambachan: I have the right to ask.

Mr. Imbert: We would take your advice very seriously. You are asking us to try and contain and reduce overtime, and we will take your advice very seriously. It is a large item of expenditure, and we will try our best to reduce and contain overtime. Your suggestion is well noted. Thank you much. That is why I said, yes.

Madam Chairman: The hon. Member for Oropouche East.

Dr. Moonilal: Just a quick clarification from the hon. Minister. Remuneration for members of the Cabinet-appointed committees, would you be in a position to just state the Cabinet-appointed committees that are functioning now at the Ministry?

Madam Chairman: That is Sub-Item 14?

Dr. Moonilal:—14, yes.

Madam Chairman: On page 121, Sub-Item 14.

Mr. Imbert: In the interest of time, Madam Chairman, they will get the list for you. It is a series of committees within the Ministry of National Security.

Dr. Moonilal: Could I ask, in the interest of time as well, if the Minister could give an undertaking that before the completion of the budget exercise that you could furnish the Finance Standing Committee with a list of all those Cabinet-appointed committees and the membership of those committees.

Mr. Imbert: The membership as well?

Dr. Moonilal: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: Well, I am sure we can get a list of the committees, but we will try our best to also get the membership for you. We would try our best. There should be no problem.

Dr. Moonilal: Would that be difficulty to get the members of the committee?

Mr. Imbert: There should be no problem.

Dr. Moonilal: Could you give an undertaking to do that?

Mr. Imbert: We will try our best.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: I can do that, but these are committees that have been in existence not today, but for some time. There have been there for some time. Like the Emblems Committee, for instance.

Dr. Moonilal: We would like to refresh our minds with the members.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Sure, I would do that.

Madam Chairman: I would just like to remind all Members that all assurances given here will be followed up by the Committee on Government Assurances. So, have we exhausted Item 01?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Anything on 122?

Madam Chairman: So, we are on page 122, so that we are going on to Item Head 002, yes, which is Fire Services. Hon. Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Madam Chairman, thank you. Under salaries and cost of living allowance for the fire service, we have an increase from the revised estimate in 2015 of \$220 million now to \$545 million in the fire service, an increase of \$325 million. Would the team be kind enough to explain what occasioned this massive increase of more than possibly 150 per cent or 130 per cent around there, from 220 to 545 for salaries and cost of living in Fires Services? Are you increasing staff exponentially or what is happening?

Mr. Imbert: It is a combination of arrears, increased salaries and vacant posts. A combination of arrears—

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: No, the vacant posts are listed elsewhere.

Mr. Imbert: No, Member for Siparia. If you look at the explanation, it states clearly, includes provisions for vacant posts. So, this is a combination of vacant posts, arrears and increased salaries.

3.05 p.m.

Dr. Gopeesingh: So if that increase is more than 120 per cent, approximately, are you saying that there are so many vacant posts that you intend to fill? So the Fire Service has been running—

Mr. Imbert: The arrears would be a significant component.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: If you will allow me—

Dr. Gopeesingh: Go ahead. Yeah, sure.

Mr. Imbert: And, as I indicated, we can do this for—as I said, we will give you a breakdown for all.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Minister, it is not accurate to say that—if you can show me which line item says Vacant Posts under Fire Service—

Mr. Imbert: Go straight across. Go straight across.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:—includes provision of posts with incumbents.

Mr. Imbert: Go straight across.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:—with incumbents.

Mr. Imbert: Still vacant posts.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: If you look at Prison Service you actually have a separate head for line items.

Mr. Imbert: But we are not on Prison Service.

Madam Chairman: May I ask, are we moving on to item 004?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: I am asking, why is there a difference under the Vacant Posts?

Madam Chairman: So, may I suggest then, hon. Member for Siparia, you await Prison Service for when we reach there and maybe you can make the analogy.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Well, you continue—the MP was not finished.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Thank you, Madam.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Well, Minister of Finance, provision for Vacant Posts with incumbents, that means people are in the position and they are being paid now, so therefore there should be no increase if they are being paid already. If there are

vacant posts and they are paid from their old salary in 2015, they are incumbents so they are being paid in 2015 already, so 2016 should not occasion an increase, probably a minimal thing, but not to the extent. You need to explain really why we jumped from \$220 million to \$545 million—

Mr. Imbert: I thought I did.

Dr. Gopeesingh: No. “Come clear nah”.

Mr. Imbert: This includes vacant posts with incumbents, arrears of salary and increased salaries.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yeah, well, you know, we will end this budget, the Finance Committee, and we would not get a clear appreciation of how much money we are really owing in arrears of salaries which you have now for 2016 across the board. So we are just dealing with National Security now, so I am sure when we come to other Ministries we will have the same situation.

Mr. Imbert: I said I would do it for all Ministries. I said that, Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: All right. Okay.

Mr. Imbert: I was very clear. Let me repeat myself again, in the interest of time, since this is obviously an issue, I will do it for all Heads. I have said that, this is now the fourth time. I really do not want to say it a fifth time because next thing you will say that, you know, I am getting on bad or something like that, but I really do not want to say it five times. Please do not ask me for a sixth time.

Dr. Gopeesingh: No, no, no, we hear you. We hear you and we appreciate that.

Mr. Imbert: Okay? I have given an undertaking, I will try my best to give you the breakdown for all Ministries. Okay?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Okay. All right.

Madam Chairman: May I call now the hon. Member for Barataria/San Juan.

Dr. Khan: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. To the hon. Minister of Finance, two things right? Item 01, the Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance, since it has jumped \$325 million, is that for contract workers? Now, what kind of workers are you going to put there?—contract, non-contract, or what are you—

Mr. Imbert: No.

Dr. Khan: No. Well then clarify, please.

Mr. Imbert: But contract workers are under Goods and Services, other contracted services.

Dr. Khan: No, incumbents, I am saying salaries and cost of living allowance for who?

Mr. Imbert: Establishment posts.

Dr. Khan: All right. On Sub-Item 04, the Allowances—I am going to Sub-Item 04 now—

Mr. Imbert: The acting.

Madam Chairman: Members, excuse me, I believe the Member for Barataria/San Juan is the one who—

Dr. Khan: Thanks, Madam Chairman. On Sub-Item 04, the allowances for the monthly-paid officers, it has jumped to \$124 million, the increase, could I ask why?

Mr. Imbert: There were collective agreements that were settled, collective agreements are in progress as we speak. You have no understanding of the \$5 billion in emoluments—

Dr. Khan: Okay. Would it not have been wiser for you to enumerate that first prior to coming here so we can jump past these items?

Mr. Imbert: I do not quite understand.

Dr. Khan: If you had given us the breakdown of the \$5 billion that you have indicated—

Mr. Imbert: I had to do that before we did the estimates.

Mr. Khan:—it would have been wise because then we would not have been even asking these questions now.

Mr. Imbert: That is very abnormal.

Dr. Khan: Is it?

Mr. Imbert: Yes.

Dr. Khan: Okay. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: Member for Oropouche East.

Dr. Moonilal: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I dare not ask the Minister to repeat himself again for the twelfth time on salaries and cost of living—

Mr. Imbert: And we are only on the first Head.

Dr. Moonilal:—but I wanted to—well, I mean, the Minister, say for the interest of time; we have five days so you can get yourself comfortable.

Mr. Imbert: No problem.

Dr. Moonilal: Minister, could you give us, or make an undertaking—because I do not expect you to have it now in front of you—an undertaking to give us a breakdown of that increase from 220 to 545? What would be the provision for vacant posts with incumbents? What would be the provision for arrears? What would be the provision for salary increase in that \$325 million jump? That is my first request. And, secondly, you made reference a few moments ago to new collective agreements, and so on, just remind us when were those collective agreements settled?

Mr. Imbert: Well you should know.

Dr. Moonilal: I am new to the Eleventh Parliament.

Mr. Imbert: You were in the Government.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: That is not a proper answer.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Minister of Finance, could you kindly respond?

Mr. Imbert: Well, Madam Chairman, I am sorry, I was not in the last Government; I cannot give you the precise date. I will get the information, but some of these would have been settled already. Some of them would have been close to settlement, I will get the information, but it was something initiated by the past regime, but they are asking me what they did. No problem, I will get the information.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much.

Dr. Moonilal: Madam Chairman, I just want to indicate to the hon. Member that I asked that for a specific question. I am aware, and I should be aware this was settled by the last administration with significant salary increase, and so on, but I wanted to know when so that we can calculate this increase to see if the calculation of the increase synchronized properly with when that increase took place. So that is why I am asking you to just give us that undertaking.

Mr. Imbert: But I had given an undertaking.

Madam Chairman: And, therefore, I think the undertaking—

Dr. Moonilal: I am aware our Government did that good job.

Madam Chairman: Members, please, the undertaking has therefore taken care of the issue and, therefore, may we proceed, and I would now call upon the hon. Member for Caroni Central.

Dr. Tewarie: Actually, it is not really a question, it is—I think the thing that is eluding all of us here is that given the level of salary increases that we know, and the additional items that these take into account, the increase of way over 100 per cent seems somehow to elude us, and that is why we need the clarification.

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman, may I make a general statement. These numbers were prepared by the Budget Division based on information provided by the Chief Personnel Officer's office by the various Ministries, by the Ministry of Public Administration, by the various departments, by the various units. I would be the happiest man if when we go through these things in due course we can make some savings if in fact some of the estimates are a bit lower than, or a bit higher than they should be. But this is based in the usual way on calculations done by the CPO, for example, with respect to the police. When we get to that you will see almost a \$1 billion increase, \$900 million increase in personnel expenditure for the police service, and this is based on the information that is given to the Budget Division by the responsible units within the public service.

I understand that some of the increases may appear astonishing, but this is why it has been calculated that there is this \$5 billion problem in 2016. And, as I said, we on this side would be very happy if we can save some expenditure if in fact when we get into the—we drill down into this and we find that it is not \$325 million, for example, it is \$320 million, we would be very happy because it would assist us with respect to the deficit and with respect to balancing the budget. So, I will give an undertaking, we will give the calculations as they have been given to us in the normal way by all of the units of government, and, as we go through the year, if we achieve savings I will most certainly let you know. Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member for Naparima.

Mr. Charles: Thank you, Madam Chairman. I agree with the undertaking given by the Minister of Finance but, just to be specific, our understanding is that the increases negotiated were in the range of 14 per cent and, if that is true, it explains the concern by my colleague from Caroni Central. When we look at the allowances and see almost 100 per cent increase it does not make sense, and that is the only reason for our concern.

Mr. Imbert: No problem, and I can give some clarity on that, and if the Chairman will allow, the Member for Naparima is new, but when you hear 14 per cent, that is multiplied, you know, you would have a certain percentage in year one, then COLA is then added to that and then it is multiplied in year two, and then multiplied in year three. It does not include the allowances so, actually, when you hear a number like 14 per cent sometimes it is really 25 per cent when you take the total wage and salary bill into account, so I can understand if you are just doing a rough calculation of 14 you could be misled. It is a combination of allowances plus COLA, plus—

Mr. Charles: But this is 100 per cent.

Mr. Imbert: No, I know—allowances, COLA, they all come together, they multiply each other, and so on. I understand what you are saying, so that, as I said, we will give you the breakdown as given to us by the various units and departments of the Government.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member for Siparia.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Thank you, Madam Chair. Perhaps when you are providing that breakdown for us you would want to note, we are looking at not a 14 per cent converted to 25 per cent and multiplied as you are speaking; we are looking at about 150 per cent, so we would appreciate. And based on what you have already said, Hon. Minister, are you saying that the \$5 billion that you spoke of in your budget statement as being owed for salaries and wages, and so on, for matters negotiated during 2015, that is included in the deficit that you are recording of \$7 billion? Or is it that we have a deficit of \$7 billion plus this \$5 billion to be paid to negotiated officers?

Mr. Imbert: No. The deficit of \$7 billion is for actual expenditure in 2015. It is the actual expenditure up until September 30; the \$5 billion is a carry-over into 2016. If in fact that had been paid, or attempts had been made to pay that—

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: The deficit would have been more.

Mr. Imbert:—it would have been \$12 billion. Yes.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Oh, some might have come in.

Mr. Imbert: Whatever. You know.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Thank you, Minister.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Madam Chair and honourable team for the Minister of National Security and the Minister of Finance, when we look at allowances in comparison to salaries, and we see allowances of \$213 million and salaries with COLA of \$545 million—I did a rough mathematical calculation, it is approximately 40 per cent—

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: This is for which one? Fire?

Dr. Gopeesingh: On page 122 for Fire. So, are allowances approximately 40 per cent of the basic salary and COLA? Is that tenable? Is it such a situation that allowances come up—so if somebody is receiving a salary of \$10,000 it means that they are getting an allowance of \$4,000 so their salary and allowance will be \$14,000; this is in fact indicating that, so could you give us an idea what constitutes that 40 per cent allowances of the salary?

Mr. Imbert: I think this is a generic question that would apply across the board, so what I would do with respect to salaries, increases in the allocation for salaries, increases in the allocation for allowances, I will get an appropriate explanation from the Chief Personnel Officer and the Budget Division to explain these things to you.

Dr. Gopeesingh: And the same thing will come up when we look at Fire Service—

Mr. Imbert: It will be right through. It will be right through.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yeah. Two hundred and thirty-something million out of 664 for allowances. So is it something within the Ministry of National Security that allowances, or is it—give us some thinking and then we can look at the others.

Mr. Imbert: I will get the information for you, but each Ministry will be different, you know, some Ministries might be paid a particular type of allowance, maybe a hazard allowance, maybe a special commuted overtime allowance, I cannot explain—

Dr. Gopeesingh: I am amazed to see 40 per cent—

Mr. Imbert: No, I am just saying, I cannot explain today, but what I will do for you, since the numbers are huge—and, I must say, when we were grappling with the unfunded gap in the budget I asked these questions as well—

Dr. Gopeesingh: It is good.

Mr. Imbert:—is it so much, how can it be so much?—and I was told by Budgets, and, I mean, these are the same people in the Budget Division who have been working there for umpteen years, they are all dedicated public servants—

Dr. Gopeesingh: Which we have great respect for.

Mr. Imbert: Yes. So, I am afraid that I had to go with the numbers given to me because you are using the same method of calculation; it is the same CPO; it is the same Budget Division, so that I will get the information for you because I myself was a bit taken aback at the quantum of the increases.

Dr. Gopeesingh: You may need to look under your 43 Heads.

Mr. Imbert: I would most certainly, and, as I said, when we get to police you will see it is doubled, you know, it has gone from \$900 to \$1.8 billion, or something like that.

Dr. Gopeesingh: So you saw it yourself?

Mr. Imbert: I saw it myself.

3.20 p.m.

Dr. Gopeesingh: So the big increase really is the big increase in allowances and salaries?

Mr. Imbert: It could be. It is based on collective agreements. It is a combination of salaries and allowances. So I will get the information for you, because rather than every single Head you see 100 per cent increase, you ask the same question, I will break it down in terms of personnell expenditure, allowances and salaries. I would really implore Members, rather than asking that same question every time we get to a different Head—

Dr. Gopeesingh: We just draw it to your attention for your consideration.

Mr. Imbert: You can draw it to my attention, and we will get proper explanations for you. I want to say if, in fact, the numbers are slightly overstated, it will help us with our budgeting, our expenditure and our deficit. It will assist; it might even balance the budget, who knows.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: While the Minister is getting all this information for us, would he be so kind as to also tell us—you mentioned about generic items—so generic, under General Administration, under Fire Service, Prison, Regiment, as we go on under each of these, under Personnel Expenditure—if you would kindly also give us how many persons were employed in each of these Sub-Heads prior to election; how many are employed now and how many new persons have been brought in under General Administration, under Prison, under Fire and each of the Heads as we go through Personnel Expenditure.

Mr. Imbert: You are talking Head by Head?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: We are talking Head 22.

Mr. Imbert: Yes, but Head by Head.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: No, I am speaking of Head 22, one Head. Sub-Heads within Head 22, Sub-Head, Personnel Expenditure and then under Personnel Expenditure, 001, General Administration, 002, Fire, 003, Prison, Regiment, blah, blah, blah—Sub-items.

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman, I think I understand the question being asked, but I want to make a point. I had said during my budget statement that these things are not wholly comparable, because Head 22 is not the same, National Security is not the same as it was last year. It now has additional—

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: I said that too; I totally agree.

Mr. Imbert: So that is why I said, rather than the Ministry, we can go to the Sub-Head which is Fire Service, Prison Service, Regiment, and we will get it that way. If we try to do it any other way we will be comparing apples and oranges.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: You see, I am not speaking here of the numbers. We are looking under General Administration, for example, which will not be Regiment, Fire, et cetera, et cetera. General Administration is the general administration of the Ministry of National Security. For Personnel Expenditure, page 1, 001, General Administration, we see that General Administration has moved from 32 to 40. This may well be as you say, because of the Heads and so on.

Mr. Imbert: That is exactly what it is.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: So that in merging them, the point is you have not decreased your general administration expenses. You have, in fact, increased them, even though you have merged two and three Ministries together for National Security.

Mr. Imbert: No, no, no—

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: One moment, please. Can I finish my question, please? My question is, I am saying under General Administration, under police and fire, I am asking for the increase. I am asking for the numbers of persons who were there pre-election, who are there post-election and how many new persons have been brought in under General Admin, under Prison, under Regiment, under Fire and each of those subsets under the Ministry of National Security. So it is not a comparison from last year at all. We are asking for your estimates for 2016.

Mr. Imbert: Yes, Member for Siparia, but the point I was making to you is that when you merge Ministries and you add lifeguard services and you add prison services and other units that would have appeared elsewhere, you also would be increasing the general administration responsibilities of this Ministry, so they are not wholly comparable. You would have general administration that would deal with prisons, you would have general administration that would deal with lifeguards, and it is not wholly comparable.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Minister of Finance, might I suggest then, when you are giving that information if you could show where they were pre-budget, where they are now and the numbers what they were then and the numbers what they are now. It may be a little more detailed an exercise.

Mr. Imbert: That is exactly the point I was trying to make. Since the information is being asked in such detail, we will try our best, but I think it is unlikely that that information would be provided before the end of this examination of these estimates, but we will try our best to get it in a reasonable time.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Madam Chair, if I may. Your guidance to the hon. Minister to say where it came from, that is contained in the estimates; it is contained here. You would see items transferring from Head whatever, Ministry of the People, transferring from Head Ministry of Justice, transferring from Ministry of Tourism. It is contained here. That is not, with due respect, what I am asking. We are talking about numbers of persons pre-September 07, post-September 07. How many are there, how many left, how many have been brought in since then; so it is not from which Heads. I am not asking for comparison.

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: Madam Chairman, may I ask a question of the Member for Siparia, just for clarification? Is there a cut-off date, so you want it from pre-September 07 to when?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: To the present date.

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: To the date of the budget, the date of the printing of these documents?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Estimates, yes; I did not say the printing, the presentation of budget estimates in the Parliament on October 05.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: If I could add; in the national security structure we have not sent home anyone so I believe it is the same figure before and—you want to know the exact figure?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Say that; if that is the case say it.

Mr. Imbert: You will get the information.

Madam Chairman: Can we then go on to item—

Dr. Gopeesingh: Madam Chair, I crave your indulgence.

Madam Chairman: This is on 002?

Dr. Gopeesingh: No.

Madam Chairman: So can we go on to item 004, which is on the same page 122, Prison Service?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes. Madam Chair, a similar situation is here with Prison Service, which the hon. Minister of Finance has indicated that he will give the same figures related to the allowances of \$236 million and the salaries of \$664 million for salaries for Prison Service. It is a new item it would seem coming into National Security, because there is no estimate or actual for 2014, and no revised estimates for 2015. So Prison Service has been brought into National Security for the first time. It has a total expense of about \$1.033 billion. So if the budget for National Security—how much did you say it was?—10-point-how-much was the budget for National Security?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: \$10.8 billion.

Dr. Gopeesingh: So if you subtract this \$1 billion from that, that would be— if it were just National Security without prison service, it would be \$9.8 billion on your expenditure for National Security, without the prison service and others, lifeguard and so on? I just want to make the assertion, so that when you said you gave the largest allocation to National Security, whereas previously National Security did not have prison service and others like lifeguard and so on, really in fact, it became the largest because you included these two other areas, yes?

Mr. Imbert: That is the end of the question?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes. I just wanted to consolidate that point.

Mr. Imbert: Is it a question or a statement you are making?

Dr. Gopeesingh: I was asking you a question.

Mr. Imbert: Would you allow me to answer it then?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Sure, go ahead.

Mr. Imbert: When I made the statement in the budget statement that the allocations to these various Heads, X, Y, Z, I made the statement—I was very clear—it is not wholly comparable to the previous year because of the merger of the Ministries.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: When you said that?

Dr. Gopeesingh: I cannot remember hearing that.

Mr. Imbert: That is in the budget statement, that is not wholly comparable. *[Interruption]* I know you did not read it. So the fact of the matter is that it is obvious that if prisons was in the Ministry of Justice before and it is now in National Security, then the allocation for prisons has increased the allocation for National Security. That should be obvious. If lifeguard services were not there before, and it is there now, then it has increased the allocation for National Security, and so on, and so on, and so on.

Dr. Gopeesingh: What I am trying to indicate to you, hon. Minister, I would say in inverted commas, that the “boast” that you gave the largest budgetary allocation to National Security, when you juxtaposed that versus 2014/2015, it is not in fact so.

Mr. Imbert: Are you making a statement or asking a question?

Dr. Gopeesingh: I am responding to what you are stating, and I ask it as a question. Where is it?

Mr. Imbert: I would answer, Madam Chairman, because I would like to bring closure to this, because we are going around in circles.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Madam Chair is in control, you know.

Madam Chairman: I think the hon. Member is trying to seek some clarification. Hon. Minister, I think that it may be very clear to you, but you may have to say until it becomes very clear to us all.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Imbert: Is that it? Okay. Let me say it again. If you look in that budget statement you are not going to see anything written there that the allocation for National Security in this fiscal is the largest ever in the history of Trinidad and Tobago, or that it is more than 2015 or anything like that. Those statements are not in the budget statement, contrary to your belief. What is in the budget

statement is that the items are not wholly comparable because we have merged Ministries, but in fiscal 2016 the largest allocation out of the total of \$63 billion is to National Security. We never made any comparison with 2015. I have no idea where you got that from; it is not written inside of here.

Dr. Moonilal: I want to really thank the Member for Diego Martin North/East for clarifying that matter, because I was under the wrongful impression, Madam Chair, that the hon. Prime Minister did make a hue and a cry, and National Security did, indeed, make statements to the effect that it was the largest most supreme slice of the cake, and they were happy to get so much. I am happy that he clarified the matter finally.

Mr. Imbert: I am talking about the budget statement, you cannot bring in extraneous matters.

Dr. Moonilal: Having said that, the matter at prison, I want to ask the hon. Member to be kind enough as well, as it relates to salary and cost of living allowance, having regard to the fact that the increase in National Security has to do mainly, but not completely, with the increase in salaries and allowances and not with any other matter, for salaries and cost of living, from my estimate here it is under the Ministry of Justice for the closing up of the budget from Ministry of Justice page 354, that has moved from \$288 million for salaries and cost of living for prison service, to \$664 million. So from \$288 million to \$664 million is the jump.

I am asking that the hon. Minister, given this, also provide for us the breakdown between arrears in salary, increase in salary, because there is no reference here to provision for vacant post with incumbents, so that is out. There are only two elements that constitute this jump from \$288 million to \$664 million. They would be arrears and they would be new salary increases. I understand the Minister when he says a salary is not just 14 per cent, it would be more and those would be pursuant to collective agreements signed prior to September by the former administration.

So if you can give us that breakdown as well, we would appreciate if you can give an undertaking that you would do that, because what is now coming on us very dramatic is that the increase in National Security has to do primarily with the increases in wages and salaries to personnel within National Security, and not new programmes or policy, because the joint patrol programme, as we understood, will first have consultation, then policy law and implementation. Thank you. If you can do that.

3.35 p.m.

Mr. Imbert: Is that a question or a statement? Madam Chairman, was I asked a question?

Madam Chairman: I think what you are being asked is to account for the difference between the—

Dr. Moonilal: Could I repeat?

Madam Chairman:—the \$288 million in 2015 under Salaries at the Ministry of Justice, and now on page 122, the Salaries—Prison Service \$664 million. Well, what is the difference?—which is about \$400-and-something million. I think that is the question.

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman, I will try my best to find out what the former administration did to cause this increase in Personnel Expenditure. What I would say however, Madam Chairman, and I will say it for yet—

Madam Chairman: Could we have a little order?

Mr. Imbert:—another time. There are two points that need to be dealt with here. I have no idea where the Members opposite got this idea that contained within this budget statement or anything that the Minister of Finance said was even remotely close to a huge allocation in National Security comprised of new programmes and new projects. That is not written and that was not said. And the Members opposite keep putting it on the record as if it was written and if it was said. It was not written and it was not said.

What we said was that within the \$63 billion allocation for 2016, of the \$63 billion the largest component is National Security at almost \$11 billion. So, we simply highlighted the fact that the expenditure for 2016 is \$63 billion of which the largest component is National Security at \$11 billion. All of those other things that hon. Members are saying, I do not know where they got that from the budget statement because it is not in there. And in addition, Madam Chairman, I have given the undertaking and I did make a plea to hon. Members opposite, that please as we go from Head to Sub-Head to Sub-Head to Sub-Head, I have given an undertaking that with respect to all of these increases in Personnel Expenditure, all, whether it is comprised of merged Ministries, whether it is comprised of old Ministries, whether it is comprised of new Ministries, all items of Personnel Expenditure in every department of Government, we will give a breakdown, and explanation of the increase in Personnel Expenditure. And I am making an impassioned plea to the Members opposite. We have about 1,000 heads, please do not ask this question 1,000 times.

Madam Chairman: Might I, in an effort for us to progress this process, in terms of when we come up under the Heads—

Mr. Imbert: Salaries, Wages, Allowances.

Madam Chairman:—could we then just maybe say to the hon. Minister of Finance that we expect your assurance to cover this Head, unless there is some other question?

Dr. Moonilal: Madam Chairman, having worked with the Member for Diego Martin North/East for several years I would prefer to ask him the question at every opportunity—

Mr. Imbert: A thousand times?

Dr. Moonilal:—and go on record with his commitment.

Madam Chairman: What I am suggesting, hon. Member for Oropouche East—

Mr. Imbert: I never worked with you.

Madam Chairman:—it is not so much that the question is not being asked. It is an equivalent to saying—

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: It is not being answered.

Madam Chairman: That is all that I am suggesting. Okay? So that we say we would make reference that the same undertaking applies to this.

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman, I give the undertaking that with respect, let us go, let us deal with it as it is written. Page 120, Ministry of National Security 01 Personnel Expenditure broken down into various Heads, Fire Service, Prison Service, Regiment, et cetera, et cetera for every single Ministry and department with respect to Sub-Head 01 we will give a breakdown and an explanation of the increase in Personnel Expenditure. I cannot say it more clearly than that, Madam Chairman.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much.

Mr. Imbert: Every single one. [*Crosstalk*] So “doh” ask me 1,000 times.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member for Caroni East, are we moving on to another item?

Dr. Gopeesingh: I just want to ask a question in summary.

Mr. Imbert: In summary. [*Laughter*]

Dr. Gopeesingh: I just want to ask the Minister, is it true to state then that the increase for the Ministry of National Security in salaries and allowances over 2015, which was 1.395, has now been increased by \$2.5 billion making the total of \$3.9 billion? So, I am asking whether you agree that the increase in salaries and allowances for the Ministry of National Security from 2015 to 2016 is in fact \$2.5 billion?

Mr. Imbert: I do not quite understand. On page 121—sorry, Madam Chairman, I apologize if I appear to be a little frustrated and befuddled, but on page 121, Head 22, line 01 going across to the one, two, three, four, five column at the top is the word “increase”.

Dr Gopeesingh: Okay. I just wanted you to confirm.

Mr. Imbert: Increase means increase.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Whether you agree.

Mr. Imbert: It is written there.

Dr. Gopeesingh: The increase is \$2.5 billion—[*Crosstalk*]

Madam Chairman: Members, please.

Mr. Imbert: It says increase.

Madam Chairman: Member for Caroni, are you asking if that is an error?

Dr. Gopeesingh: No. I am just asking him to confirm. [*Crosstalk*] I am just asking him to determine, to tell us whether that figure of \$2.5 billion increase in salaries in the Ministry of National Security from 2015 to 2016 is in fact \$2.5 billion?

Mr. Imbert: Is the increase an increase? All right, Madam Chairman, he is asking a question. I go again to page 121. I do not know how else to do this. Page 121, Head 22, 01 Personnel Expenditure, 2015 revised estimate written in the English language, \$1,395,397,560; 2015 revised estimates. 2016, written again in the English language, \$3,373,905,850. When you subtract the two you get what is written in the fifth column under the heading Increase—\$2,542,508,290. Are you asking whether it is a misprint? It is not a misprint.

Madam Chairman: Minister of Finance, I think you answered the question. Could we kindly move and can I suggest we move on to Item 5. Could I call upon the hon. Member for Fyzabad.

Dr. Bodoë: Thank you, Madam Chair. This question is directed to the Minister of National Security and at the risk of incurring the wrath of the Minister of Finance, but I am asking here about a decrease. It is not an increase.

Madam Chairman: We are at Item number—

Dr. Bodoë: It is a decrease I am asking about, Madam Chair, and is in regard to salaries and cost of living allowance together with wages and cost of living allowance there, those two decreases. I am just asking whether if there is an explanation for that decrease, and if so, whether this will have an impact in terms of the deployment of manpower in Regiment with regards to National Security.

Mr. Imbert: That is a very good question. I thank you for that question and I would ask the Minister to elucidate.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Arrears were paid last year and that is the balance of the arrears that have been paid. That is why there is a decrease.

Dr. Bodoë: No. No.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: The arrears were paid last year so that this is just the balance. That is why there is a decrease. That is the remainder.

Dr. Bodoë: Oh. I see.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: That is in fact the civilian workers.

Dr. Bodoë: Okay. I am to take it then—sorry. Sorry, Madam Chairman, may I take it then that there is no reference here in terms of decreased personnel in the regiment?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: This is payment for civilian workers.

Dr. Bodoë: Okay. That is the clarification. Okay. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Dr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Chairman. Just a quick question to the Minister of National Security or the hon. Minister of Finance. Under Probation Services 008 and also I will tie that into 009 Forensic Science Centre, as far as Sub-Head 01—

Madam Chairman: What? Hon. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, could I ask that you defer your question for when we reach to those Heads?

Dr. Lee: I thought we were dealing with all 0—

Appropriation Bill, 2015

Wednesday, October 14, 2015

Madam Chairman: No. We are still on Item—we are now on Item 05 which is Regiment and that is on page 123. Are we exhausted? Hon. Member for Barataria/San Juan.

Dr. Khan: Madam Chair, I just want to ask something based on the answer that was given about the arrears. Head 02 Wages and Cost of Living allowance, it has dropped, decreased by up to \$5,299,000 [*Crosstalk*] 02. Same thing.

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: Page 125?

Dr. Khan: Yeah.

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: 123.

Dr. Khan: Yeah. 005/02.

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: Wages and Cost of Living Allowance.

Dr. Khan: Yes. Number one, initially you indicated that it was arrears. Why has that dropped like that? The actual Wages and Cost of Living Allowance.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: This is daily-paid workers that arrears were paid last year.

Dr. Khan: That is also arrears?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: That is right.

Dr. Khan: Okay.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: The decrease was paid. [*Crosstalk*] The decrease was paid. [*Crosstalk*]

Dr. Khan: No. I am just asking if 01, was what arrears? Who were the officers for those arrears and who were the officers for the 02 arrears?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: The monthly-paid and daily-paid public servants.

Dr. Khan: So monthly paid was 01?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Yes, 01.

Dr. Khan: And 02 is daily-paid? I know. I know. I am just asking. So therefore what you are saying, salaries for monthly-paid people are basically \$2.2 million versus daily-paid \$9.4?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: That is civilians working in the regiment.

Dr. Khan: So much?

Appropriation Bill, 2015

Wednesday, October 14, 2015

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: How you mean “so much”?

Dr. Khan: No. No. I am just looking at the discrepancy of both Salaries and Cost of Living.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: How you mean “so much”?

Dr. Khan: No. I am just asking because \$2.2 million and \$9.4 million is a lot.

Mr. Imbert: Could I explain?

Dr. Khan: Sure, please.

Mr. Imbert: Each department has a different configuration in terms of daily paid and monthly paid. Some Ministries and departments would have more monthly paid than daily paid, others would have more daily paid than monthly paid. So the regiment, from what you are seeing here, had a significant complement of daily-paid workers and a smaller complement of monthly-paid workers.

Dr. Khan: Ok. Thank you.

Mr. Imbert: That is what is going on there.

Dr. Khan: Thanks.

Madam Chairman: Member for Oropouche East.

Dr. Moonilal: Hon. Minister, when we looked earlier at Prison we saw the increase, and the Regiment we are not seeing the increase, in fact there is a decrease. Is it that arrangements for increase in salaries and wages have not been undertaken? Is there any ongoing process now for revising salaries and wages of members of the regiment, both civilian and/or non-civilian? Because this has received a decrease and not an increase akin with other areas of National Security.

And my follow-up enquiry would be, the civilians that we refer to under Salaries and Cost of Living, are they not employed under a similar arrangement with other members in the public service to benefit from salary increases elsewhere? They are negotiating by themselves, and if so, what is the arrangement for any revision in salary increase and wage increase? Can they expect an increase in this fiscal or next fiscal or is it that they will get no increase while other members in the national security and protective services have benefited from generous increases?

Mr. Imbert: I am getting clarification as to whether the monthly-paid are in fact members of the PSA, and the daily-paid are in fact members of the NUGFW. Just give us one second?

Dr. Moonilal: Sure.

Mr. Imbert: So, they are members of the PSA and members of the NUGFW.

Dr. Moonilal: Then I ask the question, why is there a decrease in the estimate? Would they not have benefited from an increase?

Mr. Imbert: I will answer. I heard your question the first time. If you look at the revised—look at the original estimate for 2015, column two, \$2.2 million and then the revised \$3 million, so the expenditure was more than anticipated. Go to the wages and cost of living, the daily paid, original estimate 10.9, actual payment 14.7.

3.50 p.m.

Dr. Moonilal: That is not actual payment.

Mr. Imbert: You are not seeing \$14,699,000?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Estimates revised.

Mr. Imbert: Yes, yes, of course. The whole thing is estimates. So that if you look at what is happening here, what is being indicated is that the payments of salaries and wages and so on, for this particular unit were more in 2015 than originally anticipated. So, it indicates, and I would get clarification for you on this, that any arrears would have been paid in 2015 rather than 2016.

Dr. Moonilal: I mean, surely you would understand and I will say it once for you, that it is not the issue of arrears paid, it is: how can you have an increase in your wages and it goes up in 2015 and goes down in 2016?

Mr. Imbert: Because you do not have arrears to pay. You paid arrears in 2015.

Dr. Moonilal: But, this figure of 2016, 9.4 is even less than actual in 2014.

Mr. Imbert: Well, there may be some changes in the establishment, it is not—

Dr. Moonilal: Well, then say that or go and enquire into that. Do not jump to the conclusion that it is false.

Mr. Imbert: But, it is not significant. It is a small sum.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Minister, I think in any event, the point that is being asked is if the estimate in 2015 was \$10 million, and there was an increase in allowances, at least the estimate in 2016, which is less than what it was in the first estimate in 2015, needs to be answered. And I guess—

Mr. Imbert: You will get an explanation.

Madam Chairman: It is not that. That is what you are asking.

Mr. Imbert: Certainly.

Madam Chairman: Member for Naparima, sorry.

Mr. Charles: Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. I am looking at page 123 and I am told that Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance is \$2.2 million, and last year \$3 million was paid. So, the total for arrears for monthly paid in the regiment is \$5.2 million. Last year and 2016.

Hon. Member: No.

Mr. Charles: What is it?

Mr. Imbert: It was 2.2 was the original estimate.

Mr. Charles: Right.

Mr. Imbert: The revised estimate is 3, and the estimate going forward goes back to the 2.2.

Madam Chairman: Because the difference is arrears.

Mr. Charles: All right. Okay.

Madam Chairman: The difference is the arrears.

Mr. Charles: All right. Just a follow-up question, if you go back to the fire services, you see it is significant, \$325 million, does this have something to do with the proportion of—

Mr. Imbert: I will get you an explanation for it.

Mr. Charles: Okay.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Thank you, Madam Chair. In other words, will the Defence Force in 2016 have increased salaries, as the police force, as the prisons, as the other units of the protective services? Will they benefit or are they to benefit from increased salaries? All the other units are benefitting. Forget the arrears now, we are talking about an increase in your salaries. Is it that they will not benefit? The question will then be, why? Is it that it has not been settled for the Defence Force?

Mr. Imbert: We will get the explanation for you.

Hon. Member: These are civilians here.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Therefore, if it is not settled for the Defence Force, when do you intend to settle their increases? All the other units have got increases.

Mr. Imbert: Just one second, I am getting some clarity for you.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: They have not increased the salaries so that might be outstanding in the other protective services.

Mr. Imbert: All right, I have the explanation, Madam Chairman. These are for public—Member for Siparia, these numbers are for public servants. If you go down to 23 and 24, you will see where the real hit is coming in. Where the salaries are going from 341 to 758 and the allowances are going 155 to 354. So, that is the soldiers. The other things on top are the public servants. It would have a few, one or two public servants, maybe accountants or something like that. But the real expenditure for personnel in the Regiment is in 23 and 24. You would see the very large sums there, direct charges. [*Interruption*] Yes, we go back to the same direct charges thing. You see it in there, \$758 million for salaries, 354—and this is all coming out of collective agreements that would have been the business of the former administration.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Could you explain direct charges?

Mr. Imbert: I explained what direct charges is. I have explained that four times. [*Crosstalk*]

Madam Chairman: Hon. Minister of Finance, I think there is a misunderstanding of what an Appropriation Bill does. Okay? And it appears that what appears in an Appropriation Bill was thought to be your total expenditure. I think you have explained that.

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman, with great respect, I think the hon. Members opposite know that what is appropriated does not include direct charges. I remember going over this issue and I remember going to this book which shows what the direct charges are. So, I think the hon. Members opposite are well aware that what is being appropriated and the direct charges are two completely different things. I think they know. I think they know.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: It is not true to say that we are not aware.

Madam Chairman: But I think we also have to remember that this is being televised live, and maybe some of our viewers may not be so aware.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you very much. Thank you. [*Desk thumping*] Very good, excellent.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So, can we therefore go on to Item 006, which is on page 124. This is Coast Guard. And can we look at the Sub-Items. Are there any matters to be raised on the Sub-Items?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Could you give us a break?

Madam Chairman: One minute, please. [*Interruption*] May we have some order, please! It is the same undertaking being sought with respect to Salaries and Wages and Cost of Living Allowance. Yes?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Increase.

Madam Chairman: Yes? Increase, decrease, all right, there is an undertaking.

Mr. Imbert: I would also like to, for the benefit of those watching, that if one looks at Item 23, Item 24, direct charges on the Consolidated Fund are amounting to \$338 million in salaries for the Coast Guard, and \$168 million in allowances for the Coast Guard, as compared to civilian salaries which are just \$568,000,

So, it is really the officers of the Coast Guard that are getting the lion's share of this allocation, and those are direct charges which are paid first, which is quite appropriate; they pay those who protect us first and then everybody else gets paid afterwards.

Madam Chairman: Okay, can we therefore go on to Item 007, which is Immigration. All right? So, for the record, same undertaking from the Minister of Finance with respect to Salaries and Cost of Living Allowances. And then may I therefore ask the Member for Tabaquite, please.

Dr. Rambachan: Thank you, Madam Chair. Under Immigration, monthly paid officers' overtime is being increased by \$3.5 million, and I am asking the question in light of the difficulties being experienced by members of the public, and the length of time it is now taking to get the passport, and even if you pay \$350 to get an expedited passport it still takes you between seven to nine days. Can you, Minister, indicate that with this additional overtime that you are going to pay, whether there is any link and any strategy to reduce the inordinate delays that are being experienced by people to get their passports at the Immigration Department, and especially so, people who are applying for passports at overseas missions?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: The Immigration Officers are in fact working over the weekends right now to try and speed up the process, and they will continue to do so until just time as we can remedy the situation.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Dr. Lee: My question is related to Sub-Head 008, Probation Services, and I do not think you have reached there as yet

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Come back to it.

Madam Chairman: Is it then, therefore, to defer your question to a “lil” later? I call on the hon. Member for Siparia.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Would the hon. Minister of National Security indicate under this 007 Immigration, whether 10-year passports have been issued to citizens, and if so, as of what date did such issuance take place?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: They are being issued—Goods and Services.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: It is under Goods and Services?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Yes. [*Laughter*].

Madam Chairman: Hon. Minister of Finance, would you answer the question, therefore?

Mr. Imbert: What is the question? [*Laughter*] What is the question?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: To the Hon. Minister of National Security—

Mr. Imbert: But I was being asked to answer.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: No—who has oversight of the Immigration Department? My question was whether 10-year passports have been issued to citizens of Trinidad and Tobago? When did such issuance take place, firstly? And when was the decision taken so to do by the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago?

Mr. Imbert: We will let you know by the end of the debate.

Dr. Moonilal: You do not know it, off hand?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Through the Minister of National Security.

Mr. Imbert: We will get back to you at the end of the debate.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Well, will you check if it is in August of 2015 that such passports began?

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member, with all due respect, I do not think that is a fair question under the items that we are considering.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Really?

Mr. Imbert: This is salaries.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: I am guided, Madam.

Madam Chairman: All right, could we therefore move on? Member for Tabaquite.

Dr. Rambachan: I do not know if the question will be appropriate also, through you, I will ask it. With respect to, again, the overtime being incurred, there are a lot of persons who have applied for work permits—business people in Trinidad—and these work permits are taking an inordinate time to get it, and very long delays, and I would like to ask the hon. Minister what is being done to process these work permits? For example, there are many restaurants which the tourism sector depends on and they cannot get specialist cooks, because some of them it takes too long.

And the second part of my question has to do with also a number of people living in Trinidad for a very long time who have applied for resident status, and in a lot of cases they come to me as an MP and they cannot find their documents? What is being done to assist both of these situations?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: There is a process involved and a great deal of time, there is insufficient information, so a lot of research and background checking takes place and that—

Dr. Rambachan: Two years?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Yes. Sometimes there is a lot of background vetting that must take place to ensure that the right procedure was carried out. Most of the time there is insufficient information provided and a lot of background checks must be done. And then for quite some time we were unable to get access to some records because of the—

Dr. Rambachan: But what strategies do you intend to employ to reduce the time that it is taking to get these work permits approved? What strategies are you going to employ? You said they are working over weekends, but what other strategies are you going to employ? Because I have a very great concern with the operations and what is being said by people who are applying for work permits, as to how the work permit committee operates, and particularly demands that are being made of people who are applying for these work permits? What is being done to investigate all of this?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Part of the review will take into consideration system and processes, and we will see how best we could improve them as we go along.

Madam Chairman: Are there any other questions under this Item? If not, can we go on to Item 007, which is Probation on page—this is 008? Ok, so the Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Hon. Member: Item 007, Immigration.

Madam Speaker: Oh, Immigration.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you Chairman, just to the Minister of National Security, with regard to the time frame in which persons are able to get information on their travel whereabouts, especially for persons who are applying for pension, it is an inordinate delay and is there anything that would be done to reduce this time frame so that persons can in fact start receiving their pensions?

4.05 p.m.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: We are, in fact, reviewing the system and processes and trying to work as hard as possible to reduce the backlog even in that area at this point in time.

Madam Chairman: Okay, can we go on to Item 008, Probation Service, page 125.

Dr. Lee: Madam Chair, my question is just a concern Probation Service came from a transfer from the Ministry of the People and Social Development. In 2015 it appears to be a small unit. The salaries were estimated in 2015 to be \$6.5 million, and I am seeing in 2016, \$4.7 million. Given the nature of the important role that division plays, why would there be a drop in the salaries?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Probation Service, Sub-Item 01?

Madam Chairman: Item 008.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Item 008.

Madam Chairman: Can we again deal with this under the general undertaking with respect to salaries and cost of living allowances?

Dr. Lee: Yeah.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Dr. Lee: And also the number of persons employed in that division.

Madam Chairman: So that an undertaking by the hon. Minister of National Security will treat with respect to that.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Yes, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. The hon. Member for Couva South.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you, Madam Chair. With respect to the Forensic Science Centre which has now been brought over from the Ministry of Justice into the Ministry of National Security—*[Interruption]*

Madam Chairman: Might I ask, I believe you are going on to Item 009?

Mr. Indarsingh: Yes.

Madam Chairman: May I just ask if all questions under Item 008 have been exhausted? Then we can go on to Item 009. I am sorry, hon. Member for Couva South. You may proceed.

Mr. Indarsingh: Yes, Madam Chair. As it relates to the Forensic Science Centre now being brought into the Ministry of National Security and the Minister continues to indicate that he is reviewing the operations of entities under his Ministry's control. When we look at salaries and cost of living it is \$6.5 million, approximately, at the Forensic Science Centre. From time to time we always see a pile-up of bodies and families going through trauma and so on, in relation to the operations of the Forensic Science Centre. Will there be an increase in the number of pathologists and so on? And last year, I am told there was an allocation of over \$9.1 million and there has been a decrease.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: We are in the process of hiring a pathologist. He should come on board very soon to treat with the issues as mentioned.

Mr. Indarsingh: One pathologist?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: More than one. I am informed it is more than one.

Mr. Indarsingh: Can you be a little more specific and clearer on this particular issue, Minister?

Mr. Imbert: Member for Couva South, if you look at page 353 and look at Item 003 Forensic Science Centre—

Mr. Indarsingh: Madam Chair, could the Minister of Finance raise his voice a little.

Mr. Imbert: Certainly. Page 353—

Mr. Indarsingh: Yes.

Mr. Imbert:—under the Ministry of Justice—

Mr. Indarsingh: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: Item 003, Sub-Item 01, Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance where 2015 revised estimate is \$9.1 million. Because you said, you wanted to know why \$9 million was the cost in 2015 whereas the allocation in 2016, when we go to National Security you are seeing \$6.5 million. Correct? That is the question you asked, right?

Mr. Indarsingh: Yeah.

Mr. Imbert: If you look at the original estimate for Forensic Science Centre, you would see the original estimate was \$6.6 million. Are you seeing it?

Mr. Indarsingh: Um-hmm.

Mr. Imbert: Right? So that there, the original estimate for the forensic science salaries was \$6.6 million, the actual revised estimate which will include all payments made, \$9.1 million. So this would include an element of arrears which would not be applicable in 2016. So the allocation similar to the other Head we just discussed, the allocation goes back down to a lower level. But we will provide you with an explanation as to any variance, because \$6.6 million was the original in 2015 and the allocation now in 2016 is \$6.5 million. So we will provide you with the explanation of any variance, taking into account any increased salaries and any changes in personnel, and that sort of thing. Okay? So we will give you that information.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Just to add, there are two pathologists now and they are in the process of hiring two more on contract.

Mr. Imbert: Yeah, so it would appear in a different Head.

Dr. Moonilal: On this matter, Minister of National Security, you indicated that we are hiring more persons but the figure is going down in terms of salaries and cost of living. [*Crosstalk*] Okay, fine, I am trying to finish. You are hiring on contract. Now—[*Interruption*]

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: I thought they were against contract employees.

Dr. Moonilal: They were against it before. Could you undertake to give us a listing of the staff at the Forensic Science Centre and whether or not they have also benefited from any salary increase in the recent past?—because given the figures, if you read across the figures from 2014 to 2016 you get the impression that they have not benefited from any salary increase, because although you will get the arrears in 2015, their salaries and cost of living dropped again in 2016. So

is it that you are retrenching persons, you are removing persons in a critical centre that the public is very concerned about. Is there any intention to cut the staff at that centre given the reduction that you are estimating for 2016?

Mr. Imbert: We are getting some clarity that will answer all of the questions that were asked.

Madam Chairman: So could we in the meantime go on to another question?

Hon. Member: Yeah.

Mr. Imbert: Okay, I have the answer now. It is what I thought it was. In part of 2015 there were three forensic pathologists hired at the Forensic Science Centre under the establishment. So their expenditure would fall under salaries and cost of living, okay? There are now two, but the Minister has indicated they are going to recruit two more but they will be paid from a different Head. So what you are seeing is an original estimate of \$6.6 million, a revised estimate of \$9 million which will include arrears and a new allocation going forward \$6.5 million but you have reduced the numbers of persons paid under this Head. So it appears that it is more than adequate to cater for the two pathologists who will be hired under the establishment and then if you go to Contracted Services which is under Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services, page 127 you will see Contract Employment allocation of \$44 million which involves an increase of \$18 million. So it would appear from the figures, contract employment has gone up, the allocation—

Dr. Moonilal: By 18—

Mr. Imbert: Eighteen million increase in contract employment. Look at it there. It is Sub-Head 02, Sub-Item 16, page 127 the revised estimate, \$26 million for 2015, \$44 million for 2016. So the pathologists will be well taken care of under that increased allocation for contracted employment. So there is nothing to worry about in terms of reducing the professional staff at the Forensic Science Centre.

Dr. Moonilal: That is understood. We are clear on that. The issue is whether or not the other staff that constitute salaries and cost of living allowance, whether or not they benefit from any increase. We understand one gone—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Imbert: If arrears were paid, certainly.

Dr. Moonilal: If arrears—so you have calculated that they benefited by arrears but would they also be recipients of increase in salaries and cost of living.

Mr. Imbert: Obviously, once they got arrears—

Dr. Moonilal: Even though it went down.

Madam Chairman: Member, would that be covered by the same ditto assurances?

Mr. Imbert: Ditto, yes.

Madam Chairman: And therefore, the Member for Oropouche East, may we go on?

Dr. Moonilal: Sure.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much.

Dr. Gopeesingh: When I look at the establishment of the Forensic Science Centre, on this *Draft Estimates of Expenditure for the Financial Year 2016*, on page 100, could the Minister guide us, the two pathologists that you have on the establishment, I am not seeing any area within that, the government Forensic Science Centre, where they are on the establishment. I see a Director and one Scientific Officer III and so on, a number of scientific officers but I do not see any area there on the establishment for the forensic pathologist.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: They are also on contract.

Dr. Gopeesingh: All on contract. So the original statement that two are—

Mr. Imbert: All on contract.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: All on contract.

Dr. Gopeesingh: So there are now four?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: There will be four on contract. [*Crosstalk*]

Dr. Gopeesingh: Plus two, four. Okay, right. I was finding it strange that I did not see it on the establishment.

Dr. Bodoë: Recruiting price—

Madam Chairman: Might I suggest that you speak into the mike? Thank you very much.

Dr. Bodoë: Thank you, Madam Chair. Sometimes there is difficulty in recruiting forensic pathologists because of the highly specialized nature of these particular doctors and I was wondering whether any consideration has been given

to, perhaps, engaging these professionals who were currently there to work on, maybe weekends, if that is currently taking place in an attempt to decrease the backlog of work that is there.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: To answer your question, there is an assigned number of cases that each pathologist must do, during the year, and therefore they work according to that.

Dr. Bodoë: Thank you, Minister.

Dr. Khan: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would just like the Minister of National Security to give the undertaking that the forensic pathologist that is going to come on contract should be recognized, specialist of forensic pathology as per the directions of the Medical Board of Trinidad and Tobago. You see if that is not the case and these pathologists give evidence in a court of law it can be thrown out if they are not recognized forensic pathologists from that specialty.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Thank you very. We will definitely look into it. Thank you, Sir.

Mr. Indarsingh: Hon. Minister, I could remember, since you have assumed the responsibility of being the Minister of National Security, you have made some public pronouncements as it relates to your Government's priority, number one priority continues to be the focus on crime. And the Forensic Science Centre has now been brought into your Ministry, and I am trying to recollect your words as it relates to the role of forensics in relation to this crime-fighting strategy and so on. Could you share whether the establishment that the Forensic Science Centre, whether it is from a ballistic point of view, and so on, did the expertise that is required to fight crime, is it adequate? What are your plans from a forensic point of view and so on as you go forward?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: That is also part of the review of the whole apparatus. So I would not be able to give you that answer at this point in time. It was based on the results of that review in terms of the number to suit the particular jobs at the Forensic Science Centre. And, of course, it involves looking in depth as to the structure and the people to fit the purpose.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Minister of National Security, is that being given as an assurance?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Yes, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: Would you be able to provide that before the close of the budget debate?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: I will be able to, Madam Chair.

4.20 p.m.

Mr. Paray: Minister of National Security, knowing that we are entering crunch time economically, what provision is being put in place by the Ministry to, one, look at recruiting local nationals in terms of forensic pathology? I know there is a scarcity locally. What provisions are being made to liaise with the University of the West Indies or the other medical facilities throughout the Caribbean that maybe able to train our own nationals to be able to take up those roles over the next couple years, therefore reducing—I know when you bring foreign consultants there is an overhead cost that comes with a foreign consultant. Any word on that, Sir?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: I know that in terms of our own history it has been very difficult to get people to accept those—even that profession as a profession, and there have been a number of searches locally. There have even been offers of scholarship, and I am not quite sure even that has been enough incentive to invite, or to allow people—to encourage people to join. So we continue to offer incentives to get our locals involved in that field, but at the same time we have to also look at the international arena to see whether we can fill the void. But we will never give up trying to at least have locals involved. So if in any way you can help us we will appreciate that.

Mr. Ramadhar: Thank you, Madam Chairman. Minister of National Security, you indicated, quite curiously, that there are a number of autopsies that are appointed to each of the pathologists. What number is that, and what happens if they exceed or if there is a need to exceed that number?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: It is approximately about 300, I believe, per year, but let me come back again and verify and provide that information at a later date for you, please.

Mr. Ramadhar: And in so doing, with your leave, of course, Milady, if there is a sharp downfall in—for instance even if this is 100, and they were paid for like 300, is there any factor that is negotiable there? How does it work?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: I think it is based on the contract, you know. It is what they are contracted to do. But again, I can provide more detail for you.

Dr. Bodoë: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is just a follow-up to the question from the Member for Mayaro with regard to personnel available. I know you may not be able to provide the answer right away but if the Minister could indicate, are

there any locals currently abroad on scholarships training in the area of forensic pathology, at what stage of their training they are, and when they are expected to return?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: I am not aware of any at this point in time.

Dr. Bodoë: Would that be a priority area in terms of scholarships to be awarded going forward, Minister?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: In fact, we had offered two scholarships and no one came forward. So we will continue to try and offer it to the public.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Hon. Minister, I was looking to see if there is any relationship here in the establishment towards the fulfilment of the accreditation of the Forensic Science Centre. It has been long on the drawing board, that in terms of storing forensic material, it can be questioned whether it is an authenticated Forensic Science Centre. We needed some degree of accreditation. Has that come to your attention in your short time there so far? And is there any area inside here that you will put some emphasis, whether personnel—goods and services we could talk about that later—to quickly establishing the Forensic Science Centre as an accredited Forensic Science Centre, so that it cannot be questioned in the courts of law as not being accredited when a sample is taken there, and so on?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: It has not come to my attention but it will be done under Institutional Strengthening. Your point is well taken.

Dr. Khan: Thank you, Madam Chair. Could I just suggest something to the Minister of National Security and his staff? In order to get a forensic pathologist it is going to be extremely difficult because there are not many programmes in the world that offer forensic pathology per se, but what I would recommend and suggest is that you do the scholarships for anatomical pathology and then we have a forensic pathologist in Trinidad and Tobago—if they work under that forensic pathologist under the guidance of the University of the West Indies and develop themselves there, they could be given the specialized status after a while. Because you are going to have a very hard time finding a forensic pathology degree externally.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Thank you. We will look at that. Thank you very much.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Through you, Madam Chair, to the Minister of National Security. Under this Forensic Science Centre would also fall—my colleague mentioned about ballistics and so on. From my understanding, there is a tremendous backlog. You are taking on pathologists to deal with autopsies and so

on. What about persons to deal with these other specialized areas: ballistics and several other things to do with chemicals and poisons and all the things that fall under forensic sciences. Would we see increased staff there?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: There are currently five ballistic experts at the Forensic Science Centre and we will continue to build capacity as we go along. But there are currently five right now.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: And so nothing will be allocated here for any increase in that capacity for forensics. Am I correct to say that? At this time—you are saying you will continue to build capacity, but at this time there is no allocation being made for that capacity building.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: No, not at this time.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Not yet. Okay.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: But we will look at it under Vacant Posts and see how best we can address the situation.

Madam Chairman: Members, we have three items left under Personnel Expenditure, which I would want to suggest that we complete before we take the tea break. So can we go on to Item 012, Lifeguard Service, which is on page 125, and that is 012.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: May I enquire, through you, whether there is any increase for the lifeguards in terms of their wages and salaries and so on. It comes out of the Ministry of Tourism so it is not immediately comparable on page 125.

Madam Chairman: And could that be dealt with under the general undertaking?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Under the “ditto”.

Dr. Moonilal: Could I, through you, Madam Chair, to the Minister of National Security, request at a later time before the completion of our exercise, a list of the beaches and facilities that are currently now being manned/serviced by the lifeguards, and whether or not there are any plans to extend that list to other places in Trinidad and Tobago? I ask that because it does not appear as if the allocation would provide for increasing of staff.

We did see in other areas the massive increase in, if not staff, certainly in the amount of money to be paid due to salaries and wages, and I really wanted to repeat that in the aftermath of the budget, the Prime Minister did indicate that the largest portion would go to National Security because of the chronic and rampant

criminal conduct in Trinidad and Tobago. We have discovered that the largest portion went to increased salaries and wages. So I would really want you tell us if you are going to expand the lifeguard facility. Because as Members of Parliament, we would like to make recommendations to you in terms of the expansion of that facility to domestic tourist sites that are unprotected at this moment and without such a service.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: As a new entity coming to National Security, definitely we will look at it and see whether, how effective they are at this point in time, and whether there is a requirement for such an increase, and if there is, we will take the actions accordingly so to do.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister of National Security, under Lifeguard Service, is it that the lifeguard service alone has been transferred to you? Or is the Ministry also responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the facilities?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: We are, in fact, responsible for the entire lifeguard mechanism. So they all belong to us.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Madam Chair, just to wrap up on Personnel Expenditure. On page 126 there is the Cadet Force and the Air Guard.

Madam Chairman: Are we completed with 012, Lifeguard?

Hon. Member: Yes.

Madam Chairman: So can we go on to 015, which is Cadet Force?

Mr. Paray: No, Lifeguard.

Madam Chairman: 012, Lifeguard?

Mr. Paray: Yes. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. Minister of National Security, in terms of the lifeguard services, one of the challenges that the lifeguards in Mayaro consistently complain about is the fact that when giving instructions to sea bathers, sometimes they do not take them seriously, in terms that they have no authority to tell them beyond—you know, force to get them out of the water. There are a lot of ATVs that are driving up and down the beaches in Mayaro disturbing the peace and sanctity of families coming with their children. Is there any—or can I suggest that at some point in time during your analysis, some way to, perhaps, have these lifeguards get a bit more authority to issue instructions for safety of both the bathing public and the families seeking a little leisure and quiet time with their families? Thank you.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: It is something that we will look at going forward. As I said, it is a new entity into Ministry of National Security so we will look at all those parameters to see how best we could improve the entire environment.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister of National Security, if I may let you know, based on what the Member for Mayaro said, we were, in fact, establishing a lifeguard authority, so maybe you can look at that.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: Can we therefore go on to Item 016 on page 126 which is Air Guard? [*Interruption*]

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: 015, at the top of the same page.

Madam Chairman: 015, Cadet Force, I am sorry.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Hon. Minister, the first question is: where does Civilian Conservation Corps fall in, whether it is the Ministry of National Security, if it is there? And the second issue, in terms of personnel for the Cadet Force, there are a number of retired personnel who have served actively to give some support to the Cadet Force. I have been struggling while as Minister of Education to increase the Cadet Force to secondary schools and move it from 29 to 41, and we have 134 secondary schools. Is there any way in this that you can help, whether contractual or some other way—I know it is your desire as well, I heard you say that—that you can work within this area to help to bring about more Cadet Force within the schools, first of all?

But I know somewhere along the line the training for cadets, you seem to have a high percentage of personnel to train the cadet officers. May I suggest, humbly, that you look at the number of trainers to the number of trainees? Because there is a disparity somewhere there. In fact, a preponderance of trainers which you may need to look at, and probably utilize their services in improving the cadet service in the schools.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Thank you very much. I will look at that. Good suggestion.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member for Siparia? This is under Cadet Force?

Dr. Gopeesingh: And the Civilization Conservation Corps is under that.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: The Civilization Conservation Corps is under that.

Mr. Imbert: Under another head.

4.35 p.m.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Thank you very much. To save time, Cadet Force and Air Guard, Madam, if you may permit me? The same questions we have asked. The ditto questions.

Madam Chairman: The ditto questions?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Yes, in terms of how much you say for salary increases and so on over 2015/2016. Now, I am looking—through you, Madam Chair, where do these programmes MILAT, MYPART, Civilian Conservation, OLEP, do they fall within this Ministry; and what will be the recurrent expenditure under Personnel? I have not seen it. We finished up to page 126 on Personnel. So would you kindly guide us, hon. Minister?

Mr. Imbert: May I come in there, please? Because I anticipate that this type of question will be asked on several occasions as we go forward. There are a number of programmes which would not appear under these Heads. With respect to the particular programmes identified by your good self and also by the Member for Caroni East, if you go to page 148, you look under Households, you are going to see civilian—

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Transfers and subsidies. Okay.

Mr. Imbert: Page 148 you will see Civilian Conservation Corps, MILAT, et cetera, et cetera. So we not reached there yet. We are far from there.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member for Chaguanas East.

Mr. Karim: Madam Chair, when you get to page 127 under Air Guard, I do not know if you want me to raise anything there.

Madam Chairman: Well, let us just finish. I assume you are finished with Cadet Force, and therefore, we can go to Air Guard and I will permit you.

Mr. Karim: Okay. Thank you, Madam Chair. Under Air Guard 02, Item 16, Contract Employment—

Mr. Imbert: 02?

Madam Chairman: No, no. I am sorry.

Mr. Karim: We still on the left?

Madam Chairman: Yes, we are still under 01.

Mr. Karim: I did indicate when we get to that stage I would like to raise it.

Madam Chairman: All right. So, are there any Members wishing to ask any question under 016, that item under 001?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Madam Chair, we are closing up on Recurrent Expenditure, Personnel Expenditure. We are closing up on that. Just that I understand clearly, there have been assurances given that out of this increase in national security for Recurrent Expenditure of \$2.8 billion, that out of that a substantial portion may be to the tune net—the net is 2.8, the gross is the 2.52 because of salaries, increases in salaries and wages, arrears payments and so on, and we look forward if that was the assurance given to provide the details under each of the units for Personnel Expenditure.

Mr. Imbert: I believe I have given that undertaking now nine times. I will give it for a 10th time and 11th time. I will find the patience and give it for 900 times.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: We look forward to getting it just once.

Mr. Imbert: I will find the patience.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Members, it is now 4.37 p.m. I propose we suspend the committee meeting for half an hour, at least till five, for us to have the tea break.

Mr. Hinds: 5.05 p.m. [*Crosstalk*]

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Five? How could we get back here at five?

Hon. Member: 5.10 p.m.

Madam Chairman: It is 4.38 p.m.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: It is 20 to five, then we go downstairs. To get up the steps is about seven minutes, to come down.

Madam Chairman: Members, I just thought with all the energy that I saw before now, that I may have been dealing with very—and I am sorry. Okay? So if we think that 10 minutes will help us, we will be back here at 5.10 p.m.

4.38 p.m.: *Standing Finance Committee suspended.*

5.10 p.m.: *Standing Finance Committee resumed.*

Madam Chairman: Members, if we could resume where we left off, and I think we are now at Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services. So that we are all on the

same page I believe we are at page 127, and may I call Item 001, General Administration. I call on the hon. Member for Caroni Central.

Dr. Tewarie: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. When I raised the matter earlier of what new hirings were likely to take place given the allocation of \$19.4 million earlier, under Item 01, the Minister of Finance referred me, as well, to 02, 16 Contract Employment, and he indicated then that that would also be another or additional source of hiring. Now, I note here that the increase is \$18.5 million and there is a note next to it which says, “Includes Provision for Graduate Employment”. Graduate employment if it is divided among the 23 Ministries, consisting of \$55 million, would mean about \$2.3 million here. So could I ask if the Minister knows—I am asking the Minister of National Security—what this provision is for in terms of new potential hiring by contract besides the graduate employment?

Madam Chairman: Hon. Minister, are you in a position to answer?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Yes, Madam Chair, somewhat. We just had a six-year plan approved, and therefore, we are looking to fill some of the positions based on that six-year that was approved. It includes the Justice also.

Dr. Tewarie: It subsumes the other figures that now are—

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Yes, including that.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member for Chaguanas East.

Mr. Karim: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. May I also elaborate because that was the question I had raised before we went to the break, whether the graduate employment—just to repeat because I wanted to get to the next stage—is the same as the Graduate Recruitment Programme as enunciated in the budget presentation by the hon. Minister of Finance on page 72? And if it is that, as my colleague has stated, then there is a \$16.3 million increase. The question I wanted to take off from my colleague is, can we get a list, where possible, of those persons who have been so contracted but not yet engaged in the graduate programme? So two situations, number one: is this the same—the explanation is 16—as enunciated in the Graduate Recruitment Programme of page 72 of the budget speech? Because if it is, with approximately \$55 million for 500 persons, it will total to \$2.16 million per year, and after that I will have another question on the same Head, Madam Chairperson.

Mr. Imbert: The Member for Caroni Central has already done that calculation and he is correct, that the appropriation for each Ministry would be approximately \$2 million for graduates. And the term “graduate employment” does in fact refer to

the overall budgetary allocation of \$55 million which works out at approximately \$2 million per Ministry plus an appropriate allocation for Tobago. So that the balance would be other employment which the Minister can now answer you on that.

Madam Chairman: The hon. Member for Couva North.

Miss Ramdial: Thank you, Madam Chairman. To the Minister. I am seeing an increase under Goods and Services, 05 telephones, of \$1.6 million, can you please account for such an increase? Also for the increases in rent, lease, vehicles, equipment received by \$25.2 million under 09, and also increases in overseas travel under 27 by \$475,000, can you account for those increases, please?

Mr. Imbert: There is a generic answer to that question, and all questions of a similar nature with respect to this Ministry. Because this Ministry involves a merger of elements of the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of National Security, the establishment of the Ministry has been increased, and therefore, what you are seeing there is the aggregate of telephones in all the constituent elements that make up this Ministry.

Dr. Moonilal: Madam Chair, I want to follow up on that.

Madam Chairman: One minute, please. Your question has been answered, Member for Couva North?

Miss Ramdial: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Member for Oropouche East.

Dr. Moonilal: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. To follow up on that you are suggesting to us, Mr. Minister of Finance, that an increase for vehicles and equipment, and I suspect these vehicles now, could you confirm that these are also government vehicles to be painted with the coat of arms and the relevant Ministry would be painted on to the vehicle as your Prime Minister instructed? You are suggesting to us that because of the merger with Ministry of Justice, Tourism, where I believe the life guard services came from, that would have accounted for \$25 million increase in the rental of vehicles and equipment?

Mr. Imbert: My good man—

Dr. Moonilal: Hon. Member.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member for Oropouche East.

Dr. Moonilal: I am not your good man.

Mr. Imbert: Hon. Member for Oropouche East, one of the areas of government service that places the greatest demands on vehicles is the prison service. You must have seen vehicles that have the marking “Justice on Time” on them. So that is a substantial increase to the vehicle requirements for the Ministry of National Security. You will recall that the prison service was under the Ministry of Justice before. So it is not just the lifeguard services that are being added, it is also the prison service which has a significant, I will say large complement of vehicles.

5.20 p.m.

Dr. Moonilal: Madam Chairman, I just want to engage the Minister on this matter.

Madam Chairman: Is it related to the particular question posed for the item?

Dr. Moonilal: It is related to what he said. Yes, yes. Minister, be very clear with me, you are saying that Justice On Time, which is the prison service contracted to a private provider, those vehicle rentals or your payment for that service provided by an independent contractor, Justice on Time, that is included in Rent/Lease, Vehicles and Equipment?

Mr. Imbert: What I am telling you is that the prison service has been added to the Ministry of National Security and the vehicle requirements of the prison service are substantial and that is why you are seeing this substantial allocation for vehicles. I used Justice On Time so that you would zero in to the fact that the prison service has been added to—

Dr. Moonilal: Yeah, so you are not saying, really, it is that independent contractor providing prison transport that is included here.

Mr. Imbert: I am not telling you yea or nay.

Dr. Moonilal: Or no. “You doh know.”

Mr. Imbert: If you want a specific answer to that specific question as to whether the vehicles provided by Justice On Time or some similar provider are included in this—it is a large sum, it is \$25 million. If you want a specific answer to that, you can get that within the next couple of minutes. Okay? And we will get it for you.

Dr. Moonilal: Yeah. Could I—?

Madam Chairman: If I may interject, I think in an effort to move the discussion further, I believe the hon. Minister of National Security may have the answer.

Dr. Moonilal: Please.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: If I can also add, the equipment part of the line item pertains to rental camera; it is almost about \$20 million—that is the CCTV—camera per month to TSTT, so that is included there.

Dr. Moonilal: And Minister, surely you could find out within a couple of seconds that this does not include contract service for provision of prison transport. Okay? Just confirm it.

Mr. Imbert: We said we would.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Yeah, I can find out that.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So can I go now to the hon. Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla?

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you, Madam Chairman. In light of the fact that you have identified, Minister of Finance, that the costing here is an aggregate of the various Ministries or services that have come under the Ministry of National Security, will you be therefore doing a cost-benefit analysis to determine the best option to get value for money between purchasing and renting/leasing? And what measures will be implemented to monitor and review these lease agreements from the Ministry?

Mr. Imbert: I will ask the Minister to answer that.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Yes, most definitely, we will be looking into that in terms of going forward because we understand that we have to do some cost-cutting measures, so that is, of course, part of the review going forward, to see how best we can manage that.

Mr. Charles: Thank you very much. Madam Chair, looking at Sub-Item 17, Training and in the context of the rebooting of our human resources to deal with crime, I see a reduction of \$173,000, and I want to know if this training relates to all personnel in the Ministry of National Security or only to the administrative staff. And while you are doing that, could you explain the increase in overseas travel by \$475,000? There seems to be a question of priority. Training, a reduction and a half of a million increase in overseas travel. That is Sub-Item 27.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Training is, in fact, reflected in terms of a decreased budget and I think for this fiscal year, we are accessing some more training in which there is assistance from our international partners that defrayed some of the cost.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you, Madam Chairman. Under Sub-Item 36, Extraordinary Expenditure, in 2015, there was an estimate of \$127,868,780 and then when it was revised, it moved down to \$65,490,000. In 2016, we are seeing an estimate of \$119 million, an increase of \$53,510,000. And just for the benefit of the national community in the context of transparency and so on, could we get an explanation of what Extraordinary Expenditure is and what has accounted for this astronomical increase of \$53 million plus?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: This has to do with a return of the Witness Protection Programme to the Ministry and some of the covert agencies that have returned to us, so that explains some of the extraordinary. It has been placed under extraordinary because of the nature of the expenditure.

Madam Chairman: Can I then call on the hon. Member for Tabaquite?

Mr. Indarsingh: Just a minute, I am not totally satisfied with that explanation because I think that in other areas of the Ministry, there is this recurring theme of Extraordinary Expenditure.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member for Couva South, your question—your current question, is it confined to this?

Mr. Indarsingh: Madam Chairman, I wish to state for the record, I am not totally satisfied with the explanation which has been provided and I am entitled to say that.

Madam Chairman: Yes, but I took it that you asked another question.

Mr. Indarsingh: Chair, I say, again, for the record, that there is a recurring theme of Extraordinary Expenditure under respective agencies within the Ministry of National Security, for example, Fire Service and so on—Prison, and I am saying, based on the commitment to transparency in Government, I am not satisfied with the explanation which has been provided by the Minister of National Security.

Mr. Imbert: Just for clarity, Madam Chairman, through you, what the Minister has indicated is that the Extraordinary Expenditure of \$119 million, which by the way is less than the original provision under your Government in 2015 of \$127 million, is for covert operations. The Fire Service, Extraordinary Expenditure is only \$20,000; and the Prison Service, the Extraordinary Expenditure is only \$150,000.

But this large Item of \$119 million is for covert operations and I suspect that the Minister does not want to go into any great deal on exactly what the items are. He has told me it includes witness protection and it includes other covert operations.

Mr. Indarsingh: Madam Chair, I hope covert operations do not trample on the rights of citizens of this country.

Dr. Rambachan: Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to go back to Sub-Item 09 Rent/Lease - Vehicles and Equipment and I want to find out from the Minister: how many vehicles, other than “just in time for justice”, are rented by the Ministry of National Security; how many are rented by the police service; how many are rented by the prison service; how many are rented by the fire service? And I would like to know also: from whom are these vehicles rented and how is the process of procurement of these vehicles done?

Because there is a complaint very often by officers when they are called to do investigations, “We do not have a vehicle”, and I am discovering that there are several vehicles—and I mean several, dozens of vehicles like this that are rented and placed in the hands of police officers who do not wear uniforms, and these vehicles are supposed to be doing overt or covert operations. I want to know who are they renting these vehicles from, what is the cost of renting these vehicles by the contractor and how is the procurement done in order to acquire these vehicles?

Madam Chairman: One minute, please, hon. Minister. Hon. Member, are you asking this under the Head of National Security or under Police because my understanding is—

Dr. Rambachan: I am asking under National Security, because—I mean, I could ask it, again, if you wish, under Police.

Madam Chairman: I did not understand your question that way.

Dr. Rambachan: —but National Security, but I hope that the Minister will take it in the wider context.

Madam Chairman: Because there is a separate Head for Police where, I guess, a similar question may arise. So that if you are asking about police, I would ask if you wait until we reach there. Okay?

Dr. Rambachan: Well, I can come back and ask it under Police.

Madam Chairman: So you may want to ask this question under this particular Head.

Dr. Rambachan: Let me specify this part of the question for National Security.

Madam Chairman: Right.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: If I may? The mere fact that it is rental for covert operations, I will not disclose the rental agency. Because, again, if it is for covert operations and I tell you the name of the rental agency, I might as well make it an overt operation. I might as well paint it and say this is a vehicle that belongs to the Ministry of National Security but I cannot. It is all part of the covert process.

Dr. Rambachan: So we are not entitled even to know from whom you are procuring these vehicles?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: No, not if—in the interest of national security, I cannot. It means the whole thing will be compromised.

Dr. Rambachan: So how does the public know that you are not overpaying for these vehicles? How does the public know that there is not competitive bidding for these contracts?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: How far do you want me to go back in terms of that?

Dr. Rambachan: Go back wherever you want, I am asking the question. I am entitled to ask the question, Minister.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Sure, but I will say, in the interest of national security, it is not right for me to do so. I will be compromising the very operators themselves if I do that.

Mr. Karim: Thank you, Madam Chairman. When I attempted to raise the question on Sub-Item 16, the hon. Minister of Finance indicated that my colleague had already asked that question and he was correct. But I do not think that he understood that the question had two parts. I wanted to hear from the hon. Minister of National Security: what constitutes the Contract Employment for this significant increase of \$16.3 million approximately?

Madam Chairman: Is 16 or 18? 18.5.

Mr. Karim: No, remember the Minister of Finance indicated that approximately \$2 million would go for the graduate programme.

Madam Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Karim: My [*Inaudible*] saying that, says the difference.

Madam Chairman: Yes.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: The figure includes people who are contracted with the Ministry at this point in time and also the provision for the Graduate Employment.

Mr. Karim: Is it possible, through you, Madam Chairman, to ask the hon. Minister if he can give us an idea as to the categories of the Contract Employment? Because it might be useful for us to understand the categories and also a list if possible.

Madam Chairman: So hon. Minister of National Security, would that be something you can give an undertaking to provide in writing before the end of—

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: That I can do, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: Right. Hon. Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister of National Security, does this lease/rental of \$150 million, is that by itself for National Security? Because I see you have lease/rental for Regiment, Fire Service, Prison Service separate, and Coast Guard, et cetera. Is this only for what area of National Security? And if you said that there are a number of vehicles rented for covert operations, what part of this \$150 million is for lease/rental for these covert operations? That \$150 million, what does it entail: Prison Service, Regiment, Coast Guard or what by itself? Because each of the others has their own vote. Police rental? So what does that cover, the \$150 million? Who does that cover? What part of the National Security?

5.35 p.m.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Most of the expenditure under this line item really pertains to the CCTV cameras, which is about \$10 million per month.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member for Caroni East, that was an answer.

Dr. Gopeesingh: I did not realize \$10 million per month. That is \$120 million.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: That is correct, to TSTT.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Okay. I have not seen any area here, if you probably, if we come to Police you might be able to find it, but the police service has a large fleet of vehicles and when they break down you would have to replace them whether by lease or—*[Interruption]*

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member for Caroni East, can I ask you to hold that for when we come under Police, please? Thank you.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Okay, all right.

Dr. Moonilal: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I have two questions. The Minister of Finance indicated in a generic response earlier that when we ask questions about particular sub-headings, and so on, we need to factor in that this would be in two Ministries in particular, National Security, Justice and he also said Tourism as well. So that accounts for increases.

I am wondering if the Minister is aware that in the question asked earlier, vehicle and equipment, the increase of \$25.2 million, someone asked this question, but in the Ministry of Justice last year, the estimate for vehicles and equipment was a mere \$295,000. So to say in these answers that you have to look at the two Ministries and add them up, if you take away \$295,000 from \$150 million, what accounts for this huge increase in vehicles and equipment? The Minister may not have the answer now, I know this, but I really would like the Minister to give us a bit more detail, where possible, given your national security concern. If you give us or make an undertaking to give us, once it is possible and it does not interfere with national security considerations, as to what constitutes this \$25 million increase because it cannot, by definition, be the Ministry of Justice which had \$295,000 last year. Do you want to respond to this?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: For clarification, you are talking about 09?

Dr. Moonilal: Yes.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: That is the same line item that the cameras come under.

Dr. Moonilal: But the cameras are \$10 million a month you are saying, more or less, whatever, so you have a \$25 million increase. You estimated at \$150 million, \$295,000 from the Ministry of Justice, more or less, would come there. There is still a significant increase. If you could just check it for us and indicate what may account for that. Okay?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Sure.

Dr. Moonilal: The other point I want to make is that, Rent/lease of office accommodation and storage, I am noticing a decrease now of \$5.3 million and I would ask you, you could answer now: what accounts for this? Because to my knowledge, there is no change in the rental arrangement for National Security throughout. What would account for that if I may ask? Is it the immigration?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Yes.

Dr. Moonilal: But they have not moved into the immigration—in fact, we did work on the Immigration Building on Frederick Street. I am not sure that within the next fiscal year they would be prepared to move into the government campus as yet.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: General administration was paying for most of these items in 2015, and the cost has now moved back to the original entities.

Dr. Moonilal: So the cost of rent—so there is really no fundamental change in office and rental; it is that you are moving the cost to—

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: To the entities that would be—

Dr. Moonilal: To the entities, okay, thank you.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Madam Chair, I look further down the pages to determine whether there was an area for the police service. I might be mistaken but I am not seeing it.

Madam Chairman: I believe, hon. Member for Caroni East, there is a particular Head and I believe it comes after we have done National Security.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Good, good.

Madam Chairman: Therefore, can we then move on to Item 002: Fire Service? Could we have a little order and a little attention, please? Could we go on to Item 002: Fire Service? And this is page 128.

Mr. Karim: Thank you Madam Chair. Item No. 13, which has a decrease of \$17 million for maintenance of vehicles, might we get an explanation on that please?

Madam Chairman: Page 128 for all Members.

Mr. Karim: It is extremely important for this area of operation and I just want to get an idea. In fact, Madam Chair, let me make the point. I am noticing a trend in Fire Service, in Regiment; a decrease of \$6.7 million and in Coast Guard of \$8.5, a total of \$22.2 million decrease. I just want to know, what was the reason for that significant decrease in the maintenance of vehicles?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: A new Item 96 has been created for fuel and lubricants so that has been removed from this figure.

Madam Chairman: Any other questions/clarifications sought under this item? So can we go on to Item 004: Prison Service, which is on page 129? Can we then go on to Item 005, which is Regiment on page 130?

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you, Madam Chair, just going back to Prison Service 004, Item 43. What type of security services are being paid for under this Sub-Item of expenditure and is there a system for procurement of security services? And what determines the allocation for security services? Thank you.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: That is the Justice on Time transportation that carries prisoners to and from prisons to courthouses.

Madam Chairman: Okay, can we now go on to 005: Regiment, page 130? Can we then now go on to Item 006: Cost Guard, which is on page 131?

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you, Madam Chair. Under Item 17: Training, I see an increase from \$8 million to \$20 million. Could we get some explanation, as it relates to this?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: That is based on the acquisition of the new vessels that were procured. We have to train the sailors to be able to man the new vessels, and, of course, to ensure that they do it competently. That is why the training has been increased. Remember we have just acquired—of course, you would know.

Mr. Imbert: On trust.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: On trust.

Madam Chairman: Are there any other questions on 006?

Dr. Gopeesingh: I want to crave your indulgence just to go back, with due respect, to just one area of Food at Institutions under Prison Service.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member, we have long passed the Prison Service if I remember.

Dr. Gopeesingh: I know, but can I bring it under Food at Institutions under—

Madam Chairman: All right, you say this is Item 40, page 130? I am only allowing it because I see it is a significant sum.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Is this only for the material for the food, or is it the cost with labour and everything? How does it work? Do you have contracted officers providing the food or is it cooked within the prison, by whom and how is that taken care of?

Mr. Imbert: We asked you what this money was for and you did not answer us.

Dr. Gopeesingh: But you are there. You could answer us.

Mr. Imbert: We just put the same allocation like you.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: It is the cost of raw material.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Raw material?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Yes.

Dr. Gopeesingh: So the prisoners prepare the meals?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Yes.

Dr. Gopeesingh: All the meals? Nobody is contracted from outside to prepare it?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Prisoners are supervised by officers.

Dr. Gopeesingh: And they prepare the meals?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Yes.

Dr. Gopeesingh: And they prepare all the meals for all the prisoners?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Yes, yes, they do, under supervision by the prison officers.

Dr. Gopeesingh: So you do not have to contract food from outside to come into the prison service?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: No, no, no you do not. That is a security risk if you do that.

Madam Chairman: So, can we continue with 006, please, which is on page 131?

Dr. Moonilal: Thank you. Minister, just some clarification. It might just be some clarification, but under Item 11: books and periodicals, that jumped from \$11,000 in 2014 to \$400,000 estimate in 2016. What would constitute that type of jump that you would be investing in more for the benefit of coast guard?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: The coast guard has in fact just completed a strategic plan, in terms of institutional strength, and so on, and in fact, it is a decrease but—

Dr. Moonilal: My issue is not the increase, but quantum, which moved from \$11,000 to \$400,000. Well what accounts for that? That is what I am asking. Is it, what, you completed a programme? [*Interruption*] Please, the Minister of Finance is disturbing me from listening to the Minister of National Security. I see books and periodicals, is it journals, is it an article, it is a newspaper?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: It covers a range of maritime documents and so on that they purchased; a number of maritime documents, training and otherwise.

Dr. Moonilal: Training and other materials.

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman, for the record, contrary to the statements made by the hon. Member, this Item has gone down from \$489,000 to \$400,000. There is no fantastic increase; there is a decrease.

Dr. Moonilal: The issue was not that, what constitutes—

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Additionally, with the new vessels, they have to purchase additional charts, maritime charts, and you know.

Madam Chairman: Please, can we kindly go on to medical expenses? This is under 006. Hon. Member for Caroni, East, we are now in 006. I just—so we are going on to—hon. Member for Couva, Couva South, are we in 006?

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you, Madam Chair, I hope you are not changing the pronunciation of the constituency. [*Laughter*] With respect to Sub-Item 40: Food at Institutions, I see it has increased by—

Madam Chairman: Might I ask, hon. Member for Couva South, are we in 006?

Mr. Indarsingh: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Could you just please tell me the Item?

Mr. Indarsingh: 132.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much.

Mr. Indarsingh: Sub-Item 40: Food at Institutions. I see it has increased to \$6,576,500. I hope that this is not the increase in VAT that is accountable for this rise.

Mr. Imbert: What is the question?

Mr. Indarsingh: What has caused the increase in Food at Institutions?

Mr. Imbert: It is not VAT.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: It has to do with the new vessels and the new vessels having to go to sea, a number of different times. It would increase in cost, in terms of operations and so on, because we expect that the vessels would be out

there. They are very good vessels, as you well know, so we expect that they will be out there for extended periods, as much as they can. So the operational cost would go up because each vessel has to be ritualized.

5.50 p.m.

Madam Chairman: One minute please, Member for Couva South, we are still on 006.

Mr. Indarsingh: Just on the vessels. What is the manpower on these vessels, Mr. Minister?

Madam Chairman: Would that be under Goods and Services?

Mr. Imbert: No.

Mr. Indarsingh: Well, in the context of the explanation that is being provided as it relates to food.

Madam Chairman: Minister, are you in a position to answer?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: That is about 30 to 40 personnel on board on these vessels, and do not forget you have to get crew changes and so on. So there are crew changes in—additionally, the Coast Guard also has to build its strength. So there will be increase in strength in terms of recruitment and so on during the fiscal year. So there will be an increase in strength. So we have to cater for that also; additional food items.

Mr. Indarsingh: Madam Chair, if you would permit me as it relates to Item 96, under Fuel and Lubricants, there was no allocation in 2015 and in 2016 we are seeing an allocation of \$30 million.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: As you have seen in the column as I mentioned a while ago, just go on to 96, Sub-Item. So there is a recent splitting of the vote, 30.

Mr. Imbert: 13.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: 13, Maintenance of Vehicles. So we have taken it and moved it across there.

Mr. Indarsingh: Okay.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Madam Chair, Item No. 17 on Training. There is a \$12 million increase in Training. Could you just identify for our information where does that training programme—what is that about? And while I am speaking—

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member for Caroni East, I believe we got an answer for that question.

Dr. Gopeesingh: No, no, no.

Mr. Imbert: Yes, asked and answered.

Madam Chairman: I have here, “based on acquisition of new vessels”.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Is that for training for the vessels alone?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Yeah.

Mr. Imbert: Asked and answered.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Well, I asked the question on food and at the institution because there is a recurring thing across the—so all these areas of the Regiment, the Coast Guard and the prisons, they prepare their own meals inside?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: No, no, no, they do not prepare their own meals. They are centrally prepared. There is a central area where they are prepared. You do not prepare your own meal.

Dr. Gopeesingh: In the Coast Guard area, where their meals are prepared there for the Coast Guard?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: It is prepared in a central area.

Dr. Gopeesingh: And then for the Regiment, a central area as well?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Central area.

Dr. Gopeesingh: And the prisons, a central area as well?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Yeah.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Okay, the medical part now. There is—

Madam Chairman: That is Item 58, hon. Member?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yeah, well, the medical part—to their medical expenses for both the Coast Guard and for the Regiment as well, but it will probably cover both. The Regiment as far as I remember had—

Madam Chairman: We are in 006.

Dr. Gopeesingh: No, I am going back to the medical expenses for both. It is medical expenses for all to them.

Madam Chairman: One minute please, Member. Are you asking Item 58, under 006?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes.

Madam Chairman: And that is Coast Guard?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes.

Madam Chairman: All right. Yes, please.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes. Do you have an in-house doctor or you have an in-house team that supplies the medical care? Or if somebody becomes ill from the Coast Guard or whether the Regiment or what happens, where do they go and what is this funding for in terms of the \$6 million or \$4 million for medical expenses?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: We have one in-house doctor. One doctor in uniform, if I remember well. I do not know if that has changed. One doctor in uniform.

Dr. Gopeesingh: In the Coast Guard?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: “Nah”, to service the Defence Force.

Dr. Gopeesingh: So that is Regiment, Coast Guard—

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: And the Air Guard, and then we also have a doctor on contract that also assists that doctor. So there is what we call a medical facility. There is one at Tetron Barracks and then there are other smaller units in some of the out stations like Camp Ogden and Piarco and so on, but there are doctors.

Dr. Gopeesingh: If there is a problem with any person in the security services—

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Additionally, there is also catering for medical treatment for soldiers, sailors and air guards in external facilities if the need arises.

Dr. Gopeesingh: At where?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Other facilities; if the need arises.

Dr. Gopeesingh: So you have facilities across servicing—

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Public and private.

Dr. Gopeesingh: So they can go to—

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: They can depending on the situation; depending on referrals from the doctor.

Dr. Gopeesingh: And you all pay for the services?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: That is right.

Dr. Gopeesingh: At the private institutions?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: If necessary, we do. Yes, we do.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Is there—what causes you to send one to a private institution as opposed to a public institution?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: It is based on the situation at the time. Based on the situation the emergency nature of the situation, or based on referral from the doctor.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Do you think that one medical doctor to service the entire national security staff—

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: No, it is certainly not enough. We have been trying to recruit doctors more in uniform, which will be part of the establishment, but there is some discussion going with respect to the allowances and the salary to attract doctors in uniform at this point in time.

Dr. Gopeesingh: I want to proffer, Madam Chair, that it is something that you need to look at, because you have thousands of security officers across the country in all different areas: prisons, regiment, coast guard, whatever, and one doctor there cannot do the job to take care—you are short-changing your personnel. I would like to recommend that you look at that very critically, and this is where you need to pay some emphasis for the protection of our servicemen.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Thank you.

Dr. Rambachan: Thank you, Madam Chair. It is just for a clarification I wanted. When the Minister was responding to the Member for Couva South, he said that the vessels have to go out there into the sea. Did I hear you correctly when you said that they are very good vessels? [*Laughter*]

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: I am a very kind-hearted person. So I said they are very good vessels.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member, under what Item are we discussing?

Dr. Rambachan: I am responding to—[*Crosstalk*]

Madam Chairman: Members, please!

Dr. Rambachan:—something the Minister said, and I am just trying to confirm whether he said that.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Yes, yes, yes.

Madam Chairman: I assure you, hon. Member for Tabaquite, if he made such a comment, it would be on the record. [*Laughter*]

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: That is right.

Dr. Rambachan: No, I just wanted to confirm it.

Madam Chairman: Can we go on to 007, Immigration?

Dr. Moonilal: Yes, Madam Speaker, 007 is the number. I wanted to ask the Minister of National Security, in light—and I am looking at No. 12, what could possibly be No. 12, Materials and Supplies and so on. Again, you can get the answer, in light of the decision taken—and could you please take a note to remind us that the decision taken to do away with the immigration forms—when was that decision taken?

Mr. Imbert: What is that?

Hon. Member: Materials and Supplies.

Dr. Moonilal: 007, when was that decision taken to your knowledge? In light of that—

Madam Chairman: One minute please.

Dr. Moonilal: I was dealing with the passport—in light of that, would there be any cost implications of that, because the Immigration Division, of course will not have to have bulk and suppliers supplying that type of materials and so on as they did, of course, over the decades. Is there any significant cost implication to that as well in terms of supplies and in terms of, you know, the costing to that department?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: I do not believe there is any significant cost.

Dr. Moonilal: You do not think it would be a significant cost in—you do not?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: I do not.

Dr. Moonilal: Okay, and you will take a note that you could just remind us of when that decision was taken. Thank you.

Mr. Imbert: Forget the decision part, Madam Speaker. In the budget statement there is the date upon which this will become operational. At the present time if you arrive in Piarco, as we speak, you have to fill out an immigration form. I have put there January 1, if my memory serves me correctly, that this will be in place.

Dr. Moonilal: And when did you take the decision?

Mr. Imbert: Which decision?

Dr. Moonilal: To do away with immigration forms?

Mr. Imbert: This was taken prior—on the day of the budget itself.

Dr. Moonilal: Oh, on the day of the budget?

Mr. Imbert: As you very well know—

Dr. Moonilal: Okay. On the day of the budget you took that decision.

Mr. Imbert: —there is a Cabinet meeting on the day of the budget, as you know you have attended at least five on them.

Dr. Moonilal: Sure, sure.

Mr. Imbert: At which you decide on the budget measures.

Dr. Moonilal: On that day you took that decision? Thank you very much.

Mr. Imbert: Formally, as you know.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Minister of Finance, could we please have a little silence to proceed?

Dr. Gopeesingh: I just want to ask an open question here. The new Revenue Authority does it include at all Immigration?

Mr. Imbert: No.

Dr. Gopeesingh: No, fine.

Mr. Padarath: Madam Chairman, through you, to the hon. Minister. We see under Immigration, Travelling and Subsistence has been increased by \$5 million. This is in relation to the Prime Minister's statement last night to the Parliament where he indicated that the Government will be reviewing the cost of overseas travelling for Government Ministers. Is it that we are seeing an increase with respect to travelling for public officers, and can the Minister explain why a \$5 million increase?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: This is not overseas travel. This is Terms and Conditions of Service; allowances.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member for Princes Town, just for guidance. If you went to your booklet, *Draft Estimates, Details of Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure*, at page x, there may be some guidance that will assist you in understanding the breakdown of the Heads.

Mr. Paray: Thank you, Madam Chairman. This is a general question to the Minister of Finance. And again, I am new to the Parliament, and this is my first exercise, so some guidance might be welcomed from you. Does a government enjoy economies of scale when we purchase or we buy services in bulk? The reason I am asking, I am thinking from a business perspective if I am amalgamating a number of service lines so, for instance, telephone services, if I have 200 cell phones on one company's account, and I amalgamate my other three companies, and I go to 600 cell phones, I should be able to enjoy some economies of scale there. I am seeing more and more increases other than decreases. Now, if it is not being done right now, perhaps I would suggest sometime as we go forward in a very tightening economy, that we try to negotiate economies of scale in all these service lines as we bring Ministries together; just a comment, Sir.

Mr. Imbert: Duly noted, and thank you for that.

Madam Chairman: Any other questions under 007?

Mr. Charles: Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. It is just a small question. I am seeing under 57, Postage, it is the first time I am seeing it—

Madam Chairman: 57?

Mr. Charles: 57, 007, Immigration. Are we there?—133.

Hon. Member: 133.

Madam Chairman: Thank you.

Mr. Charles: 133, and I am just wondering what is unique about the Immigration Department to warrant \$500,000, half a million in postage. Maybe it could be easily explained.

Mr. Imbert: Passports, courier services; that sort of services.

Mr. Charles: What?

Mr. Imbert: Courier, courier.

Mr. Charles: So passports are delivered to your homes?

Mr. Imbert: Well, passports that you might apply for abroad and that sort of thing.

Mr. Indarsingh: Yes, Madam Chair. Under Sub-Item 43, and I want to address 51 also. There is an increase in security services by \$4.1 million. Is this as a result of more immigration offices, or...? And also with respect to the relocation

of overseas staff, I see an increase of \$3 million. How many persons have been involved in this particular exercise and so on?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: The security services have to do with the new building that the immigration has occupied and there is also a building in San Fernando at Lady Hailes Avenue, that they are about to occupy. So security services are being provided for those two areas.

Mr. Indarsingh: So, the office that is in San Fernando at the moment, there will be an additional office or—

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: We are actually moving into an office.

Mr. Indarsingh: So you are moving an office, so you are not transferring the security that—

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: It is a larger facility, so it needs additional security.

Mr. Indarsingh: A larger facility, interesting. No, I asked, Madam Chair, on the issue of Sub-Item 51, the relocation of overseas staff.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: That has to do with families and so on, being relocated.

Mr. Indarsingh: One family—

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Families.

Mr. Indarsingh:—2, 3, 4, 5?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: It depends. It is the movement of families during the fiscal year. Sometimes there are five or six families having to move in one particular year, depending on the movement of staff.

Mr. Indarsingh: No, I have no problem with looking after—

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: I cannot give you the number.

Mr. Indarsingh: I do not have any problem, Minister, with looking after the movement of persons who are serving Trinidad and Tobago. I have absolutely no problem with that.

6.10 p.m.

All I am trying to get from you is, we have increased this by \$3 million, so is it one, two, three, four, five families?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: It is based on the movement of staff, and when one staff comes another one has to replace that person. So, it is roughly about six or so staff are there and then including family members. So, one staff may have five or six family members depending. Essentially, that is what it is all about, the movement of staff replacing one another and it could be as far as China, it could be as far as India, it could be as far as you know, different places that we have missions, new embassies and so on.

Madam Chairman: So, if we are finished with Item 007, can we go on to Item 008, Probation Service which is on page 133? If there are no questions, can we go on to page 134, Item 009, Forensic Science Centre? Hon. Member for Fyzabad.

Dr. Bodoë: Thank you, Madam Chairman, just to come back to the allocation for forensic science, I raise this issue because I do believe that in view of the crime situation and the imperative to solve crime, I would want clarification, Minister, on the contract employment if the Minister can specify who are actually going to be paid under that allocation. The second question would be under Training. I noticed the allocation for Training seems to be a small sum, so I do not know if the Minister can address those issues.

Madam Chairman: So we are looking at Items 16 and 17.

Dr. Bodoë: Yes. I know that we did state that the forensic pathologists are employed.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: And other professionals within the Forensic Science Centre.

Dr. Bodoë: So, would that cater for the expected increase that you are looking at?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: That is correct, yes, the vacancies.

Dr. Bodoë: It does seem to be a little small.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Two new ones for 2016.

Dr. Bodoë: It looks like a small sum; that is why I am thinking whether you have the allocation to attract the required professionals, and with regard to training.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: The training is in fact additional training. Most of the people come already qualified, so it is just an enhanced training for them. Most of the people who are hired are already qualified, so it is more an enhanced training for them, hence the reason for the small amount.

Dr. Bodoë: Thank you.

Dr. Rambachan: Minister, through you Chair, I am interested in Items 15 and 21, Repairs and Maintenance—Equipment and Repairs and Maintenance—Buildings, but more so Repairs and Maintenance—Equipment, and there is a blanket million dollars put there. Is this million dollars based upon assessment, the detailed assessment of what is required at this point in time to bring the equipment and so on in the Forensic Science Centre up-to-date, because you keep hearing complaints and you read stories about the quality of the equipment that they have to work with, or is this just a figure put in there and we are going to read again that, you know, there are problems with the refrigerators and what have you and so on? How is this done?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Most of the equipment, it is a fact, based on service contract so that there is maintenance there.

Mr. Indarsingh: Madam Chairman, just an observation really. Minister, under Item 99, now, I have looked at it in other areas of your Ministry and I see an allocation of \$5,000 for an Employee Assistance Programme. I would like, I mean, that is totally inadequate and I think that the importance of human beings to all arms of operations and so on, we should really revisit that going forward, whether in the Ministry of National Security or outside of the Ministry of National Security, allocations to employee assistance programmes should be increased based on the stressful conditions of work, and the input that they make to the well-being of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Imbert: Noted, with thanks. Thank you very much. That has been duly noted and will be taken care of. Thank you very much.

Dr. Rambachan: Madam Chairman, I want to come back to my 15 and 21, the same questions I asked, because the inability to deal effectively with the pile-up of bodies and other investigations at the Forensic Science Centre has to have some bearing on our ability to solve crime, which has a very low rate right now in terms of murders, in particular, you know, 11 or 12 per cent or what have you.

When I looked at the figures under the Ministry of Justice, under Item 58 in the budget—of course, that is no longer, that Ministry of Justice has been merged—it was higher in 2015 than now. While the Minister has said service contracts, something has to be terribly wrong with the service providers if we continue to have the level of breakdowns and the level of complaints that we are getting from the people who are working there and so on. If productivity is an issue, then the quality of the environment and the quality of the equipment is

something we must do something about. So what I would like to ask is: Does the Minister have an idea of who are these contractors? How often these contractors go in there? Do we have a record of what they go in and do, and how often they go back to do the same work over and over?—because that is what I understand.

I am questioning, one, the amount allocated and, secondly, I am questioning also the quality of supervision, whether we have a facilities manager in the Forensic Science Centre, a facilities manager who will be able to ensure that you have preventative approaches to the management of the quality of the equipment and so on.

Mr. Imbert: Five years you had to do that, you are asking him.

Dr. Rambachan: I was Minister of Works.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Well, there is an arrangement with NIPDEC right now, but I would look into it. There is an arrangement with NIPDEC who handles most of the maintenance at the Forensic Science Centre.

Dr. Rambachan: I hope you appreciate what I am saying.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Yes, sure, sure. I understand you, and I thank you for that.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Madam Chair, in keeping with what my colleague, the Member for Tabaquite, indicated, there are a lot of complaints now about the physical facilities at the Forensic Science Centre, and there seems to be the need for expansion and improvement. So, I think it would be worthwhile for you to take some special consideration to that and probably seek some support from the Minister of Finance in getting that centre going.

And, of course, I spoke about the accreditation process, because if the infrastructure is not sound, nobody will want to come to accredit the centre and when your equipment is not good as well. So it consolidates the point my colleague, the Member for Tabaquite, on equipment and infrastructure needs to be upgraded to assist in making the Forensic Science Centre accredited and to help with the environment for work. You should give some more money.

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman, just let me say with regard to all these comments with respect to the allocations for the Forensic Science Centre and the expressions of concerns about maintenance of equipment and need for expansion and accreditation, I am very touched by this sudden concern for this institution. I wish it had been done over the last five years, but since they have now realized that these things need to be done, I would take into consideration all of the very

welcome suggestions coming from the Members for Caroni East and Tabaquite and we would see what we can do to reallocate funds to develop and enhance and boost and upgrade the Forensic Science Centre in accordance with the suggestions made by the Members for Fyzabad, Caroni East and Tabaquite. I thank you very much for your very productive and constructive comments, notwithstanding the fact that we have only been here for three weeks, but I understand and we would follow your recommendations. I would respond to all.

Madam Chairman: Are we now completed with 009? Can we go on to 010 which is Fire Service (Tobago) which is at page 135? Can we then therefore go on to Item 011, which is Prison Service (Tobago), which is on page 136? Can we go on to Item 012, Lifeguard Service, which is page 137?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Madam Chair, I just want to ask a broad question for Tobago with the expenditure on Tobago here. All these areas that we have here, under which vote is that coming from? Is it the vote for two-point- something billion for Tobago, Minister of Finance, these areas here? You said part of the funding for Tobago will be 1.3 from the central government and two-point-something that will be given to Tobago—is this part of the 1.3 from central government, the expenditure from here?

Mr. Imbert: Member for Caroni East, I see I will have to take some lessons in how to be patient. Obviously, if this allocation is not within the allocation of the Tobago House of Assembly, obviously—

Dr. Gopeesingh: I am asking.

Mr. Imbert: I am telling you, I am answering you. Obviously, since this is not within the allocation for the Tobago House of Assembly, obviously it would fall within the \$1.3 billion—

Dr. Gopeesingh: That is what I wanted to confirm.

Mr. Imbert: That is obvious.

Dr. Gopeesingh: I wanted to have that confirmed by you.

Mr. Imbert: This is not a THA allocation.

Dr. Gopeesingh: This is part of your \$1.3 billion from the Central Government.

Mr. Imbert: It could only be. It cannot be anything else.

Dr. Gopeesingh: It is a question I am asking for confirmation.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Minister of Finance, I think we should consider that we are also assisting the viewing public with some of these answers that you are so familiar with.

Mr. Imbert: But they know, it is five years they were in Government, they know.

Madam Chairman: As I said, hon. Minister of Finance, for the members of the public—

Mr. Imbert: They know, they know.

Madam Chairman:—I think this is a great exercise with respect to giving them answers. [Crosstalk]

Mr. Imbert: And you are meant for Opposition, you are not meant for Government.

Madam Chairman: Let us go on please. Members, please. Can we go on to Item 013, Immigration (Tobago)? Item 014, Defence Force Headquarters.

Dr. Moonilal: Yes, Ma'am.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member for Oropouche East, and this is at page 138.

Dr. Moonilal: I wanted to ask the Minister of National Security to just give some explanation on two points really. At 09, Rent/Lease—Vehicles and Equipment, I noticed there is a decrease in \$2.2 million there—what would account for a decrease in vehicles and equipment for the Defence Force Headquarters? And repairs and maintenance, there is a further drop there by \$10.3 million—what would explain that as well? [Crosstalk]

6.20 p.m.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Minister of Finance, could you kindly just make the cross-reference for the guidance of the committee, please?

Mr. Imbert: As the hon. Member for Chaguanas East has very helpfully pointed out to his colleague from Oropouche East, what has happened in National Security is that there are new items, new Sub-Heads, new items actually, that is what they are called, and Sub-Items, and they have created a Sub-Item called Fuel and Lubricants, which previously was contained within the overall item for maintenance, and so on.

Dr. Moonilal: Okay, good, but for the 2016 estimate there is \$2 million under Repairs and Maintenance, correct? Why you still have something in 2016 for it if it is covered in 96 Fuel and Lubricants at \$800,000?

Mr. Imbert: What is that?

Dr. Moonilal: What I am saying is that you have said before, I think 25 times, that Fuel and Lubricants is a new line item—

Mr. Imbert: Yes.

Dr. Moonilal:—and that would take the expenditure from Repairs and Maintenance - Buildings.

Mr. Imbert: No, they have split it. They have split it.

Dr. Moonilal: Oh, they have split it.

Mr. Imbert: Yes, they have split it into various Sub-Items.

Dr. Moonilal: Good, so you should have no difficulty with us asking a very simple question which is in the 2016 estimate, it is 2,000, which is \$10.3 million less—

Mr. Imbert: Where is this? What page are you on?

Dr. Moonilal: Just now, get a book, you have a book?

Mr. Imbert: I have it here. What page are you on?

Dr. Moonilal: I am on page 138 and, correspondingly, 139. Under Sub-Item 96, Fuel and Lubricants, you have \$800,000 there; that is your new Sub-Item—

Mr. Imbert: Yes.

Dr. Moonilal: Right. You have a decrease of \$10.3 million—

Mr. Imbert: Under which item has been decreased by \$10 million?

Dr. Moonilal: Sub-Item 21 on page 138. Is there an English—at Sub-Item 21?

Mr. Imbert: That is Buildings.

Dr. Moonilal: I am asking the question to explain—

Mr. Imbert: Buildings do not have fuel and lubricant.

Dr. Moonilal: Well, you told me it was broken up and sent into that.

Mr. Imbert: No, repairs of vehicles.

Dr. Moonilal: But I am asking about Sub-Item 21, why are you talking about fuel and lubricant then?

Mr. Imbert: Because you asked about vehicles first.

Dr. Moonilal: If you would stop interrupting and allow the Minister of National Security to answer, it would be fine.

Mr. Imbert: Lord of Mercy, have mercy.

Madam Chairman: Could we exercise some degree of restraint?

Dr. Moonilal: Ma'am, could I address you? Ma'am, there is an issue here. We are directing questions to the Minister of National Security who is more than cooperative, he has his technical support here and in good time, very quickly, they are generating either direct answers or a commitment to answer. The Minister of Finance is in the front row and is intervening at every moment and creating, to me, a disjunctive process. If the Minister of National Security is here and can answer the question please permit him to answer. If it is a matter dealing with strict financing, and so on, the Minister of Finance is here, but these are matters of operation in the Ministry, and the Minister is not asking for help. I am just making a comment to you, Ma'am.

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman, may I say something, please? I know it was not a question, but I would like to clarify. These estimates were prepared by the Ministry of Finance based on requests from the various Ministries. We were unable to give the Ministries everything that they asked for because the requests would exceed the appropriation. So the Ministry of Finance, the Budget Division, in consultation with the various departments would make an allocation, so in some situations you would see a simple allocation of \$1 million that is a nominal allocation, or you might see a reduction, or you might see an increase. The Minister is new and the reason why the Ministry of Finance is getting involved is that these are generic issues and we were giving you generic answers.

Dr. Moonilal: Madam Chairman, am I permitted to ask the Minister of National Security a question?

Madam Chairman: And, therefore, Member for Oropouche East, you now have your opportunity to ask the question you would like to ask.

Dr. Moonilal: Minister of National Security, there is a decrease in the heading of Repairs and Maintenance - Buildings, by \$10.3 million; if there would be an explanation you could put forward now, or an undertaking, I would be very happy. And while I am on that, there is also the issue of Vehicles and Equipment

which also decreased by \$2.2 million, if that is related to the new subheading you can indicate that or not, but I am really asking you to give us some type of explanation as to those types of decreases. That is all.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: With respect to the Repairs and Maintenance - Buildings, there was an aggressive refurbishment of office accommodation, and so on, in 2015, right, and, therefore, in 2016 there is a decrease based on that.

Dr. Moonilal: So what you are saying is the work was done already?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Right.

Dr. Moonilal: Okay.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: A substantive part of the work was done in 2015.

Dr. Moonilal: It was done in 2015?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Yes, that is right.

Dr. Moonilal: Okay, very good.

Madam Chairman: Can we then go on to—

Dr. Moonilal: The Vehicles and Equipment—

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Sub-Item 13? Which one is that?

Dr. Moonilal: Sub-Item 09.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Rental?

Dr. Moonilal: Rental, Vehicles and Equipment.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: The rental of vehicles is based really on the operational tempo, sometimes it goes up, sometimes it decreases depending on the state of operations, and so on.

Dr. Moonilal: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Okay, can we therefore go on to Item 015, Cadet Force?

Dr. Lee: Madam Chairman—

Madam Chairman: Are we on to Item 015 Cadet Force? Hon. Member for Point-a-Pierre.

Dr. Lee: Madam Chairman, I just want to ask, before you go on, in Item 014, line item 40—I was trying to get your attention—Food at Institutions at \$2 million; first time a new item there, never before they had any expenses related

that I—I just wanted to get some clarity why they would want to have a Food at Institutions in the Defence Force which they never had before—line Item 40.

Madam Chairman: Page 138.

Dr. Lee: Page 138, correct.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Traditionally, the food at institutions would have come from the Coast Guard and Regiment, but in 2016 Defence Force Headquarters will be responsible for providing food at institutions.

Dr. Lee: Thank you. So I guess we would see a reduction in the other end, the Coast Guard and the other areas, respectively.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Not necessarily.

Dr. Lee: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member for Naparima.

Mr. Charles: Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. I am looking at Item 014 under Training and I am seeing a reduction of \$1.3 million., when we go to the Cadet Force shortly you would see a reduction of \$1 million, and we will see later on an increase in the Air Guard; am I sensing that training is being reduced in the army and the cadet services, and emphasis from a training perspective, from a human resource development perspective, is being accorded only to the Air Guard and to the Coast Guard.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: They are two different natures of training you are talking about, because training in the Air Guard is different to training in the Regiment—

Mr. Charles: Okay.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:—and even far more different than what goes on in the Coast Guard. The cost of training in the Air Guard, for instance, is a different kind of cost because you are talking about pilot, and more technical related training, as opposed to the Regiment and opposed to the—so that would account to a large extent for the difference in the amount that is appropriated to the Air Guard compared to the Regiment, and so on.

Mr. Charles: But the decreases in the Regiment and the Defence Force Headquarters in no way reflects a diminished interest in training and operating the human resource.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: No, it does not.

Madam Chairman: Right, can we go to Item 015, Cadet Force, page 139. Can we then—

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Madam Chairman, on page 139.

Madam Chairman: Is it one question, hon. Member for Siparia?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: If you so guide me, hon. Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: I will be grateful.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Thank you very much, I noticed under the Defence Force there is no Head here under Goods and Services for stationery and office supplies, and so on, is it that this will be taken care of otherwise? The other Heads have it under their—

Hon. Member: Defence Force Headquarters, it is Sub-Item 10.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Well, the Headquarters, yes, I guess if it is not there.

Madam Chairman: Sub-Item 10.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Thank you, Sub-Item 10, it is there. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: So, can we move on, please, and we now go to Item 015, which is on page 139, Cadet Force. Can we then go on to—Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: No, that would have come under emoluments—that is all right, I am fine.

Madam Chairman: Can we then go on to Item 016, which is the Air Guard, page 140. Item 017, Member for Point-a-Pierre.

Dr. Lee: Sorry, Madam. Page 141, Sub-Item 61, this is under Air Guard, Item 016, Insurance, you have a massive increase of \$8.5 million.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: That is the insurance for the helicopters. That moved from PSIP to recurrent expenditure, insurance for the helicopters.

Dr. Lee: New helicopters, I presume, if you are moving from PSIP to recurrent.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Yes, existing helicopters.

Mr. Imbert: Existing helicopters, the AgustaWestland helicopters above us.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: AW139s.

Mr. Imbert: The ones you are using, AgustaWestland.

Madam Chairman: Member for Siparia.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: I am giving way.

Madam Chairman: Okay, Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Under page 140, Maintenance of Vehicles, the service contracts for maintaining the vessels, the Air Guard helicopters, and so on, AgustaWestland and so on, there is a certain amount of money that is paid to the international company for keeping these things in the proper fitness, where is that shown in this under Air Guard, Item 016? Can you help direct us to where, or is that incorporated in the Maintenance of Vehicles?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: That is under the development programme.

Dr. Gopeesingh: That is under development? All right. So we will look at it there, but should it not be under Maintenance of Vehicles, because you are maintaining the—

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: It is part of the contract, so it comes under—

Dr. Gopeesingh: All right, okay.

Madam Chairman: Member for Siparia.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Thank you, Madam. Under that same Maintenance of Vehicles—so this does not include the helicopters, and so on, and therefore I would want to think then it is like motor vehicles, I noticed that there is almost a 50 per cent, by half, decrease in Maintenance of Vehicles, is there a reason why? It has dropped from \$15.5 million to \$7.2 million. This is under line item 13 under the Air Guard. It is cut in half.

Mr. Imbert: It is not cut in half you know—yeah, but it was 22 before—well it is 22 gone down to 15.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Sorry, 22, 15, yeah.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: They have taken out the lubricants, and so on, and put it in the Vote 96 from that Vote, so that is the decrease.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: And Fuel and Lubricants is a new item—

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Sub-Item 96, yeah, throughout.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:—has been removed from all of these?

Mr. Imbert: It will be \$10 million if you look at it.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: For this Ministry?

Mr. Imbert: No, for this particular Item, Air Guard, \$10 million.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Okay, so 10 and 7, 17.

Madam Chairman: The next Item 96.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Fuel and Lubricants, yeah. Well, it is throughout, under every one of the units you have Fuel and Lubricants.

Mr. Imbert:—identify fuel as a separate item, you know, that is an area where there is abuse, you know. It is not a bad thing. It is not a bad thing at all to monitor it.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Sure.

Madam Chairman: Okay, so can we go on to Item 017, which is Immigration Detention Centre on page 141?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Before we get there, on page 141, still under Air Guard, line item 50, Housing Accommodation, we see here for 2016, there was nothing in 2015 and now we see a \$400,000 in 2016. Hon. Minister, any explanation for that?

6.35 p.m.

Mr. Imbert: The explanation we are getting is that new people come in from time to time, their terms and conditions might be a little different, so that you would see there was an allocation of \$840,000, actual expenditure in 2015 was nothing, zero. Now an allocation has been put for \$400,000 that is probably to cater for contract negotiations with new staff coming in or settlement of a contract with a contract officer. You see, when the Ministry of Finance is doing these allocations, when you see a round number like that, \$400,000, it is an estimate. It is just an allocation. The Ministry has the authority to vire, with the approval of the Ministry of Finance, if they would need to spend more than \$400,000.

Dr. Rambachan: I was trying to get back to that. Just to ask a quick question. Yes he said maintenance of vehicles does not include the aircraft, and you said it might be under the development; the fixed thing, sorry C26. I believe that we have a contract with a Canadian firm to maintain those aircraft.

Mr. Imbert: Could we wait until we get to that item, because this is just motor vehicles? Could we wait until we get to aircraft?

Dr. Rambachan: All right; I am not seeing it at all that is why I asked.

Mr. Imbert: I will try and find it for you in the meantime.

Madam Chairman: Item 017, Immigration Detention Centre on page 141.

Mr. Charles: Madam Chairman, I am looking at Food at Institutions, Item 40, and I see the allocation is \$5 million. When I looked at Food at Institutions for the entire prison service it was \$16 million. Am I to assume that the population at the Immigration Detention Centre is one-third? So, therefore, this seems to be inordinately high. At \$5 million—and if you wish you can go back to page 130 and see the \$16 million allocation for Food at Institutions at all prison institutions.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: The food there is contracted by a service provider by the IDC.

Mr. Charles: And that could explain the difference in cost? But it may be that you may wish to use—no, well, you cannot because people are there short-term.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: No, you cannot, it is two different facilities.

Mr. Padarath: Madam Chairman, through you, could the hon. Minister explain how we moved to \$8 million for contract employment, and could he expand in terms of what this contract employment entails?

Madam Chairman: Item 16?

Mr. Padarath: Yes.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Member for Princes Town, this is the guards at the IDC. They were previously under Other Contracting Services and they have now been moved to Contract Employment.

Mr. Padarath: Hon. Minister, would you consider then that in order to cut cost that we may wish to use officers from within the regiment for this service, rather than—

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: No, no, no; the regiment cannot be used. The IDC is a special place, so you cannot use the soldiers for that.

Mr. Paray: Madam Chairman, through you to the Minister of National Security. I notice in terms of contract labour right through all your budget allocations, I have a question in terms of what are the standard durations for these contract positions. Are they spread across three months, six months, one year, two years? Secondly, how are these contract positions sourced, are they advertised on the newspapers or are they picked from existing contracting companies that you may have? What is the process involved? Thank you.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: It is normally one, two or three years and they advertise.

Madam Chairman: Item 018, Volunteer Defence Force (Reserves), page 142.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Madam Chair, there is a common thread running through all the areas of the different arms of the security services on Uniforms. You will see here on Volunteer Defence Force, Uniforms is \$3 million. I do not want to take you back, but you have Uniforms of Air Guard for \$6 million, and then you have Uniforms for Cadet, \$2 million and so on. Could you enlighten us on the methodology of procurement of uniforms? Each one of the arms of the security services, how do they procure the uniforms? That is a question. Could you enlighten us on the procurement and the process for the procurement, because Uniforms across the security services seem to be close to—from my simple addition—about \$15 million? That is a significant amount. Let us hear your process.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Let me first outline that there are different types of uniforms, and the Cadet is outside of the defence force structure. The Coast Guard wears a different uniform to the army, a different uniform to the Air Guard. The procurement in some areas would be tendering, based on the material. Some might be unique only to one supplier for security reasons; so there are different kinds of processes depending on the nature of the uniform. Camouflage—you would not go and shop that outside.

Dr. Gopeesingh: I am still not clear. Let us run a process for let us say the uniforms for the Volunteer Defence Force. You have \$3 million there; you want to get your uniform for the reserves or for Coast Guard or so. How does that arm deal with it? Do they advertise it or you have had a supplier supplying it for years and they just continue to supply? If that is so, there is something wrong with that.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: In some cases we go back out to tender. For instance the camouflage pattern for the regiment is a pattern that is made especially for the Trinidad and Tobago Regiment.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Internationally or here locally? Manufactured here locally?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: No, it is not made locally.

Dr. Gopeesingh: But you are not answering the question, hon. Minister. If you could enlighten us? You have \$3 million to spend on uniforms, how do you go about that? You just have a supplier and you say, “All right, next year you

provide X amount, next year you provide Y amount”? Is there not an annual tender for it or is that a tender continuing for five year or 10 years?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: There are, in fact, open tenders.

Dr. Gopeesingh: On an annual basis?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: It depends; as required.

Dr. Gopeesingh: That is an amorphous answer. Let us say, what process would you use for 2016?

Mr. Imbert: Can I assist? A uniform would have a certain life cycle; so some uniforms might last 18 months, some might last two years, some might last three years. So when you are doing procurement you may not have to do it every year. So the allocation is based on an estimate of the quantity of uniforms—let us say the volunteer reserves—that would be in need of replacement. So you may not tender for a complete set of uniforms every year.

Dr. Gopeesingh: The whole process of procurement is a big issue. You want to replace then—if you are saying replace the uniforms, do you not have to do a procurement process to replace it?

Mr. Imbert: What the Minister is telling you—

Dr. Gopeesingh: Let the Minister answer. He has the answer there.

Mr. Imbert: He has only been there for three weeks. When the need arises—

Dr. Gopeesingh: His Permanent Secretary is there.

Mr. Imbert: Allow me to speak, please.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Minister of Finance, one minute please. Could we ask whether the hon. Minister of National Security—*[Interruption]* One minute please. Is the hon. Minister of National Security in a position to answer?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: There are some open tenders for things like boots, helmets and socks and shoes, and there are some selective tenders for security items.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Is it a sole select tender?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Sole selective, only for arms and ammunition.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Sorry? *[Crosstalk]*

Madam Chairman: Have you got your answer, hon. Member?

Dr. Gopeesingh: No, no.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Minister of National Security, you are saying that there are—with respect to the tender process?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: That has been the way it has been done, but as we go forward we look to review those systems and procedures.

Madam Chairman: In terms of—that has been the way it is done. If you can just outline—*[Interruption]* Excuse me, please, hon. Member for Couva South—hon. Member for Couva South, please. Hon. Member for Couva South, please. It is unfortunate it is your voice that I am hearing.

Mr. Indarsingh: You must listen to all sides.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: The way it is done now is open tenders for items such as boots and helmets, socks and shoes. Selective tenders for security items, and sole selective for things like arms and ammunition. But as we go forward we are going to be reviewing it.

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman, may I come in here?

Madam Chairman: One minute, please. May I ask in terms of the uniforms, and I think it follows from a question that was asked. Are you asking about the actual making of the uniforms or the fabric of the uniforms?

Dr. Gopeesingh: The manufacturing of the uniform.

Madam Chairman: Who does it or is it the process? I think that is what you are asking.

Dr. Gopeesingh: The process of having it done. Is it to a sole supplier all the time and say, “You make these for me”?

Madam Chairman: I believe he said it is an open tender. Hon. Member for Caroni East, he said it was an open tender.

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman, could I make a point?

Madam Chairman: By way of assistance?

Mr. Imbert: Very much assistance. Madam Chairman, we are looking at the estimates of expenditure for the year 2016. As you are aware, there is a Procurement Bill—a Procurement Act as a matter of fact—which has been partially proclaimed. So whatever procurement systems were used in the past in 2015, when the Hon. Minister was not the Minister, may not necessarily apply

going forward into 2016. So, Madam Chairman, when Members opposite ask what was the system used before, that has very little application to the estimates for 2016, especially since there will be a new procurement regime in 2016.

Therefore, since procurement is a responsibility of the Ministry of Finance, and since the procurement regulation agency will report to the Ministry of Finance, and since it is the Minister of Finance's responsibility to implement the new procurement system for general application or for general assistance, whatever was done in the past with respect to procurement, is going to change in 2016, and what will be done in 2016 will be transparent, will be equitable, will be cost-effective, will be honest, will be appropriate. So that we cannot go back into 2015 and see what you did. We are going forward, and we are putting a much better procurement system in place in 2016.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Madam Chair, the hon. Member is being disingenuous, to say what is the existing position which probably happened before, that is the situation now. What you are talking about—

Mr. Imbert: We are changing that.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:—is an intent to change. When it changes, fine, you come and tell us.

Mr. Imbert: It will change in 2016.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: But what is the process now? I do believe, without the intervention of the Member for Diego Martin North/East, the hon. Minister has answered the question.

Madam Chairman: I believe the question is answered.

Mr. Imbert: He cannot answer that question. I have answered the question.

Madam Chairman: One minute, please, Members. I know we are in committee, and we are a little more relaxed, but let us facilitate the process. I believe the question has been answered. Hon. Member for Caroni Central.

6.50 p.m.

Dr. Tewarie: Madam Chairman, I heard the Minister of Finance make a statement on the Procurement Bill and he made one statement which I would like him to clarify. He said that under the Procurement Bill which has been partially proclaimed, Act, that the procurement—I do not think he used the word regulator, but he said the—reporting will be to the Minister of Finance. Can I ask the Minister whether he simply said that, made a slip or intends to change it from what it is now which is reporting to the Parliament?

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman, in the first place I said no such thing. What I said and this was the responsibility of my predecessor, Minister Howai, was that the system of implementation of the new procurement legislation is a responsibility of the Ministry of Finance. You will recall that a committee was established, a task force as a matter of fact, with Mr. Hamel-Smith being chairman of that committee, to implement a new procurement regime in all government Ministries, agencies and departments. That the responsibility for the implementation of your procurement regime is a responsibility of the Ministry of Finance, and we do intend to go forward in 2016. We have said that we are going to amend the procurement legislation and we will move swiftly to fully operationalize the new procurement system and therefore, it is unfair to ask any Minister what is going to be the procurement system based on what occurred in the past under your administration. We are going to implement a completely new procurement system which is clean, honest and transparent.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Members, might I suggest that the discussion that we are entering into at this stage is not relevant to the process.

Mr. Imbert: Totally irrelevant.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Minister of Finance, please. The discussion is not—[Crosstalk] it is not relevant. Remember we are in committee so we are a little more relaxed, but still we cannot break down to pure anarchy. Okay? I would want to suggest that the discussion is going along the lines that is not relevant to this process. I would expect if there are to be changes, there will have to be legislative changes and they come about in a particular type of way. So that I would want to suggest that we resume to the exercise at hand. Okay? May I call again—as I said we are on Item—we are still under Goods and Services and we under 018 Volunteer Defence Force (Reserves) which is at page 142, and therefore, if we—hon. Member for Mayaro.

Mr. Paray: Thank you, Madam Chairman. Minister of National Security, again, looking at Uniforms here, and I just want to thread carefully on this question before I get sidelined. Is there an inherent security risk to sew or make our uniforms locally through our own young people in new industries that can be created in Trinidad and Tobago? My question is, rather than importing uniforms that are being made, we already have surplus human resources on the island. Is there an inherent security risk to make these uniforms locally here? Thank you.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: There is somewhat of a risk. Yes. I would say, yes, there is. And there is also certain kinds of specifications for the uniforms especially things like the camouflage and so on that must be taken into consideration.

Mr. Paray: So just to continue. So, because of the security risks the consideration of making some of them, perhaps I would select the police uniforms, the fire uniforms to be sewn locally using our surplus human resources. That may be out the question?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Something has been tried in the past, we are not ruling it out in the future, but it has been tried in the past and something that we could consider going forward. But at this point in time based on the security risk and so on, and especially in terms of quality control and so on, because remember these uniforms stand up to very rigid training and different kinds of environment and so on.

Mr. Paray: Just one follow-up, Madam Chairman. Knowing that we are in a position, again coming back to the tight economic conditions that we are heading in, perhaps some training, some collaboration would be necessary, training organizations, to raise the standard, raise the quality, and I think my main purpose here is how can we utilize our surplus human resource that we can use in a very productive way. That is all, Sir. Thank you.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: I think we have to build the capacity. Once we have the capacity and we could produce the necessary kind of quality and standards, we can work with that. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Okay. Can we therefore go on to Sub-Head 03 Minor Equipment Purchases which is at page 143, 001 General Administration. Hon. Member for Siparia.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Thank you. Under 03 a total for Minor Equipment Purchases. We see a major decrease of \$20.3 million. Of course there will be—the other line items will be subsumed, but has there been a deliberate policy decision to decrease your Minor Equipment Purchases? Page 143, 03 Minor Equipment Purchases.

Mr. Imbert: Twenty million?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: From—yeah.

Madam Chairman: 001 General Administration.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Well, not General, I am looking at the total Minor Equipment Purchases. The very first line, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much.

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Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Yeah. It has moved from \$123 million to \$103 million, a decrease of \$20.3 million for Minor Equipment Purchases—the totals.

Mr. Imbert: The first Item is GA, the second one is Fire Service, the third one is Prison Service.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Well, I was not aware, Madam Chair, that we have to do the Item. I thought we were doing the Heads.

Mr. Imbert: That is how we have been doing it. [*Crosstalk*]

Madam Chairman: Well, I would suggest—

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: This is a total of all the line Items.

Madam Chairman: Hon, Member for Siparia, I would suggest that maybe if we went to the individual Sub-Items it may give you the answer for the ballpark figure that you are asking.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Ma'am, thank you and I thank you for the guidance. With due respect, when we go to each one, each of these line Items, it would tell us the specific Item that might have had a decrease. I am not saying that I want to know which vehicle—whether it was vehicles or whether it was a typewriter. I am saying, was there a policy decision to generally decrease your Minor Equipment Purchases as a whole?—policy decision to decrease because it is a \$20 million decrease.

Mr. Imbert: If you look at Fire Service, for example, that has been decreased by \$4.5 million. If you look at—sorry—increase. If you go to General Administration, vehicles have been decreased by \$1.3 million. If you go to Regiment, vehicles have been decreased by \$1.8 million. Coast Guard has been decreased by \$3 million and so on and so on. The only way you could get the answers to your questions is go into the actual Items and look at the actual decreases because it is an aggregate figure of a large number of Items and Sub-Items. So there is no policy. If you look you would see some have gone up and some have gone down and the net effect of all of that is a decrease. So, you would have to deal with each Item and Sub-Item individually to get the answer. [*Crosstalk*] Well okay.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: I disagree, with respect.

Mr. Imbert: You can disagree if you wish.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: I will leave it in the hands of Madam Chair— [*Crosstalk*] to decrease down to \$20 million.

Mr. Imbert: There is no policy to decrease or increase anything.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Really!

Mr. Imbert: It is according to need. And that is your answer.

Madam Chairman: Item 001 General Administration. Yes, hon. Member for Tabaquite.

Dr. Rambachan: I thought we were going down to Item 002, Fire Service because that is—*[Crosstalk]*

Madam Chairman: Can we then go on to 002? Yes. Please hon. Member for Tabaquite.

Dr. Rambachan: Thank you. What I would like to ask is whether this \$24.5 million, in terms of Minor Equipment, what are we talking about? Does this include any fire tenders and so on? I ask this because recently there was need to respond to a fire and I heard the fire service people say that there were no fire tenders available in two of the fire stations and therefore, they could not respond. So is this about fire tenders or water trucks? What is this \$24.5 million about? And if so, how does it meet the needs of the fire service? *[Crosstalk]*

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: New fire vehicles would come under the development programme and this figure here would be for the—

Dr. Rambachan: New fire vehicles in the development programme?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: This one is for replacement. Replacement of fire vehicles.

Dr. Rambachan: Do you know how many by chance?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: I—this is replacement.

Dr. Moonilal: It is a very simple question. You say vehicles \$24.5 million. What vehicles are they replacing?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: I will get that. What type of vehicles?

Dr. Moonilal: A car, a van, a truck?

Mr. Imbert: One that fell down a ravine and you pulled out for \$6 million.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Members, you will get this in writing. And would we get a breakdown of the vehicles to be replaced and the cost associated with each vehicle? Yes. Are we finished with 002? Can we go on to 004?

Dr. Rambachan: Madam Chair, on similarly number 04 Other Minor Equipment there is an \$8 million. So that is significant also. What is the Other Minor Equipment that is involved there? All I am concerned about is that the fire service get what they have to get in order to protect the lives and property of the citizens.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Other Minor Equipment will be in terms of breathing apparatus and so on, equipment for the firefighter. That is not listed under uniforms and those kind of things. Like breathing apparatus and equipment that is neither uniforms nor otherwise that the firefighter uses in the performance of his duties.

Dr. Rambachan: Well, Chair, you know, I understand what the Minister is saying, eh, and I appreciate the general answer. But my experience has been that you get these general answers, Minister, and then you do not have a full detail of what is going to be bought, and you end up either buying or not buying or buying the wrong things, and therefore you have to have a match between what the technocrats in fire service, the people who want the equipment tell you, and what is bought. And I am just trying to make sure that we have a proper fit with what is requested, what is necessary, and not just buy things. I mean, fire hoses, for example, you know, have holes all over the place and the fire officers show you that all the time. Recently they had it in the newspapers when they roll out the fire hoses and you could see the water flipping all over the place. So, we need to do something about it. And I just want to make sure that if we do it now, let us do it right.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Thank you. Noted. Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member for Oropouche East.

Dr. Moonilal: Minister, just add to that, and why I myself am concerned with this vehicle and the composition of that subheading is that, we really want to have some assurance from you and from your Ministry that the vehicles and fire appliances and so on would be available to occupy and work out of the Mayaro Fire Station that was recently constructed. Because when we asked that in budget during the debate, we said we will work it out in the Standing Finance Committee. So, we are—I am very clear now if this is the heading for \$24.5 million, do we have to purchase new appliances, new equipment, new whatever, for Mayaro so that could be up and running. Because when I go later down, I do not want to dwell on it, but when you go to Tobago fire service there is also an increase of about \$3 million or so because I know you have some intention to do some work there as well.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: The intention is to outfit the Mayaro Fire Station.

Dr. Moonilal: Okay.

7.05 p.m.

Madam Chairman: Can we go on to 004? Can we go on to 005, which is Regiment on page 144? 006 Coast Guard? 007 Immigration?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Coast Guard again, Madam, 006. I note that there has been a decrease of \$6.3 million for all the Items under 006, under Goods and Services, can the Minister indicate why it is we are decreasing every one of these Items? Under the Coast Guard—we are under Coast Guard or Regiment, Madam?

Madam Chairman: We are under Coast Guard.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Ok, but the same under the Regiment by the way, a decrease of \$13.3.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: It is based on patronizing the budget in terms of prioritizing what is required, what they can do in 2016 as opposed to what they have done in 2015. So, they have some areas that they had to do some adjustments.

Dr. Rambachan: Does minor equipment and vehicles here under Coast Guard include specifically any vehicles and equipment for the port of Cedros? Also does it include anything for Moruga and Orange Valley, Carli Bay area?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: These are more vehicles, not vessels. Vehicles you are talking about, yes. So, vehicles will be done where there is requirement for, they would outfit. If there is a requirement for a vehicle or a jeep as such for Cedros, then that is based on the commander of the Coast Guard assigning that vehicle to that location, wherever the need is.

Dr. Rambachan: I am very concerned about Cedros.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: I, too, am also concerned. That is my constituency.

Dr. Rambachan: Because you are the Member. Very concerned, because what has been happening in Cedros, and there are a number of illegal immigrants coming through there, drugs in recent times, and what else have you, and I feel very strongly about what should be done down in Cedros there and Moruga.

Madam Chairman, maybe you could guide me on something immediately, please. In the Standing Orders, under 84, Procedural Examination of Estimates in Standing Finance Committee, there are amendments to the heads of expenditure

to increase the sums allotted, is it that that can be done in this committee by the Minister, if the committee here is convinced and convinces the committee that you should have an increase in the particular head?

Madam Chairman: But, this would be under Standing Order 84(5).

Dr. Rambachan: Yes.

Madam Chairman: And this would require a Motion by a Minister, which must first have Cabinet approval for the increase. So, I do not know if I am getting your drift. I do not know if it were, that saying a Member on your side.

Dr. Rambachan: Yes, I know it is a Minister who has to move it.

Madam Chairman: A Minister has to move it.

Dr. Rambachan: But, bear with me a moment. Here we are debating the allocations of what have you, and here I am, and I think the Minister is convinced of what I am saying, that more needs to be done, for example, in Cedros, and maybe that sufficient has not been put in the budget to deal with Cedros which is a very porous area, and Moruga which is a porous area. And I am saying, maybe something can be done here in the committee—and I am trying to figure out what is the process that allows us to amend this budget so we can have a change in the head? Maybe I am wrong, you know.

Madam Chairman: No, but I think hon. Member, the provisions of Standing Order 84(5) are clear—

Dr. Rambachan: I read it.

Madam Chairman:—and I believe there is also another Standing Order which says, and I think it comes with money Bills, that that could only be done by a Minister. It could not be a private member.

Dr. Rambachan: No, no, no, I am saying that if you have a Standing Order like this, it then does suggest that at this committee we have the possibility of convincing the Minister, that you may increase a head of expenditure. You cannot decrease but you can increase.

Madam Chairman: But, I would say that if you so convince the Minister then the Minister would have to do something by going to the other place. And I do not know that therefore the direct action that you would like to result from something that may be felt here can be effected here. Okay.

Dr. Rambachan: Well, I think that the Minister is convinced that something must be done. [*Laughter*]

Madam Chairman: Let us put it this way, hon. Member for Tabaquite. I think the only person who could tell us that he is convinced is the Minister.

Dr. Rambachan: Well, Madam, I am not being facetious or anything, I am very serious, because I happen to live in the south and know the circumstances there. Because not only there, but along that entire Mosquito Creek area going right into Otaheite, it is haven for people coming in there with illegal activities. And, therefore, I think that I want to prevail upon the Minister to look at the Standing Order and to let us do something even more for that particular area.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Minister of National Security.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Noted, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: All right. Hon. Minister of Finance, seeing that this comes under finance and the budget is your portfolio.

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman, for the benefit of hon. Members opposite, if a Head is increased and no other Head is decreased there would be an increase in the overall appropriation, which would affect the fiscal balance. And, therefore, any increase in any Head, notwithstanding that Standing Order, will require, firstly, the approval of the Ministry of Finance and then the approval of Cabinet, which is why Cabinet is mentioned there, and therefore it is unfair to ask a Minister to increase a Head, because that first has to be approved by the Ministry of Finance.

And I can assure you that unless it is absolutely necessary, because we have a mid-year review, we have the authority to vire between heads. As you know, that Ministers can vire between heads, that we would not be making any major adjustments to these estimates at this time, because that will disrupt the entire budgetary process. We would have to print new pages and so on. So, what I would tell you, is having listened to everything that is being said, if this Minister or any other Minister wants to make adjustments consequent on recommendations coming from the other side—from your good selves—then, certainly, once the increase is reasonable, and there is sufficient funds within the overall allocation for that Ministry, I would accommodate that request coming from the Minister, I would allow virements, and I would also allow expenditure that may go beyond the initial allocation, because you can always supplement at the mid-year review. But, to actually make an increase here on the floor during this five days, that is highly unlikely. I just wanted to let you know.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. Can we move on? We are at Item 007, page 144. Then can we move on to Item 008 at page 145, Probation Service. Can we, therefore, go on to Item 009, Forensic Science Centre, page 145; 010, Fire Service, Tobago.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Madam Chairman, under vehicles 010, under the fire service, I see here an increase of \$3 million for the fire service, Tobago. If the Minister would be kind enough to tell us what that is for? I know it is for vehicles, but which vehicles? What type? Numbers? Cost per unit?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: That is for replacement vehicles for Tobago.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: What kind of vehicles, Sir?

Madam Chairman: Can we ask again—

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Fire tenders or other vehicles?

Madam Chairman: I think, hon. Member for Siparia, we had got an undertaking in an earlier head that what will be provided is a listing of the vehicles and the cost of the particular vehicles, and maybe we can deal with this—

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: For the record then we had given the assurance for the two?

Madam Chairman: I understand everything that is done here is considered an assurance.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: No, the assurance now, you see, on this specific.

Madam Chairman: All right? Okay.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Yes, so it is a given. It is just for us to record it.

Dr. Moonilal: We cannot record your nod. [*Laughter*]

Madam Chairman: All right. So, can we go on to 012, which is Life Guard Service on page 146; 014 Defence Force Headquarters, page 146; 015? Hon. Member for Naparima.

Mr. Charles: Thank you, Madam Chairman. In the context of the challenges we face with young males and the critical role that I think that institutions like the cadet force can play in ameliorating that problem that we have, I just want to record and to draw to the Minister's attention—not necessarily for an answer—that it is a measure of some concern, the reduction in expenditure to the cadet

force. I knew the Minister of Finance said that there may be a process involving him in the context of looking at the possibility of amendments, I would just ask that he bear that in mind as something worthy of consideration for support. Thank you.

Mr. Imbert: Let me just say, Madam Chairman, that would apply to all useful suggestions. That was a useful suggestion, and that the Ministry will consider all such requests coming from the Ministry of National Security, and any others, based on the very valuable contribution being made by Members opposite; like that one for example.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member for Siparia.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: You mentioned 014, 015, okay, so can I kindly?

Madam Chairman: I understand.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Thank you, Madam. 014, again, I see a \$5.1—in fact, every Item under the Defence Force Headquarters has been reduced to the extent of \$5.1 million. Now, when I had asked the question, it was a global question, I was told to come under the specific Items, which do not give the quantities, but, again, Minister, if you would be kind enough, is this, again, part of your prioritizing that you decreased under goods and services?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: This is done on prioritizing, but it is also done on the fact that some things were received in 2015 and therefore—

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: So, some good work was done.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Work was done in 2015. Work was done in 2015.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Would you be kind enough to say which of these that work was done in 2015 so you could decrease everyone for 2016?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: No. We are looking at 2016.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: The Minister is saying that in 2016 every single line item has been decreased to zero.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: I said work was done—[*Crosstalk*]

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: So, there is no work under every line item here for 2016—yes—to be done? Is that what you are saying?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: No. Pardon, I did not hear what you say, Member for Siparia.

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Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: You said, under 014 every line item there is no allocation. In other words, there has been a decrease of \$5.1.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: There are decreases. There are line items in 2016, and you would see that—

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: There is a decrease of \$5.1 million.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Overall.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Overall, yes, for every item.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: There are still items to be received in 2016 going forward.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: You said this was because work was done in 2015?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: I said work was done in 2015 and work will be done in 2016 also.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Okay, Madam Chair. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Can we go on to 016, Air Guard on page 147?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: 016.

Madam Chairman: 016, Air Guard.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Hon. Minister, I see again a decrease of \$3.3 million under the Air Guard for all these line items, which is like half of \$3.3 million decrease. I just record it.

Dr. Moonilal: I want to ask—could I? Just a follow up question.

Madam Chairman: This is on 016?

Dr. Moonilal: Yes. Minister of National Security, I wanted to ask, is there some risk here that whether it was a deliberate policy or not, whether it is a result of prioritization or budgetary restraints, is there any risk to national security that throughout—and I am on 016, because that is where there is a big decrease here, minor equipment for the Air Guard and so on. Is there a risk that we are undermining the integrity of national security institutions by slashing across the board every single division in national security in this way? Because, while we look at the overall figure, as you would agree, wages and salaries pick it up, a big

contribution there, and it is responsible in the main for the overall figure. But, this continues throughout, and I am just asking you whether there are serious risks involved with under budgeting for national security in this way? It is almost like slashing of the national security budget across the board.

7.20 p.m.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: I do not think there is any risk involved. I think it has been provided for in 2016. I do not think there is any risk involved.

Hon. Imbert: And we intend to be very prudent in 2016 and not waste money as happened in 2015.

Madam Chairman: Members can we go on to Item 017 which is the Immigration Detention Centre.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Likewise, Madam Chair, is there any risk here with a \$1.5 million decrease across the board for Item 017.

Hon. Imbert: No, it is prudent.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Minister of National Security, through you, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Minister of National Security, we are on Item 017, Immigration Detention Centre. And the hon. Member for Siparia is asking the question with respect to the decrease in \$1.56 million. Would there be any threat—*[Interruption]*

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:—compromising of—

Madam Chairman:—compromising of the national security?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: There were some things that were required already and therefore we do need to acquire them in 2016.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Okay.

Madam Chairman: Can we go on to Item 018, Volunteer Defence Force (Reserves).

Dr. Moonilal: Mr. Minister of National Security, again, there is a \$3.3 million decrease. You are certain that for the Volunteer Defence Force (Reserves) this will not again compromise the integrity of their performance at all that we are slashing their budget again.

Hon. Imbert: We are rooting out corruption.

Dr. Moonilal: You are rooting out corruption in the Volunteer Defence Force (Reserves).

Hon. Imbert: Yes, everywhere. That is what JTUM asked us to do.

Madam Chairman: Can we go on to Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies. This is on page 148.

Dr. Moonilal: Could I ask—is it that you are rooting out corruption in the Regional Associations as well? Because there is also a decrease here.

Hon. Imbert: Everywhere there is waste, mismanagement and corruption, we are rooting it out.

Dr. Moonilal: In the Caribbean crime and security organization and the Regional Bodies, fine.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Thank you, Madam Chair, under Sub-Head 04 Current Transfers and Subsidies, Regional Bodies, I am looking at a decrease with respect to IMPACS of \$1.5 million. What caused this decrease allocation to IMPACS, please? Through you, Madam Chair, to the Minister of National Security. IMPACS, a decrease of \$1.5 million allocation for the purposes of that regional body, IMPACS.

Madam Chairman: Item 05.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Taking out corruption out of IMPACS. Looking at the Line Item 05, IMPACS.

Hon. Imbert: The 2015 estimate was \$13 million, it went up \$15 million. We have now allocated \$14 million, it is an appropriate allocation. It is more than the original allocation of 2015.

Dr. Moonilal: Figures make sense.

Hon. Imbert: Yes, it is an appropriate prudent fiscally responsible allocation.

Dr. Moonilal: It just means he do not know.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Laughs.

Hon. Imbert: It said we are rooting out waste and mismanagement.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: In IMPACS.

Hon. Imbert: Everywhere.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: We will ask what that is when you come back.

Madam Chairman: Can we therefore go on to—[*Interruption*]

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: International Bodies.

Madam Chairman: Item 004.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Madam Chair, through you, if I may just pause for a cause for the moment. I know we have next, the TTPS, but given the time—you did say we will stop at 8.00 p.m., we may not get around to that and perhaps you may want to release some, please.

Madam Chairman: I am indeed—ask the position of the Government. Are you in concurrence with the suggestion?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Madam Chair, we did indicate as you did at the start of the proceedings that we will end at 8.00 p.m. today. And I certainly agree with the Leader of Opposition that we should release the Police Service, because at the rate we are going now, I doubt we will finish national security and get to them before 8.00 p.m. So, I would agree with that on behalf of the Government.

Madam Chairman: So, may I on behalf of the committee thank the representatives of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and maybe—the members of the technocrats from the Ministry of Trade and Industry are here also, and therefore we would like to thank you for your attendance. We would really like to relieve you at this time and would ask you to return tomorrow at 1.30 p.m. [*Crosstalk*]

Members, in terms of, I believe we said that we are going to start with the THA tomorrow which will be 1.30 p.m. So do we want the police to come here for 1.30 p.m.?

Hon. Members: No, no.

Madam Chairman: So could we suggest a time. Could we say to them three o'clock, right? Alright, so as I say, could we then, therefore relieve the members of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service who are here and the Ministry of Trade and Industry? We will ask you all to return tomorrow afternoon. I believe the staff of the Parliament would liaise with you all with respect to the time of your attendance tomorrow. Thank you.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Thank you, Madam Chair. We were at, which one, will you remind us?

Madam Chairman: So can we therefore continue, and I believe we are at Item 004, International Bodies. Can we go on to Item 007 which is Households? Hon. Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Madam Chair, earlier on I alluded to, let me have the attention of the Minister of National Security. Earlier on I alluded to the profession of the Civilian Conservation Corps, and I asked where it was incorporated and here it is, I have seen it. I have seen the allocation of \$58 million. Could the Minister indicate to us how many trainers there are in the programme and how many trainees are trained on an annual basis in the Civilian Conservation Corps?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: I will have to provide you with that at a later date. I do not have those figures here but I can provide you at a later date. Let me repeat this, the amount of trainers and the amount of trainees in the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Madam Chair, if I can probably guide the hon. Minister, my information from the past being in Cabinet, we had raised this issue that they needed to look at the question of the cost factor. Because my colleague, Member of Parliament for Chaguanas East reminds me as well, that we believe that there were about 300 trainees per year and there were about 150 trainers to train these 300 trainees. And from our evaluation it was excessive to have one trainer to train two trainees in the Civilian Conservation Corps. I could be proven wrong.

And so, therefore, to train 300 trainees in the Civilian Conservation Corps for \$58 million is an unpardonable sin. And therefore it is important for us to get a clear picture from the Ministry of National Security on this programme. We would like to have that programme, of course, continued. It is doing a great job, but the excessive expenditure you need to look at that critically. So perhaps when we get the information—the ratio of trainers to trainees. It is jobs for the boys, Minister of National Security, and it is an excessive flood of people to do the training for these nice young students who are willing to do well and prevent crime.

Madam Chairman: I believe we have done Households unless, the Member for Siparia, your question is in Households because we are in Households.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Thank you very much Madam Chair. Through you, under Households we have Sub-Item 04 mentioned from my colleague, Civilian Conservation Corps. We have the MILAT, we have the National Youth Service, Mentoring Programme for Youth at Risk, the National Security Officers Foundation and so on, which would represent some substantial amounts of money. However, we have no idea of how these are to be disbursed. It is just giving us a transfer of \$58 million, a transfer of \$15 million and so on.

My colleague has already asked about trainers and trainees. We would appreciate for each of these special programmes, hon. Minister, if through the assurance that you can give because you may not have this. How much out of that is for recurrent personnel expenditure for each of these units? And how much out of that \$58 million is for goods and services, minor equipment purchases?—all the Sub-Heads under Recurrent Expenditure. So for each of these, how much for salaries and wages and the other items of recurrent? For each of these programmes all we have is the block allocation for these various programmes under Households.

Madam Chairman: Page 147.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: We are at page 148.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Yes, we have the assurance from the Minister?

Madam Chairman: Yes, so we will get this in writing and detailed as asked by the hon. Member for Siparia. Can we go on to Sub-Head 009, at page 149? Hon. Member for Oropouche East.

Dr. Moonilal: Through you, Madam Chair, to the Minister of National Security, I just wanted to clarify one matter and ask a direct question. You will continue the Movant/Laventille Initiative, but I noticed there is an estimate of 11.3, down slightly. I just wanted some details as well, because there is a \$2 million cut in that initiative. If you can explain that as to: what is the status of that programme? And what is the intention this year, 2016, given the decrease of \$2 million in the Morvant/Laventille Initiative.

The Office of Law Enforcement Policy, Item 13, there is something dramatic here, in that 2015 there was a revised estimate of \$60 million more or less, and in 2016 \$8 million, a decrease of \$52 million. You could probably remind us as to what would have caused that decrease as well. And what are the implications of that. I can ask a follow up question, but first I just wanted the answer on those two matters.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: The Movant/Laventille Initiative, the decrease is based on really an assessment that we had to cut out waste in the programme. So the reduction is based on that. [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Imbert: You all were wasting this much.

Madam Chairman: And this is now Office of Law Enforcement Policy?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: IDC is now catered under OLEP.

Madam Chairman: IDC?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: IDC has moved elsewhere.

Madam Chairman: So the Office of Law Enforcement Policy runs—

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: A programme called IDC.

Madam Chairman: Could we say what IDC is please?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Immigration Detention Centre.

Madam Chairman: “Oh!” So is it that this has been moved to another Sub-Item.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Yes. [*Crosstalk*]

Dr. Gopeesingh: Immigration Detention Centre. We just completed that.

Hon. Imbert: OLEP runs the detention centre. The detention centre expenditure has been moved to another Head.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: And the OLEP money has gone to IDC.

7.35 p.m.

Dr. Moonilal: Where the \$53 million gone?

Mr. Imbert: Your comfort control people which we are looking at to make sure it is not wasteful, used to be run by the OLEP office. So your comfort patrols and the detention centre were catered under this head before. Those are being moved to their own subheads. If you look down below at Item 23—[*Interruption*] Look down below at Item 23—I know you do not want to look, you know, but look down at Item 23—and you will see a \$20 million that used to be under the OLEP. Okay? And the detention centre now has its own—[*Interruption*] No, not there, elsewhere.

Madam Chairman: So could I ask, therefore, that the hon. Minister of National Security maybe can find that cross-reference and let us know later in the proceedings.

Mr. Imbert: We will.

Dr. Moonilal: Please, because Immigration Detention Centre, \$400,000.

Mr. Imbert: No, no, it is much more than that.

Madam Chairman: So we will just defer the response to this during the course of these proceedings. Okay? Hon. Member for Mayaro.

Mr. Paray: Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. If I could just crave your indulgence for one minute to just go back to Sub-item 7, item 09, which is “School Discipline Initiative”. Minister of National Security, noting the fact that we have had such a high incidence lately of all these videos circulating on social media, with school children displaying some very unruly behaviour, I notice in the budget here that there have been no subventions in terms of that school discipline initiative. I was wondering if that is something that was prudent to take off. Or has it been transferred across to the Ministry of Education to deal with under that heading? Thank you.

Madam Chairman: This is page 148, Item 09.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: The school discipline is not under National Security at this time.

Mr. Paray: Okay.

Madam Chairman: Okay. Can we then go to—

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman, with your leave, to answer a question raised before. Contrary to the assertion that the detention centre is only \$400,000, if you go to page 142, “Goods and Services, Immigration Detention Centre”, total is \$22 million. So it is \$22 million for that, and that is just one item of expenditure for Immigration Detention Centre because they also have personnel expenditure, they have minor equipment purchases for the Immigration Detention Centre. So that will come up to a considerable sum, plus the \$20 million for the Community Comfort Police. That is where the \$52 million reduction came from. It is all there in the documents.

Dr. Moonilal: Madam Chairman, given that that is so, I would like to ask the Minister of National Security a direct question now. Is it that you are cutting the Community Comfort Patrol Programme? And if you are, could you tell us what was spent in 2015 on the Community Comfort Patrol Programme; which areas were serviced and what is the intention in 2016 whether it is to cut the programme and reduce the amount of patrols? And if you are reducing the amount of patrols, in which areas do you intend to reduce the amount of patrols? Because it may well be that you are cutting the budget for that programme.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: The intention is to make it more effective and efficient going forward, and whatever it takes to make it more efficient and effective, we will—

Dr. Moonilal: So if it is a reduction and a cut and so on, it is fine?

Mr. Imbert: It is not a reduction. It is a new item of \$20 million.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Madam Chair, on the explanation given by—

Madam Chairman: One moment, please.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Sorry.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member for Siparia.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Thank you, Madam. On the explanation given by the Hon. Minister of Finance, it does not add up to say that under the IDC at page 141, “Immigration Detention Centre Carried Forward”, the total there was \$21 million, carried over to the other page to a total of \$22.1 million allocated for 2016. Originally, this was under the OLEP and it is now taken out to go under IDC. Because you will see in 2014, you had actual expenditure under IDC, in 2015 you have revised expenditure under IDC, so it was not under the OLEP; it was under its own head or item. So it is not correct, in my respectful view, to say that \$53 million has now been decreased because you take it out and send it to IDC. It does not make sense. It does not add up.

Mr. Imbert: That is the information we have been provided with.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Okay. Well, it is not accurate and therefore has to be—*[Interruption]*

Madam Chairman: Could we get from the hon. Minister of National Security an undertaking to clarify this item?

Mr. Imbert: Maybe you were paying twice for the same item, who knows.

Madam Chairman: May we go on, please? Hon. Member for Couva South.

Mr. Indarsingh: Madam Chair, the issue of the reduction to the Morvant/Laventille initiative and OLEP was dealt with by the Member for Oropouche East.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member for Couva North.

Miss Ramdial: Madam Chair, the same. The question was previously answered, so thank you.

Madam Chairman: Okay. Hon. Member for Oropouche West.

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am on Item 12 and I see there is an increase of \$1 million for HIV/AIDS Coordinating Unit. To the hon. Minister of National Security, is it that that increase is for an anticipation of an increase in AIDS cases?

Hon. Member: What!

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: It is more for training and educational purposes.

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: Okay. [*Crosstalk*] Do not think it is in any condescending way. It is a serious question I am asking.

Dr. Francis: Really?

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: I was not addressing you—the question.

Madam Chairman: Has the question been answered?

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: Yes. And another thing, please, Minister. Is it that the predicate offences which will fall under the RICO offences—is it encompassed in your Anti-Money Laundering or Terrorism Compliance Unit?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Repeat that question.

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: The RICO offences which are predicate offences, is that included in 18, which is your Anti-Money Laundering or Terrorism Compliance Unit? I need some clarification or perhaps you—

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: That is for the special unit.

Mr. Al-Rawi: If I may, the RICO offences—

Madam Chairman: Hon. Minister of National Security, have you finished your response?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Yes, I have.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Attorney General.

Mr. Al-Rawi: Perhaps I may lend some assistance. The RICO offences and money laundering and terrorism are all separately managed in the architecture of Government. The Ministry of Finance has certain supervisory aspects, the Attorney General's office and the Ministry of National Security. Counter terrorism is dealt with by the Ministry of National Security. The Ministry of Finance deals with the FIU and in particular, the money laundering aspect that may come out of that. The Proceeds of Crime Act is a mix between agencies. The DPP deals with some of those as well.

So insofar as the RICO may be a combination of events, it may be spread across Ministry of Finance, Ministry of the Attorney General and also Ministry of National Security, depending upon how it is arranged. So I do not think that we could get one clear-cut answer to a very good question, on that aspect. So perhaps we could look at that a little further.

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: Thank you kindly, AG.

Madam Chairman: May we have the Member for Caroni East?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Madam Chair, 009, Subhead 02, “Strategic Services Agency”, \$100 million. Would it be possible for the Minister of National Security to give us—

Madam Chairman: Excuse me. Is it \$100 million?

Dr. Gopeesingh: \$100 million, yes. Would it be possible for you to give us an idea of the breakdown, cost of personnel, cost of the other sub-items, goods and services and minor equipment? And also, as I am on that, if you would take two questions. The second one is the Transit Police Unit, there is an increase. Is that the Transit Police Service Unit for the priority bus route?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Yes.

Madam Chairman: That is Item 16?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Thank you.

Dr. Gopeesingh: That answers the second question, but the first one I would wait for the answer.

Mr. Imbert: You are not getting that information.

Dr. Gopeesingh: I cannot get that today?

Mr. Imbert: National Security.

Madam Chairman: Do I understand the Minister of Finance to say because of public policy reasons of a national security nature—

Mr. Imbert: Yes, Ma’am.

Madam Chairman:—that information cannot be made available?

Mr. Imbert: Yes, Ma’am. That is the Strategic Services Agency, the agency that Resmi Ramnarine was put to head at one point in time.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Is that the same agency where a guy called Vincent Clement had \$5million sitting aside to pay people to bring information?

Madam Chairman: Member for Caroni East, could we—*[Interruption]* I believe the response is that it is because of public policy, this is a matter of national security and therefore cannot be made available. I believe that is the answer that we have got.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: You cannot say how much is being spent for salaries and wages? That is what the question is. How much out of that \$100 million is for salaries and wages.

Mr. Imbert: National security.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Is that for public policy to protect—*[Interruption]* We are not asking whom or how many. How much is for salaries and wages.

Mr. Imbert: Did you ever provide that information when you—

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Did you ever ask for it?

Mr. Imbert: Yes, we did. Did you?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: You did not ask for it. Look, I am not speaking across the floor.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Minister of Finance, is the information going to be made—*[Crosstalk]* Hon. Minister of Finance, is the information going to be made available?

Mr. Imbert: No, Madam Chairman. This is a highly sensitive—

Madam Chairman: This is on the basis of public policy.

Mr. Imbert: This is a highly sensitive, probably the most sensitive intelligence agency in the country and to give that kind of information will compromise our national security system, and the Leader of the Opposition should know that.

Mr. Al-Rawi: And they answered that way when we asked them last year.

Mr. Imbert: And they answered just that way when we asked the same question last year.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Madam Chair, they asked for salaries in the past of the different people in the Strategic Services Agency—

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Of individuals.

Dr. Gopeesingh:—of individuals in that area. They did not think it difficult to ask that question and they hammered us for year after year on that same question and the answer was forthcoming to them. Why is it that they are reluctant now to give the answer to us, particularly of salaries? Are they paying somebody \$50 million per year, or are they paying somebody \$10 million per year? We are not asking who is the person—

Mr. Imbert: We paying them the same way you were paying them.

Dr. Gopeesingh:—but it is important for the country to know how the money is spent.

Madam Chairman: But if I understood the question, hon. Member for Caroni East, you did not even ask, as you are saying now, for a person. You asked for the total category of salaries and wages.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes. Even that is easier for them to answer.

Madam Chairman: And therefore the Government has said that it is a matter, based on public policy, national security reasons.

Mr. Imbert: We are paying the same people you were paying.

Dr. Gopeesingh: I am not comforted by that, Madam Chair.

Mr. Imbert: We have not made any changes.

Dr. Gopeesingh: It is no comfort to me.

Mr. Imbert: You should know.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: All right. Community Comfort Patrol. Can I move to Community Comfort Patrol?

Madam Chairman: So are we—I will take the Member for Oropouche East first before—

Dr. Moonilal: I will give way to the Member for Siparia.

Madam Chairman: So, Hon. Member for Siparia, we are at Item 23.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Thank you, Ma'am. If the Minister would kindly—[*Interruption*] if the others could kindly allow me to hear what the Minister's response would be with respect to the Community Comfort Patrol Programme of \$20 million, the new sub-item, how is this to be worked? And how many patrols are we looking at; what personnel; what numbers are we looking at? How will it work? Because it is a new sub-item.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: This is going to be reviewed right now. The Community Comfort Patrol will be reviewed right now for its effectiveness and efficiency and going forward we would know what kind of adjustments could be made.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: So whilst it is being reviewed, will it continue or will it be stopped.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: It will continue while it is being reviewed.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: So whilst it is continuing, how is it working continuing?

Mr. Imbert: The same way you had it working.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: There are no changes in how it is working.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: I have not asked if there is any change.

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: That is why the examination is how it is doing right now—

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: You have \$20 million—

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:—and to see its effectiveness and efficiency, and based on that examination, adjustments will be made.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: You may or may not change for the way forward, Minister?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: I do not know what the examination will reveal.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: But at the present you say it is continuing. So do we have 10 patrols, 20 patrols—

Mr. Imbert: It is the same way you left it!

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Madam Chair, through you—not the same way I left it.

7.50 p.m.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Members, the question is how it is going to be run, and I understand the answer to be that it is going to be continued to be operated in the same way until policy. Can we therefore ask in writing that we say how it operates currently? And again, that will be dealt as an assurance.

Dr. Gopeesingh: That is one. Number 21, National Security Training Academy. Is this the academy for the training of police officers, or is it a training for whom? And where is that—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Imbert: You were in Government?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes, but we want to know what you are doing. We are asking.

Mr. Imbert: You were sleeping for the—

Dr. Gopeesingh: No, no, no.

Madam Chairman: Okay. Please, Members. The question is National Security Training Academy, for whom does that institution—

Dr. Gopeesingh: Who are being trained in the academy; and how many are being trained?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: Provides training for Defence Force and the protected services. I do not have the numbers right now, but it provides training for both the Defence Force and the protected services.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Do they have one centre or many centres across the country?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: One centre.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Madam Chair, through you, I must object. The hon. Member for Diego Martin West is insisting you know, you know. There are Members in this Parliament who are new and do not know. There are Members in this Parliament who do not know, and I am making my duty to certainly—*[Crosstalk]*

Madam Chairman: Members. Members we are wasting precious time with respect to getting responses for this very important exercise. Hon. Minister of Finance, I share the view that while some Members here are extremely experienced and understand everything that is said, but even though the ones who are asking the questions may know the answer, it may also assist Members who do not even understand what the question is. So I will permit the question and I would ask if we could all be very respectful in giving the answers so that we can all benefit. Can we proceed?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Because the national population—

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, hon. Member for Caroni East. So we were asking the question and I believe the—

Dr. Gopeesingh: The amount of personnel who are doing the training; how many trainees are being trained on an annual basis; and all the other areas under Goods and Services.

Madam Chairman: And this is with respect to the National Security Training Academy? And I believe the hon. Minister of National Security gave an assurance that the information will be forthcoming in writing and we know—hon. Member for Caroni East, please—this is an assurance and it will be dealt with in a particular way.

Dr. Gopeesingh: I just want to include one thing, how much of it for salaries, particularly.

Madam Chairman: I think he understands, with the greatest respect, all that.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Madam Chair, I see today, we are six minutes to the hour and we will want to stop at eight, so do we proceed to Developmental Programme or do we leave the eight minutes to start tomorrow?

Madam Chairman: I would want to suggest having regard to our rate of progress that every minute counts. So I would suggest that we end at eight. Even if we took three more items, it will be three items less.

Dr. Gopeesingh: I have just one answer. Madam Chair, I have one question on the Draft Estimates of Expenditure under Head 22.

Madam Chairman: And could you assist us by referring to the page?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Page 149, it is cyber security?

Dr. Gopeesingh: No.

Madam Chairman: Page 149?

Dr. Gopeesingh: 149, yes.

Madam Chairman: We are not under Ministry of National Security?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Item 22.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Head 22.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Head 22.

Madam Chairman: 149—

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Page 92, Madam. Yes, page 92

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. So Members we are in the *Draft Estimates of Expenditure for the Financial Year 2016*. This book, page 92. [Madam Chairman displays book] Yes, hon. Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes. Cyber Security. Are they for personnel? That is a major important issue now.

Madam Chairman: Can I just ask for a little further guidance. I am really not seeing Cyber Security on page 92, Head 22. So we are at page 149—

Dr. Gopeesingh: Under Cyber Security Programme, 22, just before we close.

Madam Chairman: Cyber Security Programme, Sub-Item 22. Thank you.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Is that a functional unit with legal capabilities? We need to answer that question from the Attorney General. The Cyber Security Unit, does it have a legal capacity; and under what department the Cyber Security Unit comes? Yes, but police, who?

Mr. Al-Rawi: Hon. Minister—through you, Madam Chair, Member for Caroni East—forgive me, Madam Chair, old habits. Member for Caroni East, cyber security is an area of law that is actually manned by several entities. There is a Cyber Security Unit in the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and a Cyber Crime Unit that deals with some security aspects, but there is a Cyber Security Unit specifically in the Ministry of National Security.

In fact, that is something which is under review right now because we had been in default of some of our major international obligations. So that unit is the one that we are speaking about under national security as distinct from the Cyber Crime Unit and the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

Dr. Gopeesingh: So there is a differentiation. One looks at national security matters and one looks at police matters?

Mr. Al-Rawi: Crimes may be partly taken up by Cyber Security Unit, and as you would be aware there was a very large National Security Council, I believe some 17 Members in the past Government, wide association. But for the benefit of new Members, the National Security Council is in constant coordination and the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service report, as do the Ministry of National Security, to the National Security Council. So that if there is some degree of confluence between the Cyber Crime and the Cyber Security Units, those things are picked up at the National Security Council level.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Where does this one lie?

Mr. Al-Rawi: This particular one that we are dealing with, under this Head, under this Sub-Item, is under the Ministry of National Security.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: And what does it do then?

Mr. Al-Rawi: What does it do? This was a unit which was constructed under previous Government and, insofar as the Item Head came forward from the previous years, and this being a division which is to be reviewed in the overall architecture, it was seen fit to maintain what was in existence under the previous Government, and then to conduct the review and to come back with the efficiency matrix that may need to be applied. But there are international obligations which the Ministry of National Security has specific conduct of, and for, and the Ministry of National Security cannot just give it up specifically.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Okay. Thank you.

Dr. Moonilal: Could I ask in the 15 seconds remaining, Madam? The Cyber Security Programme under National Security—and I am speaking to the Minister of National Security—is this also under review as everything else that you are reviewing? And if it is, why did you increase it to \$177,000/\$178,000?

Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon: It is also being part of the review, but it is also an operational unit. In other words, there is the cyber security research team. So there are ongoing issues that they are dealing with. In fact, it is part of the International Telecommunication Union. There is a relationship there. We do have some equipment to purchase, even while we review; it is a functioning unit.

Madam Chairman: Members, I know it is eight o'clock and 42 seconds and we promised that we will be finished at eight o'clock, but we are not as yet finished. We have to set the table for tomorrow because we are still in the midst of National Security. We have the Development Programme to do.

We have understood and I think Tobago has already been communicated with that they will be taken first tomorrow. So I think there needs to be some agreement with respect to how we proceed tomorrow. So is it that we will take Tobago and then continue with the Development Programme for National Security. Yes?

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: We agree.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So are we going to therefore invite the Tobago House of Assembly, Ministry of National Security and the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. I would just wish to caution us, we have five days to get this done.

Appropriation Bill, 2015

Wednesday, October 14, 2015

Dr. Moonilal: If the Member for Diego Martin North/East restrains himself, we will complete it.

Madam Speaker: Members, I think—

Mr. Imbert: You are referring to the Minister of Finance whose estimates these are?

Madam Chairman: While we all—[*Interruption*]

Madam Chairman: Excuse me, please.

Mr. Imbert: You got to be kidding.

Madam Chairman: Excuse me please. While we all need a little relief, I think good manners begets good manners; tolerance begets tolerance. On that note, it is 8.02 p.m. and I therefore suspend this Standing Finance Committee meeting for tomorrow, which is Thursday, October 15, 2015 at 1.30 p.m. Thank you very much.

8.02 p.m.: *Standing Finance Committee suspended.*