



REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

# Debates of the House of Representatives

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**OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)**

THE HONOURABLE BRIDGID ANNISETTE-GEORGE  
SPEAKER

THE HONOURABLE ESMOND FORDE  
DEPUTY SPEAKER

**Thursday 15th October, 2015**

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## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 15, 2015*

## APPROPRIATION (FINANCIAL YEAR 2016) BILL, 2015

[Sixth Day]

*The Standing Finance Committee (Second Day) of the whole House resumed its deliberations on the Bill and Estimates.*

[Chairman: Mrs. Annette-George]

**1.30 p.m.**

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Members, good afternoon and we are going to resume the Standing Finance Committee meeting. I believe we had determined we would start with the Tobago House of Assembly, and I would like to say that having regard to our pace yesterday, I would want to suggest that we determine up to seven on the order which is Head—so up to Head 02 today. In your order, we will complete up to number seven in your order which will carry us up to Head 02.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Madam Chair, to you, I did have a brief word with the Leader of Government Business on that matter and as I indicated, from our experience last year as well, where several of us participated, there are a few Ministries that would take much, much more time, but there are several agencies, Ministries and so on, that one can get over in 15 minutes, 20 minutes, as our experience last year showed.

So that if you give yourself a number per day, it may include Ministries that would not take a long time. Also, it may include the bigger ones where there will be much more query. So that instead of setting it up with numbers, I suspect that we can continue particularly with the big ones and then work out the others. But I would prefer not to mark it by number that way because then you may crush something that is big and you really want to focus an investigation on.

**Madam Chairman:** Well, I think, hon. Member of Oropouche East, you sort of anticipated me because I was going to say item seven or midnight, whichever is the later.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Madam, we also have an arrangement with the Government that we will finish at 8.00 so I do not know if you would also—

**Madam Chairman:** Well, the thing about it is, while I respect all arrangements and I believe it is “you all” House, we have a process to manage and with all due respect to everybody, I do not think we managed it very well yesterday and therefore, in light of that, with everything in life, sometimes we have to make some adjustments and the adjustments sometimes we have to make are harsh ones. But let us see—yes, Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Imbert:** Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. I am sorry to interrupt, thank you very much. Last year, as far as I can recall, was the first time we examined the estimates under the new system and your predecessor had made the point that we have five days to complete approximately 50 Heads and had said upfront that he was going to do 10 Heads a day in order to get through the 50. So that these issues, Madam Chairman, have already been well ventilated in this Chamber and your predecessor, I think, adopted the correct approach that we should try to get through 10 Heads a day.

Otherwise, we will reach the fifth day, we would have only done five out of 50 Heads, and then we reach the situation where the other 45 would have to be done in five minutes. So that I would suggest that—you are absolutely right, Madam Chairman, we need to be flexible of course, and we need to also be cognizant of the fact that if we spend too long on one Head, it will leave no time for other Heads which could be equally important. So we should really try to do 10 per day. And since we only did three-quarter of one yesterday, we now probably have to do 12 a day between now and the end.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay, so I believe we can start. I believe the Head we are going to consider is the Tobago House of Assembly, Head 15.

*Head 15.*

*Question proposed:* That Head 15 stand part of the Schedule.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Members, the sum of \$2,748,800,000 for Head 15, the Tobago House of Assembly is comprised of moneys proposed for expenditure under the following Sub-Heads and Items to be found in the *Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure* and the *Draft Estimates of Development Programme*.

So we move to Sub-Head 06, Current Transfers to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies, division 01, Assembly Legislature, Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Yes, Madam Chairman, thank you very much. On the Sub-Item 01, Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance, you have an estimate of \$9.3 billion. The revised estimate for 2015—was it \$8.6 billion?

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Oropouche East, might I ask? We are on page 11 of the *Draft Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of the Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies and the Tobago House of Assembly*. We are at page 11.

**Dr. Moonilal:** You are not on recurrent expenditure? We started with that first yesterday.

**Hon. Imbert:** This is recurrent expenditure. Page 11.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Under recurrent expenditure, you have Tobago House of Assembly at page 58.

**Hon. Imbert:** No, no, you are looking at the wrong thing. Revenue and expenditure THA.

**Dr. Moonilal:** So it is not in the—

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Members, the correct book is Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies of the Tobago House of Assembly. So we are at page 11, Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Madam Chair, we also have the Tobago House of Assembly on the Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure; the other book that we were using yesterday. So which one are we going to start with? This one? On page 11.

**Madam Chairman:** We are on Head 15, hon. Member for Caroni East, page 11.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** All right.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Yes, Madam Chairman. I just wanted to get an understanding on when I say the figure, we would be very clear on where we are. Page 11, you have for General Administration for Personnel Expenditure, an actual in 2014 of 3.9 and you have an estimate for 2016 of 5.2. What would account for that increase when the revised estimate in 2015 was 4? So you have an increase of \$1.2 million for Personnel Expenditure.

**Hon. Imbert:** In similar fashion to the other Heads we examined yesterday, this would be a combination of arrears of salary, increase in salaries and other factors and I will provide that information to the Member. Similarly as to the undertaking I gave yesterday, in due course, it will be provided.

**Madam Chairman:** Can I just remind Members? And it may have escaped us. I believe the undertaking of the hon. Minister of Finance, when it came to Personnel Expenditure, is a blanket undertaking.

**Hon. Imbert:** Across the board for every single entity. So it would be provided for every single entity.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Madam Chairman, I just want to look at—I know we are going into the details of the expenditure here but the summary of it is on page 10 of the book which shows the Government's subvention to the Tobago House of Assembly, what was in 2014, 1.948; what was in 2015, the revised estimate, 2.102, and the estimate for 2016 which is 2.345, showing an increase of \$242,384,000. I just want to get—are we going to see the details of that expenditure of \$2.345 billion in the pages 11 to whatever in the Tobago House of Assembly?

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member, I think, in terms of adjusting, we have to learn from what we have done before. I would suggest that the decision be that we examine the details and not the summary.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Well, I just wanted to make mention of the summary of—there is an increase of \$242 million.

**Madam Chairman:** Well, hon. Member for Caroni East, if we understand that, it means that when we come to the details, your point will be taken.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Well, as you said yesterday, it is important for the general public to know that. We see it in the book but remember we are speaking to the national audience as well and they would not see it in our book.

**Madam Chairman:** I understand that.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** So it is important for us to mention that they have an increase of \$242 million for the THA.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Caroni East, sorry to cut you off but I think we have made a decision on how we would proceed.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** No, I am finished. I am finished with that.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Chaguanas West.

**Hon. Imbert:** Madam Chairman, can I just make a very brief intervention? In keeping with established practice, the details of the estimates will be published online on the Ministry's website so the public will be able to avail themselves of every single document that is being submitted to hon. Members.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** That does not negate and exclude.

**Madam Chairman:** Members, can I please proceed with this exercise?



**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Sure.

**Mr. Singh:** Thank you, Madam Chair, I just wanted to be reminded of the undertaking given by the Minister of Finance and whether it includes the number of employees, monthly paid and daily paid, because I would want a listing of that with respect to the Tobago House of Assembly.

**Hon. Imbert:** No problem at all. The undertaking given was with respect to an explanation for the increase in Personnel Expenditure, but if you are asking for the number of employees separated into monthly paid and daily paid, that information will be provided to you, as you have requested for the Tobago House of Assembly.

**Mr. Singh:** Thank you.

**Hon. Imbert:** Actually, to save time, the accounting officer has told me that there are 2,206 public servants, 8,922 daily-rated workers, 1,706 contract workers and 231 persons on short-term contracts in the Tobago House of Assembly. *[Interruption]* 231 persons on short-term contracts; 1,706 on long-term contracts; 8,922 daily-rated and 2,206 public servants.

**Madam Chairman:** Can we go on to Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Just a quick query. I mean, I remember the injunction of the hon. Prime Minister as it relates to overseas travel and the new policy-thinking on restricting overseas travel. I am seeing here an increase by almost 40 per cent or more—could be more—for Official Overseas Travel at Sub-Item 27. Would the THA be also under the guidance of the hon. Prime Minister's injunction?

**Hon. Imbert:** The answer is yes, and if you look at the original 2015 estimate, it was \$500,000. And in fact, the THA, according to this document, exercised prudent fiscal management and only used up \$100,000 of the \$500,000 allocated to it. *[Interruption]* Hold on. Since it is the Ministry of Finance who has done these estimates, we have put back a figure of 425 but I can assure you that during the fiscal year, we will monitor this and we will make—not make—we will ensure that only those trips that are necessary will be made in an attempt to save as much public funds as we can.

**1.45 p.m.**

**Dr. Moonilal:** Madam Chairman, just for the record, I want it to be very clear, as the Minister is, that the 2015 accounts have not been closed, so anything for 2015 is the revised estimates.

**Hon. Imbert:** Yes, of course.

**Dr. Moonilal:** So that when the Member speak about reduction and so on that is the revised, okay, for the record.

**Hon. Imbert:** Of course, that is what it says.

**Dr. Moonilal:** That is not what you said.

**Mr. Singh:** Madam Chair, a derivative of the policy statement made by the hon. Minister of Finance, how is that going to be working in light of the autonomy of the Tobago House of Assembly?

**Dr. Tewarie:** I would like to follow that up.

**Hon. Imbert:** We have an excellent relationship.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Madam Chair, I know that the procedure we are following in this instance of the Tobago House of Assembly is that the Minister of Finance answers and I know that, on the last occasion when we had the Finance Committee, the Chair of the Tobago House of Assembly was not present either. I wanted to know what was the relationship of accountability in financial matters, with regard to the Tobago House of Assembly and the Parliament of this country? I just wanted some clarification. I am not challenging any decisions that have been made or any course that we are pursuing.

The second matter is really to reinforce the question asked by the Member for Chaguanas West, when the Minister of Finance indicates that he intends to control X or Y under the budget of the House of Assembly. I find these two things quite—I am disturbed by them really.

**Hon. Imbert:** With your permission, Madam Chairman, just let me offer some elucidation. There are number of Heads where there is no Minister. You would see Judiciary, Auditor General, THA, Parliament, et cetera, and in each one of those, I think there are about 15 of them, the Minister who would respond will be me, the Minister of Finance, and that is the established procedure in the Finance Committee now for about 40 years. So that this is why I would respond on behalf of the Tobago House of Assembly. I would also respond on behalf of the Parliament, et cetera, et cetera, because only Members of Parliament can speak in this House and I am the only Member of Parliament who can speak on behalf of these entities.

With respect to that other matter about the financial accountability between THA and Ministry of Finance, I will send you a response in writing.

**Madam Chairman:** Can we now move on to Head 03: Minor Equipment Purchases? Head 04: Current Transfers and Subsidies.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Under minor equipment practices there is a drop in the office equipment, significant. I just wanted to take note of it. There is some strange decreasing and if there would be explanations you do not anticipate that in 2016, you will purchasing anything at all to maintain office and so on, equipment?

**Hon. Imbert:** Okay. If you look closely, you will see the original allocation in 2015 for office equipment was \$42,000. That increased to \$90,000, I guess because of the exigencies of the situation in the House of Assembly. So what we have done is simply restored the original allocation in 2015/2016. So you would see \$42,000 original, \$90,000 revised. We are back to \$42,000.

**Madam Chairman:** Can we go on to current?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** No.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Caroni East, are we in Sub-Head 04 because that is where the committee is right now?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** No, no, no, Madam Chair. I needed to speak to 02, which is the—

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for—*[Interruption]*

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Madam Chair, you skipped that. That did not—*[Interruption]*

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Caroni East, I called 01, 02, 03. We are now in Head 04: Current Transfers and Subsidies and I would like to remind Members, there are several other opportunities that we have, as Members of Parliament, with respect to these figures. There are several other opportunities.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Would you be kind enough to allow me the privilege of just asking one question on 02?

**Madam Chairman:** I would really ask, please, hon. Member for Caroni East, that we deal with Sub-Head 04: Current Transfers and Subsidies. I would really like us to get on with that.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** So, even though I have a question on 02?

**Madam Chairman:** And I am also saying that there are other opportunities for your questions to be ventilated and answered.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** So we could come back to the end and refer back to that?

**Madam Chairman:** No. You know that there are other opportunities. Sub-Head 04: Current Transfers and Subsidies. Division 2, Office of the Chief

Secretary, Sub-Head 01: Personnel Expenditure. And I would say that the assurance given applies here of the Minister of Finance. Sub-Head 02: Goods and Services.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** No, no, 01: Personnel Expenditure on page 13. I have a question on that. The revised estimate in 2015 is \$120,553,000 and the estimate in 2016 is \$12 million, a decrease of \$107 million. Could we have an explanation of Personnel Expenditure coming down from \$120 million? It was estimated in 2015 to be \$10.9 million. It went up to \$120 million. We need some explanation from the THA. Is that a typographical error or did it really go up from \$10 million to \$120 million? And now this year the estimate is \$12 million. So if it were \$120 million, what would have caused this astronomical increase in the Personnel Expenditure by \$110 million in 2015 and now decreasing back again in 2016, to \$12 million?

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Caroni East, is your question simply if it is a typographical error?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** No, I am asking if—I would expect no typographical errors here.

**Madam Chairman:** All right, and, therefore I would want to suggest that if you accept it is not a typographical error, it is covered by the blanket assurance to give reasons for the increase or decrease in salary and COLA.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** No, no, no, Madam Chair. We are asking that question now. The Personnel Expenditure increase is \$10 million in 2015 from what was the original estimate.

**Hon. Imbert:** Madam Chairman, I can answer the question rather than spend an hour on this one point.

**Madam Chairman:** Go ahead and answer, Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Imbert:** Previously arrears of salary was funded under this vote. Arrears of salary are no longer funded under this vote. So what you are seeing here is pure Personnel Expenditure.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Minister of Finance, the \$120 million that was spent in 2015, included possibly about \$110 million for arrears in salaries? If you subtract the \$10 million, is that a back pay and a back pay for what negotiation or where?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Would you pay \$110 million in back pay in a year?

**Hon. Imbert:** We would write you.

**Dr. Moonilal:** What?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** You would what?

**Hon. Imbert:** I would put it in writing.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Members, and this is the suggestion. The details that a question like this requires—it would be best answered in writing, and the assurance, just for our recollection, is not just only for reasons for increase and decrease of salary and COLA, it is also the reasons for the increase in settlement of arrears, the number of persons who were employed prior to September 07, 2105 and the number of persons employed from September 08, 2015 to October 05. That is the assurance.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Madam Chairman, I just want to make an observation. Now, I understand the practice—which I support—that every time we see Personnel Expenditure, salaries, the Minister has an undertaking inherent that he will give an explanation.

Madam Chairman, this is a public Standing Finance Committee exercise, in which we raise certain questions for the benefit of ourselves but also for the national community. May I say that when we come across things like these, where you have a dramatic increase from \$10 million to \$120 million, we just cannot simply say okay, we will explain it in writing through the normal practice, which we adopt, but we may be allowed to just elaborate for a few moments on such matters because it is not every headline we are seeing these type of increases. This is dramatic and I would just crave your indulgence to raise the matter publicly, knowing that it is also captured by our ditto rule.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay, so that if I understand all you are asking is that it be expressed?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Expressed.

**Madam Chairman:** All right and that it will be covered.

**Dr. Moonilal:** But it is very dramatic that increase of \$110 million in one year.

**Madam Chairman:** So we accept that this will be covered by a written answer.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Yes, sure.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Madam Chair, this is an essential principled issue that I want to raise and the issue is that this is a Finance Committee that is aired by television to the general public. When that answer is brought to us in four days' time from now or three days, whatever, in writing. The general public is robbed of that information

as to what the issue is, what caused this \$110 million increase. So it makes the effort of the Finance Committee null and void because we could have had a closed Finance Committee meeting the general public would not have known about it. But this went through the European Bank Development Programme to give effort to make this thing very transparent and what we are doing here is a cover up, under the auspices of that it will be given—[*Interruption*]

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

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** No, no.

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

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** No, no, no, no.

**Madam Chairman:** I would suggest that you use another word.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** All right.

**Madam Chairman:** All right? Because and may I?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** It is less than transparent.

**Madam Chairman:** May I be permitted? We run the risk, while on the one hand we may not be in a position to delve in great detail with everyone, we also run the risk of reaching the five-day limit and having not examined many. So that is the balance we are trying to take. And maybe you might want to suggest that when the answers are circulated something else be done with them, which most probably can be entertained. But I would not sit here and allow us—all the tedious work that is being done by all Members here—to be termed “a cover up”.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Well Madam Chair, this is \$110 million of expenditure by the THA in one year.

**Hon. Imbert:** Under the UNC Government.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Caroni East—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** What under the UNC?

**Madam Chairman:** Excuse me, Members, Members, Members. I think we have dealt extensively enough with this point. We have an assurance that the—  
[*Interruption*]

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** As a Member of this Standing Finance Committee, I am not satisfied with the explanation.

**Madam Chairman:** And I understand.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** I want to indicate that.

**Madam Chairman:** I understand that, hon. Member for Caroni East. Can I move on?

**Mr. Al-Rawi:** Madam Chair, just in terms of guidance, I just wish to put on the record, I tracked last year's Finance Committee with great interest and detail. The then Government responded to the vast majority of enquiries in writing. It took them months to produce the information. Some is as yet outstanding. This, therefore, stands as a precedent established by the last UNC administration and it was deemed apposite to the efficient operation of the Finance Committee by ruling of the Speaker then that that was in fact the process. So I am very alarmed that my learned colleagues would now wish to put on to the record this opinion and view as to something which has been established by them. I just wanted to put that on the record.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Madam Chair, this is not an establishment.

**Madam Chairman:** Members, I would really want to suggest that we move on.

**Dr. Moonilal:** We cannot respond to that observation.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Oropouche East, this is a new Parliament. I am not going back to 2015, outside of what we are dealing with in these books. Okay? Can we move on, please?

Division 2: Office of the Chief Secretary, Sub-Head 01: Personnel Expenditure and we determined how we are dealing with that. Sub-Head 02: Goods and Services.

**Mr. Singh:** Madam Chair, I just wanted to deal on Sub-Head 1: Vacant Posts, Salaries and COLA. I just want to have an appreciation of the number of vacant posts and, if they can be listed. Because having regard to the fact that, based on the numbers given by the hon. Minister of Finance, we have something close to 12,000 persons employed by the THA. I would like to really find out of what are the vacant posts.

**Hon. Imbert:** Certainly and it is actually just over 10,000. You would get that in writing.

**2.00 p.m.**

**Madam Chairman:** Okay. So we are in Sub-Head 02, Good and Services, Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases; *[Interruption]* 14, hon. Member. Can we go on to Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies?

**Mr. Singh:** No, no, no, no, you are moving too fast, Madam Chair. I mean, I understand your need for speed. However, I want to look at 02 Goods and Services, No. 22, Short-Term Employment.

**Madam Chairman:** What I would like to advise—

**Mr. Singh:** Page 14.

**Madam Chairman:** Might I just say this to cover our deliberations. If Members could really, please to facilitate us going forward, mark ahead what they would like to raise, so that when we reach to it—because once I look around and I do not see anybody, I take it as an indication that we have passed it. So, and please, again, to ensure that we move ahead I would like that we will deal with finality with one Sub-Head before we go on to another. All right? So we are at, hon. Member for Chaguanas West.

**Mr. Singh:** Yes, Madam Chair. Sub-Item 22 on page 14, Short-Term Employment, there is an increase of \$300,000. In light of the significant employment in—the Short-Term Employment I am dealing with, could the hon. Minister indicate what is the purpose of that Short-Term Employment? And how many persons would be provided with that opportunity for Short-Term Employment?

**Hon. Imbert:** Certainly, you will get that in writing. However, just to clarify a point. If you look at the original allocations for 2015 it was \$800,000. So we had simply restored a similar allocation in 2016, but you will get the information about the purpose and details of the employment.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Madam Chair, 16 Contract Employment. We are dealing with the Office of the Chief Secretary. Is it possible they can give some elucidation on the issues of the contracts that will amount to \$10 million which is an increase of \$1.3 million in the Office of the Chief Secretary on contract employment?

**Madam Chairman:** So that is Item 16?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** 16.

**Hon. Imbert:** Same assurance. You will get it in writing.

**Mr. Charles:** Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. Sub-Item 17, I see a continuing reduction in human resource development, with a reduction in training; \$275,000. At the same time I will like to raise at 62, in the context of alleged over expenditure in past promotions and publicity, I see an increase of \$2.3 million in promotions and publicity.



**Hon. Imbert:** The first one, what was the item of the first one?

**Madam Chairman:** Sub-Item 17 Training.

**Hon. Imbert:** Okay. 17, okay. If you look closely you will see the original allocation in 2015 for Training was \$200,000 which was then increased to \$475,000 during the year, again, because of the demands during the year. We have restored the original allocation of \$200,000. And 62, again, if you look at the original allocation in 2015, it was \$2.5 million, and clearly through very prudent management THA only spent \$200,000. So we have restored the \$2.5 million allocation.

**Mr. Charles:** But, Chairman, in 2015 there were different economic circumstances. With the current straitened circumstances in which we are, it is in my view, not fair to compare apples and oranges.

**Hon. Imbert:** Point noted.

**Mr. Singh:** Madam Chair, I am looking at Sub-Item 28 Other Contracted Services. I see that there is a decrease of \$1 million. I just wanted to know in light of the fact that the audited statements of the THA dates back to 2007, and we are in 2015/2016 budget, should not an allocation be made for those services to be contracted out in order to bring the transparent, value for money approach being taken by the policy position of the Government?

**Hon. Imbert:** I would just make two points here: that again, look at the original allocation. It was \$1 million. It went up to \$2 million and we have put it back to the original allocation. It is the Auditor General's responsibility to audit the books of the THA not the THA. It does not audit itself. So that point, which is a very good suggestion, really requires additional funding for the Auditor General's Office. So I would certainly take note of that.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Just following on that note from the Minister of Finance. When was the last audited accounts of the THA?

**Hon. Imbert:** I do not know. I will get that in writing for you.

**Dr. Moonilal:** You do not know.

**Mr. Singh:** Perhaps I can lend some assistance.

**Hon. Imbert:** I was not there last year.

**Mr. Singh:** I can lend some assistance. The last audited statement of the Auditor General on the THA was 2007.

**Hon. Imbert:** That is a merely anecdotal statement. I will get the information. I will provide you with it.

**Mr. Singh:** No, no, no. That is fact.

**Madam Chairman:** Members, please? The response will come in writing.

**Dr. Moonilal:** I have not finished.

**Madam Chairman:** I will come back to you.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Madam Chair, we are looking here at General Administration, Goods and Services, and you had expenses for Promotions, Publicity and Printing, and then you have information here, you have Promotions, Publicity and Printing. So each one of the areas it would seem has a line item for Promotions, Publicity and Printing.

Information has a line item, No. 62 on page 15 which we are dealing with of \$4.5 million and similarly there was one in 62, under General Administration for promotions/publicity for \$2.5 million. So it would seem as though each one of the various Sub-Heads carrying a promotions, publicity and advertising. Because when we look at page 14 and Item No. 62, we have \$2.5 million there for General Administration, and then No. 62 again, under Information, which is \$4.5 million. So where are we, each department having its own promotions, publicity and advertising?

**Hon. Imbert:** Yes. If you look in the estimates, you will see you approved that same procedure last year for 2015. Look at what you did last year, it was same thing.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Finance, is the response that this is the standard way that the estimates—

**Hon. Imbert:** Yes Ma'am.

**Madam Chairman:** Can we move on? [*Crosstalk*]

**Dr. Moonilal:** Could the Minister, if he would stop his crosstalk. Could the Minister also undertake to give us an explanation as to why the Office of Chief Secretary in 2016 is about to spend to spend \$4.5 million on promotions, publicity and printing—

**Hon. Imbert:** Tell me what line you think that is?

**Dr. Moonilal:**—that is the Office of the Chief Secretary.

**Hon. Imbert:** What line item, please?

**Dr. Moonilal:** 62, page 15. I would just like to have an idea of the Office of the Chief Secretary, what they do for Promotions, Publicity and Printing that would cost \$4.5 million?

**Hon. Imbert:** No, but that is the same point brought up by your hon. colleague, that there is a line item for promotions and publicity under Information, and it is all the Office of the Chief Secretary. There is a line item—[*Crosstalk*]—Madam Chairman, could I answer without a barrage of crosstalk? There is a line item on page 15 for promotions and publicity, and there is also a line item on page 14 for promotions and publicity. If you wish to know why that is so, and what it is for, I will provide that answer in writing.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay. Can we, therefore, go on to Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases? Moving on the Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies; Division 03.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Which page are you on now?

**Madam Chairman:** We are starting on page 17, that is where the Minor Equipment and Purchases—we have passed that, and we are now going to Current Transfers and Subsidies, which starts on page 18. And we are now moving to Division 03, Finance and Enterprise Development, which starts on page 20, Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure. Again, we remind the hon. Minister of Finance of his assurance.

**Hon. Imbert:** Actually, Madam Chairman, I think the whole thing was captured at the front, but I will certainly check that first, and make sure that that is so. If it is now, we will do it Item by Item, Sub-Head by Sub-Head.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you very much. Can we therefore now go on to Head 02, Goods and Services which is at page 21? Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases, which is at page 28.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** You are moving from 21 to 28, Madam Chair?

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Caroni East, you know, I guess maybe we might be all having a little challenge with the paper. I am calling the Sub-Heads. Some Sub-Heads take up half a page, some take up more, and that is why I asked if Members can flag their issues ahead, which will allow us to move with a little—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** But with that alacrity from 21 to 28, Madam Chair?  
[*Crosstalk*]

**Madam Chairman:** Please Members, we are going by the Sub-Heads and not page by page. So therefore, Member for Caroni East, if you had an issue at page 26, I will take it.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Okay.

**Mr. Charles:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Question on page 25.

**Madam Chairman:** We are at Minor—

**Mr. Charles:** We passed there, but you see there was a jump.

**Madam Chairman:** Excuse me, we are at Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases.

**Mr. Charles:** Okay.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay? Which is at page 28. It begins, and maybe I am misleading by saying “which is” and which I should say “which begins”. Can we then go on to Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies which begins at page 31?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Madam Chair, 009, Other Transfers, No. 16, Studley Park Escrow Account. An escrow account, the revised estimate—first of all, what is that escrow account about; Studley Park Escrow Account of 20—revised estimate in 2015 was \$8.4 million; an estimate for 2016, an increase of \$11.578 million. Could we get an understanding of what that the Studley Park account is about?

**Hon. Imbert:** We will try and find out in the next couple minutes. It may very well be a loan. There was a loan from one of the commercial banks. We will find out for you and if we cannot find out in the next couple minutes, you will get it in writing.

**Madam Chairman:** So the response to this is, deferred.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** No, Madam Chair, I have another question. Is that part of the escrow account that the THA has in its bank from year to year that they draw down money from, and they do not account to the national Parliament? We understand that there are millions of dollars in an escrow account that the THA has which they do not account to Parliament for, for a number of years.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Caroni East, if we defer the question I am sure the hon. Minister as he said will come back with the answer. If not, we will get it in writing. Anything else on—

**Dr. Moonilal:** Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. Just a simple question, and they can supply the answer at a later time. The Eco Industrial Company of Tobago, could I have just a listing of the Members, the directors of the company?

**Hon. Imbert:** We will get that for you in writing.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Sure. Thank you.

**Mr. Singh:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am just interested in Item 15, the Interest on Project Financing Repayment, what are those projects and what is the interest associated with those projects?

**Hon. Imbert:** You will get that in writing. I cannot give you that now.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay. Can we move on?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Everything is in writing?

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Caroni East, I really do not think that is a fair answer. I believe we got some answers yesterday and today.

**2.15 p.m.**

**Dr. Moonilal:** With a second company—a Fishing Processing Company of Tobago—again, if I could just have the membership of this company directors and what it was established for. Also that would hold for the Eco Industrial Company of Tobago as well, what it was established for and who are the directors of the company.

**Hon. Imbert:** Well, I think your colleague asked for the directors, so I would do that in both cases. You want the purpose and the directors.

**Mr. Singh:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The Milford Road Esplanade, I know that is a very good project, but I saw there is a reduction in the allocation. Is there a reason why? Is it complete?

**Hon. Imbert:** It is almost finished.

**Madam Chairman:** Can we move on, Division 05—Tourism and Transportation. We are commencing at page 32.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** We are with you, Madam Chair.

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

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** No, no, I said we are with you.

**Madam Chairman:** You are with me? Okay. So can we go to Sub-Head 01, which is Personnel Expenditure, and bind the hon. Minister of Finance to his assurance.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** The increase of 1.5.

**Madam Chairman:** Yes. Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services, page 33. It really starts at page 32.

**Dr. Moonilal:** It starts there but, Madam Chair, again, because as you clearly said, they would start but it takes several pages, and for interest of time, you are not going to go page by page.

**Madam Chairman:** Unless you direct me to a page.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Yeah, this is what I prefer to do, because it may well be I would ask a question and somebody will take you back, but I want to ask fast before you move on, because you are not going by page.

**Madam Chairman:** What I would say, hon. Member for Oropouche East, once it is within the Head that we are dealing with.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Then I ask.

**Madam Chairman:** Yes.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Okay. I am on page 34. There is a significant drop over the years here and it is very significant from 2014, Promotions, Publicity and Printing. There is a decrease of effectively \$8.2 million. Now, it appears clearly, Madam Chairman, that 2015 was a very special year for the Tobago House of Assembly, because all the estimates went up, and then were revised down for 2016. So in 2015 you are seeing \$26 million for what is called Promotion, Publicity and Printing. There may have been a lot of that in 2015, but this has been curtailed by \$8.2 million. Could I have some explanation as to why this cut in Promotions, Publicity and Printing or why such a huge sum in the first place in 2015?

**Hon. Imbert:** Firstly, if you go back to the 2015 original estimate, it was \$18 million, so you have simply restored the original estimate. Secondly, this is the Tourism Division of the Tobago House of Assembly, and if you do visit Tobago from time to time you would be aware that Tobago is a tourism economy and, therefore, Promotions, Publicity and Printing would have fundamental importance to the development of the Tobago economy and for the functioning of this division. That is why there is a substantial allocation for the Tourism Division.

**Dr. Moonilal:** I am asking why the decrease. Is it that you are not going to do—

**Hon. Imbert:** It is not a decrease. If you look at the 2015 estimates, the original allocation was \$18 million and we have simply restored it. As you know Minister, former Minister, the Tobago House of Assembly gets its funds en bloc and it has the authority with the approval of the appropriate authority to move funds around. So if the Tobago House of Assembly in its wisdom felt because of airlines pulling out or whatever reason that they wanted to spend more money on promotion of tourism in 2015, I do not think we should begrudge them that. We have simply restored the original allocation, and if during the year the THA is of the view that they wish to spend more money on promotion, they would simply make the appropriate application to the appropriate authority which would be considered favourably.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Madam Chairman, just following up on it.

**Madam Chairman:** I know, but I believe we should lend way to the hon. Member for Naparima.

**Dr. Moonilal:** We would lose the point at hand that is hard to come back to.

**Madam Chairman:** Please.

**Mr. Charles:** Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. I am looking at Item 17 on page 35, Tourism and Transport, and I see again a continuing decrease in the allocation for training. I have learnt that the human resource development and human resources are the most critical resource that a nation could have. Is it possible we could get a sense of what the human resource development policy is in the THA so that we could contextualize the continuous decrease in allocation after allocation?

**Hon. Imbert:** The first answer to the second question is yes, and to correct the record there has not been a continuous decrease. Look at the 2014 expenditure. It was \$510,000 and the allocation for 2016 is \$600,000, so it is only in 2015 that there was an increase. But if you look at it over the years, the 2016 allocation is, in fact, more than the 2014 allocation. I would get an answer to your question about the policy and we will put that in writing.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Madam Chairman, I was just following up on that same matter. You see, I took note that in 2014 the actual figure was about \$22 million and it is now down to \$18 million which is \$4 million less—62 page 34. I took note that even the \$18 million provided for now is less than the \$22 million used in 2014. What would be the reason for that? Having said that, I leave it there.

**Hon. Imbert:** Are you asking the question?

**Dr. Moonilal:** I asked you: what was the reason why you drop this so suddenly?

**Hon. Imbert:** I am going to answer you. Do not ask a question and run.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Members, please. Do you have an answer, Minister of Finance?

**Hon. Imbert:** Yes, I have an answer and would really prefer if Members did not ask and answer questions themselves. I made the point that the original allocation in 2015 was \$18 million. The THA decided that because of the demands being placed on tourism to increase the funding of that Item from \$18 million to \$26 million. We have restored the original allocation of \$18 million and I said that if the THA is of the view that they need to spend more money promoting tourism in 2016, I will consider favourably a request from them to move funds around to increase that item in the same way that they did in 2015. Now, I cannot get clearer than that.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** I know you are trying to expedite this, Madam Chair, if my colleagues do not have any questions on page 35, I would move to page 36.

**Madam Chairman:** I really understand you are assisting me, I appreciate, in us moving forward. So we are now on Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases. Yes, hon. Member for Caroni East.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** May I draw your attention to 009, Other Transfers, No. 13, Rolling Three-Year Tourism Plan.

**Madam Chairman:** So, there are no questions on Head 03, Minor Equipment and, therefore, we are on Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies. That is where you are hon. Member.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Yes. At Sub-Head 009, Other Transfers and Sub-Item 13, it is a Rolling Three-Year Tourism Plan of course, which is \$100 million now. Well, of course, 2015 estimate was \$100 million which I do not have any difficulty, but you are now putting back the \$37 million addition. You have spent \$62 million last year to the THA in the revised estimates, and it is back to \$100 million. Just kindly give us a little explanation of your rationale for your three-year tourism plan.

Can I link a question on Item 17 which is the Tobago Tourism Festival, an expenditure estimate of \$10 million? Is that part of the —what does the three-year tourism plan and how this Item 17 links with that? Is it a plan that you are spending \$100 million on or there are areas within the plan that you are implementing?



**Hon. Imbert:** I am advised, I really hate that phrase, but I am advised that the tourism plan includes the relationship between the THA and the airlines where you have to pay the airlines for airlift among other things, because if you do not have airlift well, of course, you will have no tourism. The tourism festivals are things like the Jazz Festival and so on. So, there would be a link, of course, that if you are trying to get tourists to come to Tobago, obviously you would have to have events on the island in addition to the natural fauna and flora and the beach and that sort of thing. You would also have events that you would want to attract the tourist to. So, there is a link of some kind, but this plan includes the payment for airlift among other things.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Can we get an idea? Your colleague is there from Tobago. How much we paid out of that \$100 million for airline?

**Hon. Imbert:** No problem, you will get that in writing.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** You do not have that answer now.

**Hon. Imbert:** No.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Again, I just want to ask the question as it relates to page 36. I am at 17, Tobago Tourism Festivals. In 2014, \$12.7 million spent; estimate 2015, \$10 million. But the revised estimate was \$18 million an \$8 million increase over the provision in the estimates. But it returns now to \$10 million. Is there a reduction in the amount of festivals with the scope of these festivals that were very big in 2015, but expected to be much smaller in scope in 2016?

**Hon. Imbert:** Madam Chairman, I am going to ask for your—I do not know what word to use—indulgence. The Member keeps asking the same question over and over in a different way, and the answer is the same. If you look at the original allocation for 2015, it was \$10 million, so we have simply restored the original allocation for 2015 in 2016. If the THA, in consideration of all its needs and requirements is of the view that it needs to spend more money on festivals in 2016, then it will move funds around and make the appropriate adjustments with the approval of the relevant authority.

**Dr. Moonilal:** We know all of that, but why did it increase, we do not know.

**Hon. Imbert:** I am speaking. We are not prejudging.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Well just say you do not know.

**Hon. Imbert:** Madam Speaker, could I speak without being interrupted by the hon. Member? We are not prejudging what they wish to do, we are restoring the allocation of 2015. If they decide they wish to increase it, there is a procedure for that. Please do not ask me the same question over and over.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Finance. [*Crosstalk*] One minute. Do I understand the information to be that there is a blanket figure given to the THA? It is allocated among different Heads and Sub-Heads and the THA by their constituent statute and documents has the ability to move this sum—this blanket sum—through the various Sub-Heads as at which and when they require.

**Hon. Imbert:** With the approval of the appropriate authority.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Madam Chairman, let me ask you the question. Why did it go up by \$8 million revised in 2015? That is the question. I know that process, if they want they get and so on. My question is: why did it go up to 18 from \$10 million?

**Madam Chairman:** Can I therefore suggest that we get that answer in writing. I do not believe that the Minister of Finance would be in a position to answer.

**Dr. Moonilal:** I have no problem.

**Hon. Imbert:** I would most certainly provide the answer, but the point is that is what was required.

**Dr. Khan:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just would like to ask the Minister of Finance and the person who is from the Tobago House of Assembly with him, you have the Rolling Three-Year Tourism Plan. With the Rolling Three-Year Tourism Plan, you have an item on 2014, 2015 and we are now in 2016. Is that the end of the plan, because that is three years? And two, okay, could you enumerate exactly what this plan does and where? You said airlift is one and I cannot see a tourism plan being an airlift plan, but I would like you to enumerate what exactly this plan does and how much is given to each one, because this is the third year we are going into and we have a three-year tourism plan, so this is the end of the year, end of the plan.

**Hon. Imbert:** The word “rolling” should give you an indication that it keeps rolling so that they develop three-year plans on a rolling basis. It is just like the medium-term economic framework for Trinidad and Tobago. It keeps rolling over every three years, every five years. So, it is a rolling plan and with respect to the details, I would provide that in writing.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** So there would be a plan for 2017 as well, if it is a three-year?

**Hon. Imbert:** It would keep on rolling. It would roll.

**Madam Chairman:** Can we therefore, Members, go on to Division 06—Education Youth Affairs and Sports, Sub-Head 01. Again, the Government assurance would bind the hon. Minister of Finance. Sub-Head 02.

**2.30 p.m.**

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Madam Chair, Primary, Secondary and Vocational Education on page 37, you have—well, I believe this might be for teachers, and so on, of \$96 million in 2015, and in 2016 it is \$115 million, which is an increase of \$18.5 million.

**Madam Chairman:** Are we on Item 001?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** You are under Education, Youth Affairs and Sports,

**Hon. Imbert:** What page?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Page 37.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member, the point we had made—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Madam Chairman, I am looking at this for over five minutes now waiting for this, to ask this.

**Madam Chairman:** But the point I had made is that when it came to Sub-Head 01—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** You are swift like lightning.

**Madam Chairman:** You know, we want this to be at least an adequately meaningful exercise, all right? So, could we just go on and stick to Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services, and certainly Member for Caroni East, I will certainly give you every opportunity within the Sub-Head.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Madam Chair, you went very fast and I looking at this for the last five minutes and I am waiting for my time to ask it, and you just skipped and it gone.

**Madam Chairman:** One minute please, hon. Minister of Finance, the Standing Orders are in charge here and I administer them. All right. Okay—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** The Speaker is the boss.

**Madam Chairman:** No, there is no boss here.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** The Speaker is in charge.

**Madam Chairman:** One minute, please, Members—Members, please, I need no one's protection. We are at Sub-Head 02, Division 06.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Which page you are on now?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Page 41.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you very much. Hon. Member for Oropouche East, thank you very much. I call on the hon. Member for St. Augustine.

**Mr. Ramadhar:** Madam Chair, repeatedly, we have had the issue of matters moving ahead when Members are still on another page, and you did make the profoundly correct statement that we need to, you know, do this thing right, would it be too much to ask then that as you proceed to go to another Sub-Head, you say—if it could be just announced that we are now moving on to page so and so, are there any other questions before we do so. I would be most grateful if you could do that. Thank you very much.

**Madam Chairman:** That is a small indulgence, I can. All right, so we are at page 41, Sub-Head 02, hon. Member for Chaguanas East.

**Mr. Karim:** On page 41, Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services, I noticed that there is a decrease in terms of Primary, Secondary and Vocational Education of \$2.4 million, would the hon. Minister be kind enough to let us have the details of that?

**Hon. Imbert:** What is the line item, please?

**Mr. Karim:** It is Goods and Services, Sub-Head 02, page 41, the top. The heading is Goods and Services, Primary, Secondary and Vocational Education. I just wanted to get an idea as to what the \$2.4 million decrease is by the sectors in terms of the primary, the secondary and the vocational so we would be able to see where that cut was.

**Madam Chairman:** That would be given in writing? [*Crosstalk*] One minute, please, that would be given in writing by the hon. Minister of Finance. Hon. Member for Caroni East.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Does that include the \$40 million for contract employment?—that \$60-something million there. Does that include the item of contract employment of \$40 million?

**Hon. Imbert:** What item are you referring to?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** There is an item of contract employment for Primary, Secondary—

**Hon. Imbert:** What page?

**Mr. Karim:** Page 41.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:**—I am not going back, but—

**Hon. Imbert:** No, well if it is not on this page I cannot answer you.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:**—number 16 under page 40 has Contract Employment of—

**Madam Chairman:** One minute, may I assist. I believe the hon. Member is on page 40, it is not that the hon. Member has gone back. He is still within the Sub-Head and he is asking, specifically, if the decrease includes the calculation for Item 16, which is within that Head.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah.

**Madam Chairman:** If I may assist, though, I would think that the response to be given in writing to the Member for Chaguanas East will deal with that issue because the Member for Chaguanas East was dealing with the whole bulk. Yes?

**Hon. Imbert:** Yes, Madam Speaker, but one of the difficulties I am having, the Members opposite make statements which are inaccurate and then you are being asked to answer and inaccurate question. If you look at Item 16 there is no decrease.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** I did not ask about a decrease. Does it include—the \$64 million here—does it include the \$40 million for contract employment?

**Hon. Imbert:** And that too I cannot understand the question, because if there is an item here and there is another item, they are two different items.

**Madam Chairman:** Maybe if I could assist, hon. Member for Caroni East, at the foot of page 40, I think, are the total figures which will include your Item 16—

**Hon. Imbert:** It is a running total—

**Madam Chairman:** One minute, please, Minister of Finance.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Okay, Madam Chair, you answered it and he could not answer it.

**Hon. Imbert:** It is obvious.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay, I think once we could assist each other we move on. Hon. Member for Naparima.

**Mr. Charles:** Madam Chairman—

**Hon. Imbert:** If I said it was obvious you would say I rude.

**Madam Chairman:** Excuse me, please.

**Mr. Charles:**—are we still within Education, Youth Affairs and Sports, and if so can I ask a question on page 38?

**Madam Chairman:** And may I therefore just elucidate, we are within Division 06 and we are at Sub-Head 02, and, therefore, I will entertain any question within Sub-Head 02, regardless of what page it is on once it is in Sub-Head 02, and I believe it starts on page 39.

**Mr. Charles:** Okay.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay? Thank you. If I may borrow from the guidance of the hon. Member for St. Augustine, and as we are moving on can we say that Sub-Head 02 is now exhausted and we now go to Sub-Head—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Madam Chairman, I crave your indulgence, under Library Services, with the new Tobago library, the new Scarborough Library, a magnificent library completed after so many years, is there an allocation inside this budget that deals with the management and the care and employment for that library? Because I see here only \$5.1 million for Library Services, and I will carry it forward, it gone to 6.2. Now, where is the Tobago library—the nice new one—where is that included in the budgetary estimate?

**Hon. Imbert:** What are you asking about?—Travelling and Subsistence, Uniforms, Electricity?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** No, no, no the 6.1. If that 6.1 incorporates all the library services, because there are smaller libraries, there are libraries based in schools, there are smaller libraries in areas, but the Scarborough library is a big issue and I am not seeing any sort of funding looking as though it could support that Scarborough library in Tobago.

**Hon. Imbert:** The reason why I asked the question, we are on Goods and Services. Are you asking about that or staff?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Both.

**Hon. Imbert:** You cannot ask about staff under Goods and Services.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Well, tell us about the goods then, the goods for the Scarborough Library.

**Hon. Imbert:** With respect to Goods and Services, the answer is yes.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** It includes it?

**Hon. Imbert:** Well you asked the question, the answer is, yes.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Where? I am looking for it but I cannot find it. If you could help me to find it.

**Dr. Moonilal:** He cannot find it either.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Finance, could we just defer and you will—

**Hon. Imbert:** What is that?

**Madam Chairman:** To the response.

**Hon. Imbert:** I answered him. He asked me whether the Scarborough Library was included under this Sub-Head and I have said, yes. I have answered him.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** How much? You are not telling us where.

**Hon. Imbert:** It is a global figure. It is a figure for library services, and you asked, whether within that global figure, was the Scarborough Library included in the global figure, and I said, yes. I have said yes four times.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Repairs and Maintenance—

**Madam Chairman:** One minute, please, Member for Caroni East. Hon. Minister of Finance, are you finished in your response. Yes, hon. Member—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** I want to take him up on that, the repairs and maintenance for buildings is only \$75,000, so that—

**Madam Chairman:** You are where? Where are you? What item?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** No. 21, under Library Services, it is \$75,000 for repairs and maintenance for buildings, so all the buildings in Tobago, all the libraries, all the school libraries, all the Scarborough new libraries, for maintenance of that is \$75,000? That is hardly likely—

**Hon. Imbert:** Is it a question or a statement?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** I am asking you.

**Hon. Imbert:** Are you finished?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Yeah.

**Hon. Imbert:** Other funding is provided under the Development Programme.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** All right, so you will draw our attention to that when the time comes and when we are looking at development.

**Hon. Imbert:** I am not going to draw your attention to that at all, you will draw my attention to it.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** I will remember it. [*Crosstalk*]

**Madam Chairman:** Excuse me, we are moving on to Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases, page 45—it commences at page 45. Can we therefore move on to Sub-Head 04? Sub-Head 04—we are at Sub-Head 04, which commences at page 46.

**Mr. Charles:** My question is on page 47—thank you very much, Madam Chair—in the context of the global perspective that early childhood care is significant in ensuring an equality in society so that nobody has a head start over anyone else, I am seeing a half a million reduction—that is Item 09 on page 47—a half a million reduction in the allocation to the Early Childhood Care.

**Madam Chairman:** That is Special Education Resources Programme?

**Mr. Charles:** That is under Households—yes. Early Childhood Care, and the question is just the explanation for the reduction of \$500,000.

**Madam Chairman:** That is Item 09 under Sub-Head 007.

**Mr. Charles:** Oh, there is an increase. Okay sorry, they are on the line.

**Mr. Karim:** Madam Chairperson—

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Chaguanas East.

**Mr. Karim:** Under Sub-Head 006, Educational Institutions, Item 03 there is an increase of \$3 million. Might we be able to get some details as to what the \$3 million involves?

**Hon. Imbert:** It is for trade centres, but you will get more information if you wish. We will get the information.

**Mr. Karim:** Yeah. Similarly, Madam Chairperson, Item 21, Tobago Science, Technology and Tertiary Education has increased by \$8.5 million. May we also have some details of those?

**Hon. Imbert:** Certainly, we intend—

**Madam Chairman:** So that will also be in writing?

**Hon. Imbert:** Yeah, but I just want to give a verbal preliminary elucidation, that is for once and for all to reverse the discrimination of the previous government to allow a proper tertiary institute in Tobago under this PNM administration, something you refused to do.

**Mr. Karim:** Madam Chairperson, can we also have that in writing?

**Madam Chairman:** Yes, I believe—



**Mr. Karim:** That statement is now recorded?

**Hon. Imbert:** Yeah, you will get that statement—

**Mr. Karim:** We will respond to it accordingly.

**Hon. Imbert:** You will get that statement in writing too.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Naparima.

**Mr. Charles:** Madam Chair, I refer to my earlier question and I was correct, in that the allocation for Early Childhood Care was reduced by half a million dollars, could—

**Madam Chairman:** All right. Hon. Minister of Finance, we are at Sub-Head 007, Households, Item 09. That is where I am?

**Mr. Charles:** Yes. And there is a decrease and I am asking for an explanation for this decrease in the context of the fact that early childhood care is seen as pivotal to the development of an egalitarian society.

**Hon. Imbert:** Certainly. If you look at the 2014 allocation you would see \$108,000 The original 2015 estimate was \$2.5 million, the revised estimate was \$1.5 million. We have given them an allocation in this fiscal of \$1 million, and I am certain that if the THA requires more funding it will be approved.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Oropouche East.

**Dr. Moonilal:** I would ask a question on Sub-Head 007 on the School Feeding Programme; that has gone up by 100 per cent from 2014 to 2016, what accounts for the increase by 100 per cent in the School Feeding Programme? Is it more children, more schools, more—

**2.45 p.m.**

**Hon. Imbert:** I am told the preliminary answer is more schools have been brought into the system, but you will get it in writing. Feeding more children.

**Miss Ramdial:** Thank you, Madam Chair, the Member for Oropouche East asked the question, so thanks.

**Madam Chairman:** Moving on to Division 07, Community Development and Culture, which commences at page 49. Sub-Head 01, which is Personnel Expenditure. Can I ask if the details can be dealt with, with the Government's assurance? Can we go on to Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services, which starts on page 50?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Two matters I want to raise, Madam Chairman, under 02, Goods and Services page 51 I am on; 08 Rent/Lease. There is an increase in Office Accommodation and Storage, again, from 2014 to 2016, 100 per cent increase. I wanted to get some explanation as to why 100 per cent increase between 2014 and 2016, for Office Accommodation and Storage. If I could just get a breakdown in writing at a later time, of what constitutes contract employment, the \$6 million figure for this one division, Community Development and Culture—the list of persons on contract employment at this division, contract employment, \$6 million.

**Hon. Imbert:** Those two Items the explanations will be given to you in writing.

**Dr. Moonilal:** For both questions?

**Hon. Imbert:** I just said that.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** I just want him to include the contract employment for Culture of \$3 million as well. That is item 003 on page 51. There is a slight increase of \$800,000.

**Madam Chairman:** Can we, therefore, go on to Sub-Head 03 which begins at page 52? Can we, therefore, move on to Division 08, Infrastructure and Public Utilities? Sorry, I did not say Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies, which is at page 53.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** And 54.

**Madam Chairman:** Therefore, can we go on to Division 08 which is infrastructure?

**Dr. Rambachan:** Madam Chairman, Assistance to Community Organizations, \$1.5 million, that is 47—04, 07 Current Transfers and Subsidies.

**Madam Chairman:** We are on page 53.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Can we get a list of those organizations who get this assistance, those community organizations, and the amounts given out to them?

**Madam Chairman:** Could we have that in writing?

**Dr. Rambachan:** Also 17; I would like to get an understanding of what is the Special Community Programme that is being spoken of here, for which \$2 million is being allocated with an increase of \$500,000 for this year.

**Hon. Imbert:** You will certainly get details of that, but I just want to point out that the allocation is identical to the original allocation for 2015.

**Madam Chairman:** And it will be supplied in writing?

**Hon. Imbert:** Yes.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** 02, same page 55.

**Madam Chairman:** So we have gone on to Division 08, Infrastructure and Public Utilities, which is at page 55.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** 002, Maintenance of Roads. There is an increase of \$21 million for wages and cost of living allowance from \$178 million to \$200 million for maintenance of roads. That is wages. I hope the hon. Minister in his acceptance that he would provide the information. Is it that we are doing more roads and you need more personnel or the \$21 million increase, does that include arrears from last year?

**Hon. Imbert:** My undertaking is for the overall Head of Personnel Expenditure which is a total of \$325 million, so I will explain everything.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** So that will be subsumed there?

**Hon. Imbert:** It is subsumed there.

**Madam Chairman:** Goods and Services, Sub-Head 02.

**Dr. Moonilal:** I am at page 58, Item 23. Madam, just bear with me here, because again I do not know if the figures are right. In 2014, the actual expenditure here is \$360,000; an estimate in 2015 for \$1 million, but in 2015 the revised estimates for fees was \$17.8 million, where the estimate was \$1 million. It now returns to the original 2015 estimate of \$1 million, with a decrease therefore of \$16.8 million. That \$16.8 million is out of that \$20 million decrease. I am very curious to know why this revised itself from \$1 million to almost \$18 million in 2015. What in fees in 2015 you had to pay that was \$18 million higher than your estimate, for one Division of Infrastructure and Public Utilities? What was it paid for? Clearly it is a one-off payment, fees, and then you return to the original \$1 million. I will like to get an explanation, thank you.

**Hon. Imbert:** We are looking at the 2016 estimates, so if you want to know what you did in 2015, I am not sure I can assist you.

**Dr. Moonilal:** I want to know what the THA did in 2015—what the PNM THA did.

**Hon. Imbert:** We are looking at the 2016 estimates.

**Madam Chairman:** Minister of Finance, could that be provided in writing?

**Hon. Imbert:** How far are we going back? We have 2014 in this book too, you know.

**Madam Chairman:** I think they just asked for 2015.

**Hon. Imbert:** I would see if I could get the information in writing, but you should know, you paid it.

**Dr. Moonilal:** I was there in the THA?

**Madam Chairman:** Members, Members, let us proceed.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** 002, Maintenance of Roads. You have Rent/Lease of Vehicles and Equipment. Is it possible the Minister could indicate whether that is—

**Madam Chairman:** You are at 09?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Yes, 09 and then on 12, a slight increase for materials and supplies. That is the budget of \$44 million for Maintenance of Roads? Is it the lease of vehicles is \$16 million? Well, of course, material and supply, \$25 million, I have no difficulty with that. You leased vehicles for the Maintenance of Roads, yes?

**Hon. Imbert:** What is the question?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Is that a lease of vehicles—rent of vehicles that is coming up to the \$16 million?

**Hon. Imbert:** I am struggling with the question, because it says Rent/Lease Vehicles and Equipment. So you are asking me—you want to know if it is a typographical error?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** No, I want to follow up—have you done a cost analysis to determine whether you purchase new vehicles as against renting and leasing, which is more cost effective, whether purchase of new vehicles, sale of old ones; whether you continue to lease or you could have a mix of rental, leasing and new vehicles? That is the question, which one is more cost effective?

**Hon. Imbert:** Certainly going forward for 2016, I will ask the THA to do that.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Madam Chairperson, I know it has been asked over and over, this matter of contract employment, and under almost every Head there are large amounts for contract employment, and the standard being given is, “We will provide an explanation”. But I would like to ask something: you have wages and

salaries and so on, but on top and above that you have all this contract employment. Why is it necessary to have this amount of contract employment in the Tobago House of Assembly?

**Madam Chairman:** I will ask, Member for Tabaquite, if maybe you could point the hon. Minister to a particular Item, it might help.

**Dr. Rambachan:** I am pointing in this case to 02, Goods and Services, page 58 No. 16. I have been looking at the figures as we went along this afternoon, and there were several. Under every one there is Contract Employment, and there are large amounts. I see, for example, in 2015, while we had estimated \$7 million, it went up to \$10.970 million, and in 2014 I do not know what the estimate was, but it was \$12,042,000. So why is it, given that you have all the Salaries and Wages and so on, and you have an establishment, what is the need for this level of Contract Employment? And it is consistent, Minister, under every Head.

**Hon. Imbert:** I will get a response—*[Interruption]* Member for Tabaquite, hello. I will get an answer for you with respect to the need for Contract Employment, but I see no difference between this and what the UNC Government did in 2015 in Trinidad. You had thousands of contract employees; maybe you could tell us why.

**Madam Chairman:** May I just ask for clarification, hon. Minister of Finance, is this a decrease here in this figure? Are we looking at the same figure?

**Hon. Imbert:** No, what has happened is that we have reverted to the original allocation for 2015. If you look at 16, on page 58, 02, 16, you would see the original estimate was \$7 million. It went up to 10.97—they must have felt the need to hire some people on contract; more people than originally anticipated. We have put it back at \$7 million, so that if during the year the THA is of the view they need to supplement this vote, they will do so using the established procedures.

**Dr. Moonilal:** I just wanted to ask the question, they could provide in writing—*[Interruption—cell phone rings]*

**Madam Chairman:** Members, may I just remind about the protocols with our devices, please.

**Dr. Moonilal:** That awful music just distracted me.

**Madam Chairman:** I am sure your attention span is greater than that.

**Dr. Moonilal:** The fees—Madam Chairman, fees as defined in the classification of expenditure for Sub-Items Goods and Services, Legal Fees, Antivirus Agreement, Slaughtering Fees, Jury Fees, the prison chaplain and so on. I would really like to get a breakdown of how \$18 million is spent by a Division of Infrastructure and Public Utilities at page 58—\$18 million spent by the a Division of Infrastructure and Public Utilities, on Legal Fees, Antivirus Agreements, Slaughtering and Funeral Expenses. I want that in some detail, please; a breakdown of fees paid and to whom; how much and to whom.

**Hon. Imbert:** There should be a prohibition on asking the same question twice. You already asked me this and I already said I would give you a breakdown of these fees. You have forgotten that. Please do not ask me the same question twice.

**Madam Chairman:** That is Item 23?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Item 23, we want the breakdown.

**Madam Chairman:** Minister of Finance, it might be difficult for us to keep track, because there are so many things, but I believe, hon. Member for Oropouche East, a question was asked on Item 23.

**Dr. Moonilal:** I did not get the answer.

**Hon. Imbert:** Of course I did.

**Dr. Moonilal:** In his arrogant way.

**Hon. Imbert:** Madam Chairman, I would ask him to withdraw that. What is this thing about arrogance? “Who more arrogant than you?” [*Crosstalk*]

**Madam Chairman:** Members, Members, Members! Can we proceed? I would like us really to proceed on the note we left off on yesterday. [*Crosstalk*] Minister of Finance, I am hearing, and I think we are all above being provoked. We are all above that. Let us move on, please.

We are at page 61, Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases. There being no questions, I move on to Sub-Head 04, which is Current Transfers and Subsidies, and it begins at page 62. There being no questions, I move on to Division 09, Agriculture, Marine Affairs, Marketing and the Environment, Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure. I again bind the hon. Minister of Finance to the assurance that he had given.

Page 65, Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services, it begins there.

**3.00 p.m.**

**Dr. Rambachan:** Madam Chairman, again, Contract Employment. I flag it again, No. 16 under Good and Services \$5 million. You know, under every one in addition to the normal wages and salaries and so on we keep seeing Contract Employment, Contract Employment, Contract Employment. I think that the public deserves some understanding. I am not asking you for details, but I am asking you for some understanding.

**Hon. Imbert:** Yes. You will get it and I think the public deserves an explanation as to why you approved \$6.8 million for this Head in 2014 as well.

**Madam Chairman:** So that this explanation will be given in writing?

**Hon. Imbert:** Yes.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Naparima.

**Mr. Charles:** Thank you very much. I refer to Item 27, Official Overseas Travel. I would have thought that Official Overseas Travel would not be a priority in the context of our circumstances. Sorry. Sorry. So could I just get an explanation for the increase in Official Overseas Travel?

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Naparima, I believe that we have had an explanation for this in all the other preceding Sub-Heads with respect to their being given a figure in 2016 that was representative of the same figure that was given in 2015, to give the Tobago House of Assembly the flexibility to move its big allocation to various areas as it sees fit providing it gets the necessary authority. I believe that was given in each division Sub-Head. I expect that—

**Hon. Imbert:** And I also want to make the point, Madam Chairman, with your permission, that the statement I made with respect to Overseas Travel on the other Sub-Head, that we gave them the same allocation, but we will speak to them during the year and ask them to see what they can do to conserve expenditure that will apply to every single time you see Overseas Travel. So what I said before applies throughout. So there is no need to ask me every time you see Overseas Travel, what is going on? It is the same situation.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Finance, I guess you can say the same explanation applies. All right? Because we are doing lots of things and some of us may not have the recording device to assist us. Okay? We are in the Item of Minor Equipment Purchases which is on page 69, Sub-Head 03. And therefore can we go on to Sub-Head 04 Current Transfers and Subsidies which begins on page 70? Can we therefore go onto Division 10 which commences on page 72 Health and

Social Services; Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure; Sub-Head 02? And I repeat, hon. Minister of Finance is bound by the undertaking, and we are in Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services. Hon. Member for Fyzabad.

**Dr. Bodoë:** Under Hospitals, with regard—I am not asking about an explanation for the increase, but if I can have the staff by category and numbers in terms of this allocation? And that would apply to both hospitals and health centres which is 03?

**Madam Chairman:** So you just want to specifically identify what you want in that undertaking?

**Dr. Bodoë:** That is correct and I can have that in writing, Minister.

**Hon. Imbert:** Repeat exactly what you want.

**Dr. Bodoë:** Okay. I want the allocation for Salaries and Wages for both hospitals and health centre. That would be 002, 003 by category and numbers.

**Hon. Imbert:** Okay.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Barataria/San Juan.

**Dr. Khan:** On 02: 43, the security services have decreased by \$460,000.

**Madam Chairman:** At 02, we are into Goods and Services.

**Dr. Khan:** Goods and Services?

**Madam Chairman:** Yes.

**Dr. Khan:** Forty three, page 74.

**Madam Chairman:** And Good and Services commence on page 73 for the guidance of Members. Yes. Hon. Member for Barataria/San Juan.

**Dr. Khan:** I have noticed that you have decreased the security services.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 43.

**Dr. Khan:** Item 43, just an explanation.

**Hon. Imbert:** I am sure there is a reasonable explanation. I will get it for you. So if things go up, you are worried. If things go down, you are worried. But I will get the explanation for you.

**Dr. Khan:** Well security in Tobago necessary, Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Imbert:** Well for the benefit of your colleague to your left, Training went up.



**Dr. Khan:** No. No. I am serious, you know. I mean, [*Crosstalk*] I am not being facetious. There is a problem with security in Tobago.

**Madam Chairman:** So that the response will be given writing.

**Dr. Khan:** He will. He definitely will in writing.

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

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** To pay attention, page 73 as we move forward, for wages. We are under the heading Public Health and the Environment. And I see the Wages and Cost of Living Allowance is \$64 million.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Caroni East, are we in 02 which commences on page 73? Because we on 02 which commences on page 73. We are not on page 73. We are on 02 which commences at page 73.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** All right. I will wait my turn.

**Madam Chairman:** Yeah. Thank you very much. Hon. Member for Oropouche East.

**Dr. Moonilal:** You are on 02 which commences at page 73.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you so much.

**Dr. Moonilal:** And I am on page 76.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Can I go there?

**Madam Chairman:** Once you are in 02.

**Dr. Moonilal:** I am in 02, Goods and Social Services. At 005, No. 16 Contract Employment. This was \$6 million estimate in 2015 and this is social services. It is estimated at 2015 at \$8.7 million and then it is reduced back to the \$6 million. There is a decrease of \$2.7 million which is almost three quarter of the \$4 million of the overall decrease. I just wanted to get a listing of the persons who were employed on contract in 2015, but would not be employed on contract in 2016 since you have reduced by almost \$3 million the Contract Employment figure, the numbers.

**Hon. Imbert:** Madam Chairman, I would get that information, but I want to make a point that when you look closely at what is being done, again with this Item the original 2015 estimate was \$6 million. So, we have simply restored the original 2016—

**Dr. Moonilal:** We know that.

**Hon. Imbert:** I am making a point. We have simply restored the original 2015 estimate and the THA—in governing the Assembly will make adjustments. I want to go back—still on 02—and that is identical to what occurred with security. The allocation, although it appears to be a decrease, is identical to the original allocation for security in 2015. So the identical formula will apply. We have simply restored the 2015 allocation and the THA in governing the Assembly will move funds around in accordance with the needs and requirements of the island of Tobago. So these things that you are seeing as decreases are not really decreases because the allocation in total has gone up. So, the THA has the ability to move funds around, and therefore I am craving your indulgence, Madam Chairman, this is a generic question coming at me every other page that, why has it gone up, why has it gone down?—but the Members are not looking at the 2015 original estimates and seeing that we have simply reverted to the original estimate of 2015.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Madam Chair, can I address you? Because I think you need to translate a question here. We are very much wary of the fact that the 2016 estimate have gone back to the original estimate of 2015. The Minister has to, in some instance, and he told us about 20 times. That is not the issue. The issue is why was it revised upward, not that it went backward, why was it revised upward? How much was spent and we want breakdown? That is the issue. It is not that it went back to the original estimate. We know that. We can read that. Why did it go the new estimate? What was spent and the composition of it?

**Madam Chairman:** So you really want to know what happened in 2015?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Correct. Please translate that in his language.

**Hon. Imbert:** Madam Chairman, I find it unconscionable that the Members opposite are asking me to explain what happened in 2015 under their watch, but if that is—[*Crosstalk*] Madam Chairman, I try my best when they are speaking not to interrupt them. So, I would ask when a question is posed to me, I would be allowed to speak without a running commentary from the Member for Oropouche East. The fact of the matter is, these are the 2016 estimates, and we on this side keep being asked what happened in 2015 under their watch. I will try my best to provide the information. But it is unconscionable that we on this side who have only been in Government for a couple weeks are continuously asked what you did in 2015 and for details of it too, and for the reasons why.

**Madam Chairman:** All right. In terms of—can we address all similar questions that the information will be provided in writing because the Minister of Finance would not have available to him the information of the revised estimates in 2015? All right? Yes. Hon. Member for St. Augustine.

**Mr. Ramadhar:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Curiously the Minister of Finance indicated earlier that they had an excellent relationship with the THA, but he omits saying publicly that they have an independent budget and therefore, the query that had been raised earlier, I think, is more germane now in terms of the Auditor General's Report. It is a notorious fact that it had not been available since 2007, there has been no audit. And therefore now to banter back and forth as to who had control, who knew, really is wasting time until we really deal with that very, very important issue. And I would also ask before I stop, whether in fact there will be any connection between the failure to have audits done and future budgetary allocations.

**Hon. Imbert:** Can I ask what line Item are you on?

**Mr. Ramadhar:** All of them.

**Hon. Imbert:** Well, I am sorry I cannot deal with all. I could only deal with one.

**Mr. Ramadhar:** I beg your pardon.

**Hon. Imbert:** I can deal with the particular line Item that the hon. Chairman has addressed our attention to. Could you please tell me which line Item you are on?

**Mr. Ramadhar:** Madam Chair, it is obvious to all those who wish to appreciate what I have said that the answers given by the Minister of Finance is really to avoid the reality of the difficulties that we have.

**Madam Chairman:** But I do not know that we can really say that. I understand, hon. Member for St. Augustine, to be making a statement which in terms of when last an audit was done by the Auditor General, and I think we had that information before being provided by the hon. Member for Chaguanas West, was 2007. And I think it has been said on this floor several times for the day that the Tobago House of Assembly has a certain amount of autonomy with respect to its budget subject to a particular type of approval. Okay? So, I take it that your statement reinforces that. All right.

**Mr. Ramadhar:** I make the point that the banter back and forth about when you were in Government now really is not assisting at all unless we truly appreciate that, and we need to fix that.

**Madam Chairman:** And I think that the assistance that we are going to get is, as I recollect, in each instance and I have been writing for myself is that as far as what happened in 2015 because of the inability of this present Government to give the information, it will be given in writing. And I propose, to save time, that I deal with that as one of our blanket ditto statements. Okay? So let us move on. Page 76.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Under 005 which is—

**Madam Chairman:** Have we gone back?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** No. No.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay. Well it is Goods and Services. Thank you.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Health and Social Services. I just want to draw back to what my colleague the Member for Tabaquite indicated on Contract Employment. Across the board here, as is evident in social services line Item 16, Contract Employment is a preponderant issue.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member, I have, and maybe might I suggest to keep track because I believe we all have rulers and markers and so on maybe we mark off things. I have it marked off in my book. I might be mistaken. You will correct me, that this has already been asked, and there is an assurance to give us it in writing.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** It had been asked on a previous Item, but I just wanted to draw—

**Madam Chairman:** Page 76, Item 16, Contract Employment, it is underlined by me.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** All right. Can I just make—because we have not moved from page 76 yet.

**3.15 p.m.**

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** It is quite evident that Contract Employment is the dominant method of employment across all the Sub-Heads in the THA. Whether you look at health and social services, whether you look at administration, whether you look at health centres, whether you look at public health and the environment, is there a reason why contract employment is the dominant method of employment in all these subsectors of the THA rather than normal employment from the public service or for the THA? Because everywhere we look is \$6 million here, \$6 million here, \$6 million there for contract employment. Is there an explanation for it? Why only contract employment is going on in all the subsectors?

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Caroni East, my recollection is that question was asked in a slightly different form. I cannot say it was asked by you, because I am not taking track of who is asking. But, I think I am seeing another Member ascribing the question to him.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** All right.

**Madam Chairman:** All right? And I believe that was asked by the hon. Member for Chaguanas East, and we would get that answer in writing. Can we proceed, please?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** No, no.

**Madam Chairman:** Can we proceed, please?

**Hon. Imbert:** Madam Chairman—

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Thank you, Chair. I just wanted to ask if the THA reps are here? Is it some way that they can probably provide some of the answers regarding just the audited accounts I am referring to? Thank you.

**Hon. Imbert:** I want to make two points. I want to repeat in response to a question from the Member for Tabaquite, who is the one who asked about, why so many contract officers. I did give an undertaking for the whole of the THA, every single division, Sub-Item, Sub-Head, to explain the recruitment of contract officers vis-à-vis public servants. So, it applies to all. With respect to the—behind the Member for Caroni Central there.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Toco/Manzanilla.

**Hon. Imbert:** The fact of matter is that I had indicated earlier, but I will indicate it again, because this may very well come up with other Heads for which I have the responsibility. Where there is no Minister or Member of Parliament in this House who can answer, the responsibility falls to the Minister of Finance. So that the technical staff of the THA advise the Minister of Finance. But it is the Minister of Finance who answers all question with respect to this Head, and that will also occur with the Judiciary, with the Parliament, with the Auditor General, all of the other Heads where there is no Minister per se. You have to remember, these estimates were prepared by the Minister of Finance, so that I am in a position to either answer immediately or to obtain the answers to any question anybody may have.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay. Can we move on? We are now at Minor Equipment. Sub-Head 03 Minor Equipment Purchases, which begins at page 77. Hon. Member for Barataria/San Juan.

**Dr. Khan:** I would just like the Minister of Finance or Tobago House of Assembly people to indicate, at each level 003; 04, 05, 08, I have noticed that all the 01 vehicles have been removed. All, on each level.

**Madam Chairman:** The hon. Member is dealing with from page 77 Minor Equipment Purchases, and he is making a general comment with that Sub-Item 01—

**Dr. Khan:** Health centres, public health and the environment, social services, and litre eradication programme, every single one the vehicles are removed.

**Mr. Imbert:** I would get an explanation. I suspect it is covered under another Head, but I will get an explanation.

**Dr. Khan:** Sure.

**Madam Chairman:** Would that be provided today or in writing before this budgetary exercise?

**Mr. Imbert:** It can be provided today. It will be provided today. Because, for example, I have received information on the escrow account for Studley Park which you brought up before. At your discretion Madam Chairman, I will give that information whenever it is convenient, and if I get the information on this Item I will indicate to you, I have received the information, and at your discretion, Madam Chairman, you will decide whether I should give the information.

**Madam Chairman:** So, what I would ask Members, before we go on to development programme I would ask the Minister of Finance if any of the information is available on questions which were either deferred or said to be given in writing and we will deal with them next. Hon. Member for Chaguanas East.

**Mr. Karim:** Madam Chairman, now that you have gone past the minor equipment purchases, may I go to Item 04 on page 79, Current Transfers and Subsidies, with your permission?

**Madam Chairman:** Yes, please. We are now on Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies commencing on page 79. Hon. Member for Chaguanas East.

**Mr. Karim:** May I now ask, through you, for some details of line Item 06, in terms of the disbursements and the breakdown of the special social programmes?

**Madam Chairman:** This is page 79, 04 Current Transfers and Subsidies, 06 Special Social Programmes. What are they? What did they comprise of and the details of disbursements?

**Hon. Imbert:** I would provide that to you in writing.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Through you, Madam Chair—

**Madam Chairman:** Yes, hon. Member for Caroni East.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:**—007 Emergency Cases Fund, of \$3 million, what are they about?

**Hon. Imbert:** I will provide that.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Barataria/San Juan.

**Dr. Khan:** Thank you, Madam Chair. 009, 05 grant towards necessitous patients, you have decreased it from \$3 million to \$2 million and I would like to ask why it has now gone back to the \$3 million? And two, the Tobago Regional Health Authority has now increased to \$168 million, and could I get an explanation for that increase?

**Madam Chairman:** Page 80.

**Dr. Khan:** Plans towards necessitous patients. It was initially in 2015, \$3 million and your 2016 estimate is \$2 million, that is more or less like necessary items.

**Madam Chairman:** I would think that that would have the generic answer which we have said, that the Ministry of Finance has put back the same allocation.

**Dr. Khan:** They have not.

**Madam Chairman:** The only difference with this is they have put the revised estimate for 2015.

**Dr. Khan:** You see, Madam Chair, and from the discussions that have been occurring, when the Minister of Finance indicates that they have put the estimates for 2015, in this case they have not. So, I was going to ask him why he has not.

**Madam Chairman:** Well, if that is the question I would allow it.

**Dr. Khan:** That is the question; why have you done that? Yes, why have you not done that here mostly because it is necessary?

**Hon. Imbert:** I would most certainly answer that. Let me deal with TRHA.

**Dr. Khan:** TRHA increased to 165.

**Hon. Imbert:** I would get a detailed response for you, but this again would arise out of collective agreements and other factors that would have caused this increase, as the employment of new staff and so on. Remember there is a new hospital which was commissioned recently and so on. So, I will get an explanation for you for the increase.

With respect to the fact that we have used the revised estimates for necessitous patients rather than the original estimate, in some cases the Ministry of Finance—well the Minister of Finance, who had to look at, I do not know how many, 50,000 items in a three-week period. In some cases we were able to get a satisfactory response from the accounting officers with respect to their actual request 2016 vis-à-vis the experience of 2015. So, in those cases, and this would be one of them, there was consensus that the allocation could be put at an initial figure of \$2 million, because that was the actual expenditure in 2015.

Again, if the THA is of the view that they need to assist more necessitous patients during 2016, they would just follow the established procedure and do so. But, in some instances we were able to get harmony between the request and the appropriation. In other cases we simply put back the original allocation because of the time involved to deal with 50,000 line items. We did not get proper explanation for everything, but we got fairly reasonable explanations.

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

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** My colleague for Barataria/San Juan indicated in the TRHA where there is an increase of \$168 million, and for the THA as a whole, the increase has been \$242 million. So would you say that this increase of \$168 million for the TRHA is a substantial part of what you consider to be the increase of \$242 million for the TRHA? So, that is a dominant increase in the allocation for THA which is \$168 million.

**Hon. Imbert:** Well, if you look at the Heads, some have gone up and some have gone down. You have to take a holistic view.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** No, but the TRHA is \$168 million increase, and the whole of Tobago House of Assembly is \$242 million increase.

**Hon. Imbert:** Yes.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** So, therefore, are you comforted that most of your increase is from the TRHA?

**Hon. Imbert:** Madam Chairman, I will try my best. You cannot pluck out one item and simply try to say that that is the bulk of the increase. You have to look at the decrease in all of the Heads and the increase in all of the Heads and do a



balancing act and then you would get a better perspective. Even though the TRHA has gone up by \$168 million, other Heads have been decreased. The increase is an overall aggregate.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Finance, so the answer to that is, no?

**Hon. Imbert:** Obviously.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you very much. Hon. Member for Fyzabad.

**Dr. Bodoë:** Thank you, Madam Chair. May I, on page 79 under Current Transfers and Subsidies, 007 Households, 04 Emergency Cases Fund, just to get an explanation of what that would be covering?

**Madam Chairman:** Emergency Cases Fund?

**Dr. Bodoë:** Yes, just to have an idea of what that covers.

**Madam Chairman:** I am sorry, I believe that was dealt with and we have an assurance for it to be given in writing.

**Hon. Imbert:** Madam Chairman, I am struggling when Members ask the same question over and over again.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Finance, if I am not struggling I do not think anybody here should complain about struggling. Can we move on? Can we move on, please? And we are now going to division 11 commencing at page 81 Settlements and Labour, Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure, and we bind the hon. Minister of Finance to the assurance that he has already given. Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services, and that commences on page 82. And therefore can we move on to page 84, Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases. Can we go on to Sub-Head 04?

**Mr. Karim:** Madam Chair—

**Madam Chairman:** Yes, please. May I call the Head, 04 Current Transfers and Subsidies, and for the benefit of all of us, page 84.

**Mr. Karim:** Okay, the question I want to raise transfers to page 85, line Item 01 Contribution to Non-profit Organizations. Maybe it is possible for us to have a list of those, and, again, the sums that were disbursed to those Non-profit Organizations.

**Hon. Imbert:** I would put that in writing.

**Madam Chairman:** Can we therefore go on to Division 12, which commences on page 86, Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure? And, again, I take it as binding the assurance given by the Minister of Finance. And, therefore can we go on to Sub-

Head 02, Goods and Services, commencing on page 86? Can we therefore go on to Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases, page 89? Hon. Member for Caroni East.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Something just caught my eye very quickly here. Something caught my eye very quickly on page 88 before you went to page 89, which is the social sector programme. Obviously, nothing was done for it in 14, 15 and 16.

**Madam Chairman:** Give me the Item number please, I am sorry, Sir.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Page 88. That is under Goods and Services, 003 Social Sector Programme. For 14, 15 and 16 there is no allocation there for Social Sector Programme. Is there an explanation for that, under planning and development for the THA?

**Madam Chairman:** Page 88, 003.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Yes. There is a blank for 14, 15 and 16, so no expenditure for 14, 15 and 16 under Social Sector Programme, which comes under the planning and development. Is there an explanation or rationale why THA has not seen it fit to bring in a Social Sector Programme?

**Hon. Imbert:** I am sure there is a reasonable explanation. I suspect it is covered under another Item. I will get the explanation for you.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** That is all right.

**Madam Chairman:** All right. Can we, therefore, go on to Minor Equipment Purchases, which is at page 89? Can we go on to Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies? And then, therefore, can we go on to the Development Programme? Just before we do that, as I indicated, hon. Minister of Finance, I believe there are two matters which have been deferred and you have indicated that you have the information for them.

**Hon. Imbert:** I have information on one of them.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay, please, and this is the escrow account, Studley Park—Hon. Minister of Finance, I do not mean to hurry you, if you do not have it then we will take it in writing.

**Hon. Imbert:** No problem, I just know that the Chief Administrator had it a little while ago. I will pull from memory. I know what he told me. The Studley Park Escrow account is an account used to purchase equipment for the quarry, and it was necessary to establish this account because the sums of money required to purchase equipment for a quarry are quite large and would not have been

available under ordinary releases. So, it is an account that accumulates over time until sufficient funds are available to buy a crusher or some other large piece of equipment. So, it is simply set up to deposit funds that would become available from time to time for the purchase of new equipment for the quarry. And when the amount reaches the level necessary to purchase a large piece of equipment they purchase the equipment and then they continue to deposit as they get funds from time to time into that Escrow account. So, that is what it is for.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Would you permit me to ask a question on this?

**Hon. Imbert:** Certainly.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Based on what we just looked at, was there purchase of new equipment under this Studley Park Escrow account?

**Hon. Imbert:** I do not have that information. I will get that for you.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** You do not have the information?

**Hon. Imbert:** No, I cannot tell you what equipment was purchased, when, but I would get the information for you.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Thank you for the explanation.

**Hon. Imbert:** Thank you very much.

**Madam Chairman:** Can we now go on to the Development Programme Tobago House of Assembly, and we are looking at the Draft Estimates, Development Programme—this book [*Holds up book*—and can we start at page 20? And why I am suggesting 20, 19 are the aggregate figures, 20 goes into the details.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Madam Chairman, just an observation. While I support your approach in terms of the method of going into every specific, to ask a specific question on the beach and landing facility and so on. When we have the generic figures, like on page 19, there may be a couple questions of a general nature that Members may wish to make. But if we only look at the specifics, we cannot get the general questions. So, if you can permit a few questions on the general thing rather than just on every—the Pigeon Point Beach and the landing facility and so on.

**Madam Chairman:** What I would say, hon. Member, I will exercise my discretion with respect to that.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** So, Madam Chair, on that first page 19—

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

**Dr. Gopeesingh:**—what was estimated for development expenditure in 2015 was \$384 million, but in fact the revised estimates show that they spent more than \$209 million more. So, the estimate for 2015 was supposed to be \$384 for expenditure, but \$593 have been in fact spent, which is \$209 million more on the development programme in 2015. Is there any area that the Minister of Finance or THA may want to answer that would have given rise to this \$210 million increased expenditure? From a global perspective?

**Hon. Imbert:** This is in 2015 you are asking?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Is it because of elections?

**Hon. Imbert:** Are you asking something relating to 2015?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Yes.

**Hon. Imbert:** Well, I will get that in writing for you.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** So you do not know whether it is for election?

**Hon. Imbert:** I was not in Government in 2015.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** THA election was in 2015.

**Hon. Imbert:** I did not have access to the records of the THA. I was not the Minister of Finance in 2015.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** But you are the Minister of Finance now.

**Hon. Imbert:** There is no way I could provide the information you are requesting.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Caroni East, I think that question and the response would be covered by one of our blanket answers. You would get that information in writing.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Oropouche East.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Thank you, Madam Chairman. Again, a general question before we go into the specifics. Could the Minister indicate whether we can look forward to audited accounts of the THA for 2006, 2007, 2008 coming, because it is almost 10 years now we have not had an audited account, where billions of dollars are being spent. Are you satisfied with that approach? And would you give some undertaking that we will get audited accounts to explain what were really billions of dollars over the last 10 years or so?

**Hon. Imbert:** What line Item are you on?

**Dr. Moonilal:** We are permitted to ask general questions on the area.

**Hon. Imbert:** You are? Madam Chairman?

**Madam Chairman:** We are permitted to ask general question as relates to the information in hope that it is here on the books. I might be mistaken, but I am only seeing actual 2014, estimate 2015, 2015 revised estimate, 2016 estimates. Okay, so that I would not allow that question. Can we therefore go to page 20? And we are now going to Item 002 Productive Sectors. It begins at page 20 and it ends at page 20. Hon. Member for Siparia.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** On page 20 please, Madam Chair, under 01 Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing; Item 470 Construction of Marketing Facilities, I see there is \$3 million allocated, which just \$400,000 was allocated previously, and through you, can we get a breakdown of which facilities these moneys are to be allocated to, the \$3 million?

**Hon. Imbert:** That is for the Scarborough Market.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Three million dollars?

**Hon. Imbert:** Yes.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Tabaquite.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I would like to know what the status of these facilities is—467, processing facilities for coconut, bay leaf, oil and pigeon peas; 474, the establishment of agro processing facilities; 478, development market research; 489, GIS GPS support system for livestock in Tobago? I would really like to know the status of those projects? Are those projects established? And if so, if they are established, who is setting up these projects? Is it the THA that is directly employing persons on these projects? Because, if they are THA-funded projects, I want to know whether THA is actually doing these projects as part of THA's core business or whether THA has dissolved this to private enterprise? And if private enterprise is doing it, how are they identified and what is the process for granting the subventions, if there are subventions?

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Imbert:** As you would realize these are ongoing projects, so that information would have been available to the previous Government. But, since you do not know what happened under your tenure, I would get the information for you and provide it in writing.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Madam Chairperson, I think it is really disrespectful for the Minister to keep saying about my tenure and my tenure.

**Hon. Imbert:** I am speaking the truth.

**Madam Chairman:** One minute, please, hon. Minister of Finance.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Madam Chairperson, I have a right as a Member of this House of Representatives and, on behalf of the public of Trinidad and Tobago, to ask questions that clarify how the money is being spent. And whether it happened under the term of the PP Government or what, today we are here to ask questions, and, Madam Chairperson, I just think I have that right to ask those questions. That is all.

**Madam Chairman:** Indeed, and hon. Minister of Finance, I understand you to be saying that the information for projects that preceded the fiscal year 2016 shall be provided by you in writing.

**Hon. Imbert:** Within the limits of the information available to me, Madam Chairman.

**Madam Chairman:** And everything, hon. Minister of Finance, could only be done within the limits of what is available and we understand that. Please, can we move on?

**Hon. Imbert:** Madam Chairman, the Member made a speech.

**Madam Chairman:** Minister of Finance, please!

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Madam Chair—

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

**Dr. Gopeesingh:**—under Goods and Services on page 21, Head 15, there has been an increase from the estimate in 2016—

**Madam Chairman:** Am, excuse me, we are still—

**Dr. Moonilal:** Product sector. We are on Productive Sector.

**Madam Chairman:** Productive Sector, Okay. Yes.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** We are still on page 20.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Page 21.

**Madam Chairman:** Page 21, no, we have—I am sorry, I am sorry. Page 21 is Economic Infrastructure, Item 003. So, Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla, are you within Head 002 Productive Sector?

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Page 20.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Yes.

**Madam Chairman:** Yes? Please.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** All right, I will wait.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Directed to the Minister of Finance, through you, Chair. If the projects referring to 480, the development of a GIS/GPS support system, if the projects are ongoing, how is there no allocation? Is it that the project has come to an end or has it been cancelled?

**Madam Chairman:** Please.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Thanks.

**Hon. Imbert:** Madam Chairman, that question was asked and answered.

**Madam Chairman:** No, no, no.

**Hon. Imbert:** It was asked and answered. I said I would provide details of the status of these projects, the establishment of these projects, the purpose of these projects, et cetera. And I think in the rubric status we would get an explanation as to why there is no allocation in 2016. And, Madam Chairman, I simply want to say, Members opposite are perfectly entitled to ask me to explain what happened under their stewardship, and I am perfectly entitled to point out that they should know what they did when they were in Government.

**Madam Chairman:** And that you would provide the answer.

**Hon. Imbert:** There are some things that they did that I will not be able to explain, because they did a lot of strange things.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Finance, we understand that you could only provide what is available. All right, so can we go on to page 21, Item 003 Economic Infrastructure, it commences at page 21. Hon. Member for Siparia.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you. Under 01 of that Economic Infrastructure; Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, D. Fishing, line Item 143 deals with improvement to beaches and landing facilities. The revised 2015 estimates indicates that \$17.3 million was spent. That now in 2016 has been reduced—the allocation has been reduced down to \$5 million. Through you, if we can be provided with a list of the beaches and landing facilities on which that \$17.3 million was spent, a list of those facilities, and a breakdown of the \$17 million? How much was spent? Where? And to whom were such payments made?

**3.45 p.m.**

**Madam Chairman:** Okay, and therefore this will be in writing, subject to whatever limitations of availability of information.

**Hon. Imbert:** Madam Chairman, again, this is 2015 so they should know.

**Madam Chairman:** We understand that, hon. Minister. Hon. Minister of Finance, we understand that and that is why we have the caveat. Can we go on, please, Member for Tabaquite.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under Fishing, Sub-Item 165, has the THA set up any commercial Tilapia/Prawn Production facilities in Tobago? Are there any facilities set up by them?—because this is a continuing project, again. Has anything been set up? Is there visible evidence of anything being set up?

**Hon. Imbert:** I get the impression you were not living here last month, but I will provide the information for you. This has been going on for years.

**Madam Chairman:** So that this would be provided in writing.

**Hon. Imbert:** Impossible, I am being asked to explain things that were approved by the previous government, but I will.

**Madam Chairman:** Much obliged, and, therefore, hon. Member for Siparia.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, if you would allow me just a moment, the hon. Minister is repeating that these things were done by us, these things were done when the Partnership was in government; they were done by the THA. The point has been made, no audited statements from way back 2007, and in fact the numbers being brought here as the revised estimates are the numbers being brought by the hon. Minister of Finance. Therefore, to say that we were there and we did it and we must know, there are new Members here, they do not know. There are persons out in the public, they do not know. And nobody knows every single thing that is happening, and that is why the revised estimates that you brought we want to ask, further, at Item 463, on same page 21, Agriculture access roads, Tobago, in your revised 2015 estimates you indicate to this House that \$53.6 million was spent, prior to that the estimate was \$5 million, and now you have come with a 2016 allocation of \$5 million. Again, Madam Chair, through you, we would like a breakdown of the agriculture access roads on which \$53.6 million was spent and to whom the payments were made for improvements of these agriculture access roads.



**Madam Chairman:** So, this is a breakdown in writing for the estimates for the year 2015, so long as the information is available. Let us move on, please.

**Hon. Imbert:** Madam Chair, the Member for Siparia made a statement that is not accurate. The THA has advised me; they have submitted their accounts to the Auditor General's Department up to the year 2013. So, it is incorrect, misleading and wrong to keep saying over and over that the THA has only submitted accounts for 2007. They have submitted accounts up to 2013, so, please, stop saying that.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Madam Chair, I made the statement that there are no audited accounts from since 2007. If it is that they feel there is something that they did or did not do that is a different point, I made it very clear there are no audited accounts of the THA since 2007. And, indeed, even the 2006 and 2007 were incomplete on one page because in it the Auditor General said that they had not received what they needed to receive from the THA. I am not going on that point, the point is that they did not include those. So, Madam Chairman, if there is no more on that page can we move to another page?

**Madam Chairman:** I am so happy Members are cooperating in expediting this process. All right, so can we go on, please, to Sub-Head 004, Social Infrastructure, and that is at page 31. It commences at page 31.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Madam Chairman, I am sorry. No, please, I asked if we were done with that particular page we were dealing with, with the beaches, I do have a question on page 23 at Item 538. I am still under Economic Infrastructure, Item 538, Facilities for Workers at Hope Farm. I note, again, in 2015 \$2 million was spent. The allocation for 2016 is \$200,000. Again, we would like a breakdown the numbers of workers at Hope Farm and the nature of the facilities on which \$2 million was spent, and to whom was the \$2 million given to in payment for the facilities at Hope Farm.

**Madam Chairman:** Can we get that in writing, please?

**Hon. Imbert:** I will try, Madam Chairman, I will see what the former Minister of Finance did with respect to this item when he gave them the money.

**Madam Chairman:** Are we finished, Members? Are we finished with Sub-Head 003, Economic Infrastructure?

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** No, Madam Chair.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Siparia.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you. On the same page 23, under line item 580, Urban Forestry Programme, I note an increased allocation of \$1 million for

2016. It was \$100,000, so \$900,000 increase, again. Through you, Madam Chair, a breakdown of what is this increase of \$900,000.

**Hon. Imbert:** Since for the first time you are asking about 2016 I will oblige.

**Madam Chairman:** Are you in a position to give it today?

**Hon. Imbert:** No, it will be given in writing.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you very much. Hon. Member for Tabaquite, please.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Thank you, Madam Chairman. Page 22, Item 468, new project, 2016, \$10.5 million, is this Goldsborough Agricultural Estate Irrigation Programme, is it owned by the THA or is this a private enterprise that is being irrigated? Who owns this Goldsborough Estate? THA?

**Hon. Imbert:** It is owned by the THA. The money is for an irrigation system and other agricultural infrastructure, and the land is leased to private farmers.

**Dr. Rambachan:** So the land is leased to private farmers but the infrastructure is being put in by the THA?

**Hon. Imbert:** But, clearly, it is part of the lease.

**Madam Chairman:** It is part of the terms of the lease? Well—

**Dr. Rambachan:** I am just asking. Nothing wrong in asking you know.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Madam Chair, through you, we would be very happy to see a copy of that lease that the hon. Minister is referring too.

**Hon. Imbert:** Sure.

**Madam Chairman:** So that the terms of the lease would be provided in writing. Hon. Member for Mayaro.

**Mr. Paray:** Thank you, Madam Chairman. I really did not raise my hand but since you have called my name I will dare ask a question, and I am being very careful with this question here, and I know we are being pointed to items in the book, and I am asking this question—

**Madam Chairman:** Lest you ascribe a blame to me for putting you somewhere else, do you have a question within the item that we are dealing with?

**Mr. Paray:** Yes, I do. Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you very much.

**Mr. Paray:** I am dealing with the heading, Details, Head 15 of the Tobago House of Assembly. I am listening, Madam Chairman, as a first-timer Member of Parliament in this exercise and—

**Madam Chairman:** You are at page—

**Mr. Paray:** On page 21.

**Madam Chairman:** Page 21—[*Crosstalk*] Excuse me, please. Okay at page 21, Item—hon. Member for Mayaro, Item?

**Mr. Paray:** No, the item that I want to ask the question on, Ma'am, is the answers that are coming in terms of—

**Madam Chairman:** May we ask Item, if you could point us to the item so that—

**Mr. Paray:** I will withdraw for the meantime, Madam Chairman.

**Madam Chairman:** Yes, I realize I put you on a spot by forcing you to ask a question, I am sorry about that.

**Mr. Paray:** Yes, Ma'am. All right. No problem.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay. Hon. Member for Siparia.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** We are still on Economic Infrastructure, Madam?

**Madam Chairman:** We are still on Economic Infrastructure.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you very much. I am looking at page 26, Item 748, Construction of Sea Defence Walls, which I am sure are very needed in Tobago. There is an increase allocation of \$11.9 million, making a total for 2016 of \$12.9 million. Again, through you, a breakdown of where this money will be expended and for which works—Item 748.

**Madam Chairman:** The Construction of Sea Defence Walls.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Yes—a breakdown of where the \$12.9 million would be spent.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay. Can we therefore move on to Social Infrastructure which begins at—

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** I am still on Economic Infrastructure.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you. On page 27, still on Sub-Head 003, Economic Infrastructure, Item 326, which is Pigeon Point Infrastructure Works. I note an \$8 million increase, from \$2 million it has gone now to \$10 million, and, again, a breakdown as to what works are to be done there on which this \$10 million would be expended. I am still on that page, if I may, I suppose in writing.

**Madam Chairman:** Yes.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Then on the same page, Enterprise Development, Item 002, under G, Business Services, under G, again—

**Madam Chairman:** Again, a breakdown of works?

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Yes, Ma'am, I see there \$5 million allocation, 2016, so some details. Then on Item 009, Enterprise Development Company of Tobago, I see \$8 million for the company, so I would like—how does Enterprise Development and Enterprise Development Company work together.

**Madam Chairman:** So you want a relationship of Items 002 and 009?

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Yes, Ma'am, because now you have 8 and 5, \$13 million, part going to the development and part going—\$8 million, the larger part—to the company. And can we please get a list of the directors of the Enterprise Development Company of Tobago, please. Again, I guess all of that would be in writing.

**Hon. Imbert:** You are asking and answering the question.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** I said I guess. So Madam Chair will guide us.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Finance, please, do we have the list of the directors?

**Hon. Imbert:** The Member has asked what the reason is for all of this, in addition to the list of the directors, and so on, if—

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** I did not ask the reason. Madam Chair, please—

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Finance, what was asked is the relationship between the two sub-items.

**Hon. Imbert:** Yes. Yes. Yes. If you read the budget statement you will see on the section on Tobago we have decided to assist the THA in developing business activity in Tobago at the Cove Estate and other areas in Tobago, and this is all

part of a new thrust to try to boost economic activity in Tobago. The details that you require will be provided, but I really wish I could have given Tobago more to stimulate business activity and economic activity in Tobago.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay, any other further—Member for Barataria/San Juan.

**Dr. Khan:** Just one question to the Minister of Finance, Item 465, Sub-Heading 003, page 22—Item 465.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you very much. We are still on the same Head. All right. We are still on the same item of Economic Infrastructure.

**Dr. Khan:** Page 22, Item 465.

**Hon. Imbert:** What is your question?

**Dr. Khan:** All right, I know your attention span is decreasing as time goes on—

**Hon. Imbert:** No, do you want to know what a hyperbaric facility is? Do you want to know what it is?

**Dr. Khan:** No, I want to know if it is functioning and how many patients that was seen last year.

**Hon. Imbert:** Okay, certainly, I will let you know what is going on with the Roxborough Hyperbaric Facility. I know as a medical doctor you know what that is.

**Dr. Khan:** No.

**Hon. Imbert:** Yes you do.

**Dr. Khan:** Could you tell me what it is?

**Hon. Imbert:** I will put it in writing, but you do know what a hyperbaric facility is; oxygenation. You should know that. You know that.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am still on Economic Infrastructure, at page 29 under D, Roads and Bridges, line 523, Major Improvement Works and Secondary Roads. Again, we note that the estimates for 2015 was \$8 million but the revised estimates for 2015, \$26.8 million, and then back down in 2016 to \$10 million. Again, through you, Madam Chair, a breakdown of which roads, secondary roads this \$26 million was spent on, and to whom were the payments made for the road works to the tune of \$26.8 million in 2015. Madam Chairman, 2015 seems to have been a singular year in Tobago; all expenditures appear to have been increased and now in 2016 decreased.

**Madam Chairman:** All right, so that if the question only relates to the revised estimates in 2015, and, therefore, hon. Minister of Finance, I understand the same caveat—the same undertaking and the same caveat too apply.

**Hon. Imbert:** Madam Chairman, I want to make the point, the statement made by the Member of Siparia is inaccurate. The THA spent its allocation in 2015. The allocation given to it by the then government. It is wrong to say that it was a spectacular year and every item—there were decreases in other Heads, so we had increases and you had decreases. It is wrong to pick out increases and say it is a spectacular year and every Head has been increased—that is not true.

**4.00 p.m.**

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Item 06, same page, 29, line 690, Resurfacing Programme. The estimates for 2015 was \$5 million. The Revised Estimate to the close of the year brought here is \$25 million an increase of \$20 million. Now allocated, 2016, \$5 million. Again, through you, a breakdown of the Resurfacing Programme on which this \$25 million was spent in 2015 and to whom were the payments made with respect to the Resurfacing Programme.

**Hon. Imbert:** Sure. I will provide that information in writing. But I want to point out, the general condition applies. If you look at the 2015 original estimate it was \$5 million. The revised was \$25. We have simply restored the original allocation in 2016. We are talking 2016 estimates here, and if the THA decides in consideration of its needs to reallocate funds within its overall allocation to pave roads in Tobago, I will happily approve it.

**Madam Chairman:** So, hon. Minister of Finance, do I understand that the statement made under recurrent, in terms of the THA being given a blanket sum as approved, applies for development programme that they can apply as they wish subject to the necessary approval.

**Hon. Imbert:** Following the established procedures, it applies to the DP as well as the recurrent.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** My question was, how was the \$25 million—  
[*Interruption*]

**Hon. Imbert:** I said I will answer that.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Siparia, Members, please. Hon. Member for Siparia, I think he has given the undertaking that it will be given in writing. The Chair just sought clarification for that other audience that we are all

so mindful of. All right, so can we go ahead, please? Anything else under the Head that we are dealing with, which is Item 003. Then can we, therefore, go on to Item—

**Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:** Madam Chair—

**Madam Chairman:** Yes, please. I am sorry.

**Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:** I know we are still on Item 003, I am looking at 576—

**Madam Chairman:** Could you guide me to the page, please?

**Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:** Page 23. I just need an explanation for the Establishment of a Centralized Compositing Facility at Goldsborough. It is from \$150,000 to \$1 million. Just an explanation.

**Madam Chairman:** This is on page 22?

**Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:** Page 23, please.

**Madam Chairman:** It is 576. I am sorry.

**Hon. Imbert:** Could I just ask the Member, what explanation do you require?

**Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:** For the increase of \$150,000 and what it entails.

**Hon. Imbert:** Okay, why did it go from \$150,000 to \$1 million? No problem.

**Madam Chairman:** And therefore, can we now go to page 31, Item 004, Social Infrastructure. And therefore I call upon the hon. Member for Caroni East.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Madam Chair, line Item 770 and 771. Line Item 771 has Reconstruction of Scarborough R.C, and line Item 770 has new construction of Scarborough R.C. There is a conundrum there. Is it a new construction or is it a reconstruction. What is happening? You cannot have a reconstruction and a construction—

**Hon. Imbert:** Are you asking and answering your own questions?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Go ahead, answer.

**Hon. Imbert:** You finish asking the question?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Yes.

**Hon. Imbert:** You are not satisfied with your own answer. *[Laughter]*

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Finance, could we have the answer, please?

**Mr. Imbert:** He asked and answered himself.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** That is how he behaves when he does not have an answer.

**Hon. Imbert:** But let me answer you now, since it is my responsibility to answer your question.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Answer it. I am waiting for it.

**Hon. Imbert:** I will now correct your answer. There is an old school and as the former Minister of Education will know that when you are building the new school you have to maintain the old school. So that the reconstruction of Scarborough R.C. is to allow the students to at least learn in some sort of environment. So money has to be spent maintaining the old school until the new school is commissioned.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** They are on the same site?

**Hon. Imbert:** That is a different question? You do not know where the Scarborough RC is? You were Minister of Education.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Where are you building the new one?

**Hon. Imbert:** You do not know that?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** No, I do not know where you are building it.

**Hon. Imbert:** You never went to Tobago?

**Madam Chairman:** Minister of Finance, please.

**Hon. Imbert:** Madam Chair, I am just astonished that the former Minister of Education does not know where the Scarborough Roman Catholic School is. I am astonished.

**Madam Chairman:** Could you kindly answer that question?

**Hon. Imbert:** I find that—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Is it a new site?

**Hon. Imbert:** Am I being asked to tell him, who was Minister for five years, where the Scarborough RC is?

**Madam Chairman:** I think you are being asked to tell the committee. Could you kindly tell us, please?

**Hon. Imbert:** It is in Scarborough. [*Desk thumping and laughter*]

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Naparima.



**Mr. Charles:** Thank you. Item 814, on page 31.

**Madam Chairman:** Could we kindly proceed, please. Could you kindly repeat the question?

**Mr. Charles:** Item 814 on page 31, Teacher Training Programme. In 2014 it was \$750,000 and actually \$800,000 was spent, and it is now reduced to \$100,000. The context of the challenges we face in education, again, in training, could you just give us an explanation for the significant reduction in teacher training?

**Hon. Imbert:** I will have to get that in writing for you, but your point you keep making is well noted, that training is important.

**Madam Chairman:** Any other questions?

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Item 004, page 40.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** I want to know—

**Madam Chairman:** I have recognized the hon. Member for Siparia.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** You can come back.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** I can come back?

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Yes, you can once it is under Item 004. Page 40, Housing and Settlements. I am looking at line Item 454, Courland Estate, Land Development. I note that in 2015, \$18.6 million was spent on this land development project. So that the Revised Estimate is very low down at \$900. Is it that most of the work has been completed, one?

Two, can we get a breakdown of the nature of the works that were done on which this \$18.6 million was expended and to whom were the payments made out of this \$18.6 million in the revised 2015 estimates? Madam Chair, I have a few more on the same page. I do not know if you want me to continue or—*[Interruption]*

**Madam Chairman:** Maybe if you can just give us all and then we would say that they would all be given in writing. Because the details, I suspect—

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Similar.

**Madam Chairman:** Yes.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** So line Item 476, Home Improvement Grant, Tobago. I note an increase of \$5 million. It is now \$7 million, from 2015 \$2 million. I would like to ask how many Home Improvement Grants were given out in 2015 and the average value of each grant? In addition—so that was line Item 476. Then we

have line Item 478 which is—one was the Home Improvement Grant, Tobago and one is the Home Improvement Subsidy, Tobago. Again, the amounts—the numbers given out and the average value of each. Continuing on that same page, line Item 486, Beneficiary-Owned Land Programme-New Home Construction, \$1 million spent in 2015 revised, \$2 million to be spent in 2016. Again the numbers?

**Madam Chairman:** So what you want is for 2015, eh?

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** 2015 expenditures. Because we cannot say what will be done, yet. And there is also line Item 484, Home Completion Programme, Tobago. Again, \$1 million expended. So the number of these home improvement, how many homes were completed and the average value for each of the homes to which the grant was given for completion?

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

**Hon. Imbert:** Before you go to the Member for Caroni East, you are talking about 2015?

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Revised Estimates, yes.

**Hon. Imbert:** So you do not know.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Of course, I do not know. That is why I am asking.

**Hon. Imbert:** Clearly, you were not here.

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

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to now remind the hon. Minister of Finance of the Scarborough Library. It is on page 33. Could he explain the increase of \$5 million? Remember when I asked whether it is for maintenance, what it is for. You said that it would be under development programme. I am seeing it here now, so I want to remind you to answer the question. [*Crosstalk*]

**Madam Chairman:** No, no, it is within the Head of Social Infrastructure.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** When I ask you about the maintenance.

**Hon. Imbert:** What do you mean maintenance?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** It is line Item 490, on page 33. I am just giving him a gentle reminder, Madam Chair.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Finance are you in a position to answer?

**Mr. Imbert:** I am told it is for the outfitting of the library.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Outfitting. So the structure is completed?

**Mr. Imbert:** The library is functional.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** And you are still outfitting. You are continuing to outfit, \$5 million more.

**Mr. Imbert:** Yes.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** All right. So you have answered it now.

**Mr. Imbert:** Yes.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Chaguanas East.

**Mr. Karim:** Madam Chair, may I ask a few questions with respect to Social Infrastructure, on page 33, Item 764. We have had continuous allocations to the Young Scholars Programme. If we could get some details on that. With respect to Item 782 on that same page, if we can have the status with respect to the Development of the Tobago Community College? On page 34, line Item 503, while we would of have a one-off in terms of 2014, the Establishment of a Consortium of Retired Educators and Specialist Teachers, what is the status of that currently? I noted in line Item 524—

**Madam Chairman:** Just a minute.

**Mr. Karim:** Sorry.

**Madam Chairman:** That is why I was asking, what really is the question.

**Mr. Karim:** The question with respect to the Young Scholars Programme—

**Madam Chairman:** Sorry, excuse me. This is with respect to the Establishment of a Consortium of Retired Educators and Specialist Teachers.

**Mr. Karim:** The question is, is it functional?

**Hon. Imbert:** There is no way I am going to go back to 2014. It is not happening.

**Madam Chairman:** But hon. Minister, the question is even with respect to now, there is no allocation in 2014.

**Hon. Imbert:** Correct.

**Madam Chairman:** So I understand the question to be a real time question.

**Hon. Imbert:** No, the Member is asking, whether it was completed?—and that goes back to 2014.

**Mr. Karim:** Well, the question could be asked, why are no funds allocated to the project?

**Hon. Imbert:** I will get an answer for you.

**Mr. Karim:** Right.

**Hon. Imbert:** But “doh” ask me what you did in 2014.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Finance, the question is, why no funds have been allocated in 2016 which I think is a legitimate question. Thank you.

**Mr. Karim:** May I ask another legitimate question?

**Madam Chairman:** Well I will determine if it is legitimate. [*Laughter*]

**Mr. Karim:** Madam Chair, line Item 524, on the same page, the Development of Library Facilities. Can we know what are these library facilities, where are they going to be located?—because there is an allocation in 2015 and 2016. It is reduced. So the question is, what are these and why have they been reduced?

**Madam Chairman:** Are you in a position to answer that hon. Minister of Finance?

**Hon. Imbert:** Madam Speaker, the 2015 estimate was \$1 million and the Revised Estimate is \$500,000. I will certainly get an explanation for this.

**Mr. Karim:** Finally, on page 36, Madam Chair, line Item 592, why has there been no allocation to the Establishment of Skill Based/Technical Vocational Programme in three secondary schools?

**Hon. Imbert:** That has been going on since your tenure. This has been going on since 2015.

**Mr. Karim:** I was just asking.

**Hon. Imbert:** Ask yourself.

**Mr. Karim:** This is the THA, you know.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Finance—

**Hon. Imbert:** Madam Chairman, I understand the concerns, but I wish to make a point. If a programme was not allocated any funds in 2015 when the UNC was in Government, it was not allocated any funds last year, why are you asking me now why we have not allocated any funds in 2016? They should have the answer.

**4.15 p.m.**

**Madam Chairman:** And, hon. Minister of Finance, I am certain that in writing you can provide a very adequate answer.

**Hon. Imbert:** So they do not know why they did not allocate funds?

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Finance, remember we said that there are other people who are interested in these answers. I am sure you will give a very adequate answer. Can we now have hon. Member for Tabaquite? No? Hon. Member for Caroni Central.

**Dr. Tewarie:** I would really like to ask the Minister of Finance a general question.

**Madam Chairman:** I would like a question on an Item.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Well, Chair, you said at the beginning that you would allow some general questions and I was trying to get your—

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Caroni Central, I said that in a context, and that was with respect to the summary page which we passed a long time ago. While I may not see everything I do have assistant eyes here, and neither my assistant's eyes nor mine had picked up any. And you see how sensitive we are, because we have picked up people who really have not tried to attract our attention on more than one occasion. Unless there is a line Item within which we are dealing with, I really cannot allow the question.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Could I then ask, Madam Chair, at the end of the examination of this development budget, if you would give me the opportunity to ask a general question?

**Hon. Imbert:** No.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Finance, the question was directed to the Chair. Hon. Member for Caroni Central, I would really like us to stick within the agreed process. As I have said before, there are other mechanisms for questions to be put to Ministers and I would really ask Members, therefore, to utilize that. It means we will have an interesting Parliament with these other questions. Therefore, can I call on the Member for Siparia, please?

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Madam Chair, with respect to your ruling of no general questions, am I to understand no general questions can be asked in the Standing Finance Committee?

**Madam Chairman:** And, and—

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Am I to understand?

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Siparia, I cannot even begin to answer that question because that is not what I said. I know you came late so that you may have missed certain things. [*Laughter*] Please, please—and you may have missed certain things. We have allowed general questions in a particular context. I am sure the hon. Member for Oropouche East would be in a position to support what has occurred here in terms of general questions and the agreed procedure with respect to which we have taken general questions.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** I did hear you in response to the Member for Caroni Central who was attempting to ask a general question, which was disallowed, and that is why I wondered whether people can ask or not ask. Because, I mean, if we look at the Standing Orders, I do not think there is any prohibition on the nature of the questions once they are relevant to the budget documents that are before us.

**Madam Chairman:** One, I would say, I did not disallow general questions. The general questions were allowed in the context of the figures before us. And the general questions came with respect to the bulk categories. That was the agreement. The way I understand this process is that questions are allowed with respect to the Items that are before us.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** But we did not know what the question was that the Member of Caroni Central was going to ask. The question was disallowed before he asked it.

**Mrs. Robinson-Regis:** He said it was a general question.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Yes, he said general.

**Madam Chairman:** I have ruled on this. Can we kindly proceed with the process, please?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** I have a line item, 546.

**Madam Chairman:** One minute, please, Member for Caroni East, I am sorry. Because I said the four eyes here are quick, I think I recognize the Member for Baratania/San Juan.

**Dr. Khan:** Thank you, Madam Chair On page 38, 07, 387 as well as 410. On 387 I have noticed that there is a decrease in the amount for dialysis. With the non-communicable diseases rising, you would think that that would also rise or remain the same. So in 2016 it has decreased. And also, the thrust of the

Government in your budget debate, you have indicated that primary health care services is high on the agenda and so, too, dental services, but yet I see a decrease in dental services in 410. Both dialysis and dental services have decreased, and that is not in keeping with the thrust of the primary health care.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Finance, are you in a position to answer the question?

**Hon. Imbert:** Thank you. I just want to make a general point. This is the Development Programme. This does not deal with goods and services or personnel expenditure. So that this would relate to purchase of pieces of equipment, refurbishment of buildings and so on, and so on. The decreases are small. You are talking about \$100,000, and therefore, I am certain there is a rational explanation. The THA may, in 2015, have purchased a lot of equipment and they see no need in 2016 to continue with that level of expenditure. But since the Member has asked, I would most certainly try to get an answer as to why there is just \$100,000 difference in the allocation.

**Madam Chairman:** And this would relate to Items 410 and 416.

**Hon. Imbert:** Well, it is the two Items the Member raised, dialysis service department, where there is a difference of \$100,000, and district dental, where there is a difference of—but remember this is Development Programme we are dealing with, not PE or goods and services. So it could be that they have enough equipment or not, as the case may be. So I will get the information for you.

**Madam Chairman:** Anymore questions on Item 004? Yes, hon. Member for Caroni East.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Madam Chair, Item 546, which is operationalization of the new Scarborough Library.

**Madam Chairman:** Could you assist us with the page you are on?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Page 35.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** There is a sum there for the operationalization, but I think the Minister of Finance consulted with his colleague from Tobago where he said previously in answer to the question, the money there was for equipping and the—*[Interruption]*

**Madam Chairman:** Operationalization of new Scarborough Library.

**Hon. Imbert:** What is the number?

**Madam Chairman:** 546 on page 35.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** But you said it was already opened. So what does the operationalization mean for that?

**Hon. Imbert:** Obviously—well, obvious to me anyhow—operationalization is an ongoing process. We have provided \$3 million in 2015. You will see there has been a reduction in \$1 million which a reasonable person would conclude that it is almost fully operationalized. Clearly, there is a requirement to spend another \$1 million in 2016 to complete the full operationalization of the Scarborough Library.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Thank you.

**Mr. Imbert:** And you know, if the former—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Oh, come on—

**Mr. Imbert:**—Prime Minister had met with the Chief Secretary—

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Finance—

**Hon. Imbert:**—you would have got all the answers to all these questions.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Finance, have you finished the answer? Therefore, I will call upon the Member for Siparia.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Page 42 still, under 004. “(c) Sports” I note that a general reduction from 2015—

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Siparia, sorry to disturb you. Could you kindly repeat the page?

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** I am sorry. Someone is disturbing us?

**Madam Chairman:** Yes. Can you repeat the page?

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Page 42. I am looking at line Items under “(c) Sports”, page 42. You have it? I note the global numbers under Sports that there has been a reduction. In 2015, \$68.56 million on the Revised Estimates was spent and for 2016 that has now been reduced to \$17.4, so quite a reduction there. One of these has to do with 659, the Shaw Park Recreation Ground and Cultural Complex, which was allocated \$50 million on the Revised Estimates last year, down to \$5 million. So, through you, if the Minister can give us an answer as to how complete is this Shaw Park Recreational Ground, and how much moneys have been expended thus far on the Shaw Park Recreational Ground.



**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Imbert:** Madam Chairman, first, I would like to say before you stop me, that if the hon. Member for Siparia had responded to the numerous requests by the Chief Secretary of the THA for a meeting, then she would not be asking these questions. [*Desk thumping*] That is a fact. You refused to meet with the Chief Secretary of the THA. And now to deal with the substantive Item. Since you refused to meet with the Secretary, I will tell you.

**Madam Chairman:** May we have an answer, please?

**Hon. Imbert:** I am answering.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you very much.

**Hon. Imbert:** That the Shaw Park Recreational facility is over 90 per cent complete and, therefore, there is no need for large expenditure in 2016. And if you had met with him you would know that.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Madam Chair, the same Item, \$50.1 million was spent, as shown in the Revised Estimates for 2015 and can we please have a breakdown—[*Crosstalk*]

**Madam Chairman:** Excuse me, Members.

**Miss Mc Donald:** Couva South.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Provoked by Port of Spain South. [*Crosstalk*]

**Madam Chairman:** Members, please. I think at this stage I suggest we take the tea break.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Can I just complete this question?

**Madam Chairman:** At this stage, I suggest we take the tea break. This meeting is suspended for—we return here at 5.00 p.m.

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

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

**Madam Chairman:** So can we resume? I think the meeting has resumed. Thank you very much.

**Dr. Moonilal:** May I have the privilege of continuing this matter? I just want to go to page 42.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Oropouche East, I just want you to guide me to the page.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Page 42, and back to this cost Item 659, the Shaw Park Recreational Ground and Cultural Complex. I wanted the Minister to give an undertaking to indicate to us; what is the overall cost of this complex? When did it start? When is it anticipated to be completed? And at what final cost they anticipate that that will be completed?

In 2015 we understand from the data that there was an enormous amount of activity on this project. So far the project is, I think, about \$95 million but there was a lot of activity. We would like to get a list of the works done in 2015; the scope of works; the list of contractors and how much money was paid on this particular project 659 in 2015; and what is anticipated in 2016, the continuation of works, scope of works in particular?

**Hon. Imbert:** I will check Minister Howai's records and revert to you.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Much obliged.

**Madam Chairman:** I think the break did you all well. So can we go on to Item—please, Members—005?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Hold on. I am still on that as well. There is an Item here on the Brian Lara Cricket Complex in Tobago. The same would apply.

**Madam Chairman:** 724?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Yes, 724. The same question would apply if we could get a list of works to be done in 2016; what is the overall cost of the project; when it is expected to be completed; and the list of works to be done in 2016. I am moving on, on the same Sub-Head.

**Hon. Imbert:** Just clarify. You are asking me about 2015 in that too?

**Dr. Moonilal:** No, for the Brian Lara Cricket Complex—

**Hon. Imbert:** You just want to know 2016?

**Dr. Moonilal:** 2016.

**Hon. Imbert:** Fine.

**Dr. Moonilal:** I think you should hope to be able to answer that.

**Hon. Imbert:** Any question under 2016 I could answer.

**Dr. Moonilal:** So I will move on the same Sub-Head. We have here—774 is on page 43—Elite Athlete Development Institute. I wanted to get from the Minister, in writing: when this Institute was established; what is the purpose of

the Institute; a breakdown of this expenditure of \$500,000 in the coming year 2016; and the list of athletes who have benefited from this programme in 2015 and to benefit in 2016.

**Hon. Imbert:** You are asking me to go back beyond 2014?

**Dr. Moonilal:** What I am saying is that I want to get an idea of the objective of the Institute, when it was established—just an historical data.

**Hon. Imbert:** It was clearly established before 2014. So you want me to tell you what happened in 2013 and 2012?

**Dr. Moonilal:** When was it established?

**Hon. Imbert:** Before 2014 because it is an expenditure of \$750—

**Dr. Moonilal:** Well since both of us do not know when, maybe you can just find—

**Hon. Imbert:** Before 2014.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Yes, but you cannot say whether it is in 2009 or 1825.

**Hon. Imbert:** Madam Chairman, I want a ruling on this. How far back am I supposed to go?

**Madam Chairman:** Let me just ensure that I understand the question. What I understand the Member to be asking is the purpose and objective of the project? when it was started? And about the current expenditure. So you are not giving all the financials for the period.

**Hon. Imbert:** Yes, I got all that, Madam Chairman, but the point I am making is that when you look at the Estimates you would see that there is an Expenditure of \$750,000 in 2014. So that obviously this thing began either in 2014 or before that. So how far am I supposed to go back, Madam Chairman?

**Dr. Moonilal:** I do not want the Estimates for 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Finance, I agree that the question does not say how far back you have to go, because how far you go back will determine by when the project was started. But that is just an historical fact, started in 2009, purpose this, current position that. So we are not going through any story.

**Hon. Imbert:** Madam Chairman, you realize that if that approach is adopted, then I will be asked to give explanations on matters that go all the way back to 10 years ago.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Finance, I hope you are not being anticipatory. I think if it is just a question with respect to when it was started, the objective, and what the current situation is, I think that it is reasonable—

**Hon. Imbert:** I understand.

**Madam Chairman:**—and that the Member is entitled.

**Hon. Imbert:** I will try my best to go back in time, but I can speak about the 2016 Estimates.

**Madam Chairman:** Yes, and that is primarily what you have to speak on.

**Hon. Imbert:** I will have difficulty going back in time.

**Dr. Moonilal:** You are very clear.

**Madam Chairman:** Another? Yes, please.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Yes, I have another one apart from the Elite Development Institute. There is also the Youth Development Institute. Now, again I will ask the question, Madam Chairman whether it was started in 2014 or in 1920, I do not want annual reports on what was done and so on, just when it was established. I do not need a report on every year. But I am very concerned that for the Youth Development Institute, their programme for 2016, what that entails that their estimate \$500,000 to be spent in 2016.

**Hon. Imbert:** Madam Chairman, can I intervene here, and I am being anticipatory if you do not mind. I have looked at the Standing Orders. We are supposed to be looking at the 2016 Estimates, any other matter of a general nature or otherwise is by resolution of the House, and there has been no resolution of this House to go back in time beyond the 2016 Estimates. So I am asking for an interpretation on this and I will refer you, Madam Chairman, to the relevant Standing Order before we get any further. We are still on the second Head—

**Dr. Moonilal:** He is wasting time.

**Hon. Imbert:** I am not wasting time. I am trying to make sure you do not waste time. So, can I go to the relevant Standing Order? Is it 83 and 84?

**Mrs. Robinson-Regis:** Yes, 84, Procedure on Examination—

**Hon. Imbert:** Yes, Procedure on Examination of Estimates, page 52, and, Madam Chairman, it speaks about the consideration of each Head and each provision. But I had also seen in another Standing Order that if we are to go outside of the consideration of the Estimates, then there needs to be a resolution of the House. I will find it, Madam Chairman. I will find it.

Yes, Madam Chairman, I do not know why the Member for Siparia is mumbling like that. 82(3), and I think that is very clear:

“By resolution the House may, at in its discretion, refer to the Committee any other matter or matters relating to Expenditure.”

But we are dealing with the 2016 Estimates, not the 2014 Estimates, and I would ask for an interpretation on this Madam Chairman.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Madam Chair, the questions we are asking have nothing to do with Estimates. We do not want Estimates of 2015, 2012 and 2011.

**Hon. Imbert:** By resolution of the House for that.

**Dr. Moonilal:** It is simply to ask when a programme started.

**Hon. Imbert:** My interpretation of this is that a resolution of the House is required.

*[Discussion between Madam Chairman and the Procedural Clerk]*

**Madam Chairman:** Members! Members, in terms of Standing Order 82(4), the way I understand—even though the question is not coming in that sort of way and may be Members on the other side need to be careful with respect to how they are framing the question. If the intent of the question is really to question whether this is DP or whether this is recurrent expenditure, I would allow that type of question. Anything outside of what is presented in the details, I would think is not permissible under the Standing Order. So that I think the information that the hon. Member may be seeking to get, he may get if framed in a different way.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Okay, let us go now. The establishment of Tobago Youth Development Institute, \$500,000 in 2016; could we have a breakdown of how this \$500,000 in 2016 would be spent and, could you tell us how long that programme has been in force?

**Hon. Imbert:** I can tell you that the allocation for 2016 is not for the start-up of this programme.

**Madam Chairman:** Are there any other questions or matters for clarification under this Item 004? If not, I suggest we go on to Item 005 which commences at page 47. Are there any questions on Item 005, Multi-Sectoral and Other Services?

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 15 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Madam Chairman:** I would like to thank the representatives from the Tobago House of Assembly for coming and assisting the committee. I wish you all a safe return journey to Tobago. So you all are relieved. We are going back to the Ministry of National Security to complete the exercise we started.

**5.15 p.m.**

**Madam Chairman:** So, hon. Members, while the technocrats find their seats, maybe we can just all get on the same page. We are at Head 22, Ministry of National Security. And I do not have mine in front of me but we are at Sub-Head 09. We are about to begin the Development Programme.

Hon. Members, we shall now proceed to continue the examination of Head 22, Ministry of National Security.

*Head 22.*

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

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Oropouche East.

**Dr. Moonilal:** As per direction earlier, you would allow for a couple of general questions at the beginning?

**Madam Chairman:** Madam Chairman, we are at Sub-Head 09, Development Programme. If you would wait one minute, let me just get—

**Dr. Moonilal:** Sure.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Oropouche East, I believe what I had indicated from the start is that the general questions would be allowed under the general category and not within their estimates. Okay? So we are at page 60, Item 004, Social Infrastructure.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you, Madam Chairman. Page 60, line Item 026, Establishment of a Marine Ship Safety and Port Facility Security Unit. I note that 2015, allocated \$5 million, but in the revised, nothing was spent and now we see \$8 million in 2016. My question, through you, what is the \$8 million? I am saying that there is now an increase from what was estimated earlier, \$5 million. What is the reason for a differential in cost? No work has been done but there now appears to be a cost increase and an explanation as to that cost increase.

**Madam Chairman:** Basically, it is what the \$8 million is going to be spent on?

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Yes, Madam.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Minister of National Security.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** That is for the establishment of the Marine Ship Safety and Port Facility Security Unit. It is a new building, new construction; it is a purchase, in fact. Purchase of a building that is for the marine port security unit.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** It says Establishment of a Marine Ship Safety and Port Facility Security Unit, so that \$8 million is to purchase a building?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** Purchase the building.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** And can we ask then which building and from who?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** That I will have to provide in writing, I do not have that information.

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

**Mr. Paray:** Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. Hon. Minister, I am looking at Item 015, Construction of Coast Guard Facility at Galeota. Can you give me an indication of how far along that—I am assuming it is a new facility that is being built? And secondly, if any provisions for new vessels that will be stationed in Galeota in the new port, if you can speak to anything on that. Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Minister of National Security, do you have the information?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** I will put that in writing.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Page 60, 045, Establishment of Coast Guard Base at Charlotteville, Tobago, I note an allocation was made in 2015, but revised. None was spent and none has been allocated in 2016. Is it that this programme or this project is now stopped or scrapped? The Coast Guard base in Charlotteville.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** We are still pursuing land acquisition for that base and that is still in process. The acquisition of the land to construct the base.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** And again, whose land? You do not know. You have to identify—

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** I will have to give you that in writing, I cannot—

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Has the land been identified?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** The land has been identified—you will get it in writing. I can give you that in writing.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** But what will I get in writing? I am continuing my question.

**Mr. Imbert:** “Yuh gonna get ah lot ah stuff in writing.”

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Finance, please. I think it is a valid question, Minister of National Security. Has the land been identified?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** I said the land has been identified, Madam Chair, but I—

**Madam Chairman:** It has been identified?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** Yes, it has been identified. As for the owner, I will have to provide that in writing.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you. That is the proper answer.

**Madam Chairman:** And the stage of the acquisition.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** That can be done.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you, Madam. Through you, again, is there any cost of this process for acquisition?

**Madam Chairman:** Well, that is why I asked him to say the whole process of the acquisition so that would say what stage they have reached and as an attorney-at-law, I am sure you understand the—

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** The process.

**Madam Chairman:**—of contract. Yes?

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Any other?

**Dr. Moonilal:** I want to go to—within the same Sub-Head on page 62, 165, Base Infrastructure for Camps at La Romain (South) Felicity and Forres Park. Is the Minister aware that at Felicity, those lands were diverted for other issues back to agriculture?

**Mr. Imbert:** Madam Chair, I would like a clarification. That has nothing to do with this provision in the 2016 estimates. I would ask that you make a ruling on that. Whether that is a fair question or not.



**Dr. Moonilal:** Madam Chairman, if the Minister is aware that the lands are not available in Felicity, then the estimates and allocations would have to be re-adjusted. It is concerning the money because the money is for three. Items and I am asking the Minister if he is aware that the Felicity lands have been reverted to the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries. So that clearly you are looking at La Romain and Forres Park.

**Madam Chairman:** I think it is a fair question. Really, you are asking him: are the lands still available?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Are the lands at Felicity still available for use for that project, for the camp?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** I am unable to answer that right now. I can produce that in writing for you, the answer for you in writing.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Thank you.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you, Madam Chairman. Page 61, still under the same Item at line 049, Refit of two (2) Coastal Patrol Vessels. I see \$8 million has been allocated and I would like to find out which coastal vessels are to be refitted from these moneys. Two vessels. Which two?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** These are CG21 and CG22, two coastal patrol vessels.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** And the cost for each one.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** There was a \$25 million charge, this is the balance of payment at 2016 that is being made up for those vessels, to refit them.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Okay.

**Dr. Moonilal:** I can move to page 65—or is it too far? Item 004, so I am looking at 191. In the budget debate, the Member for Point Fortin, of course, was very happy to announce the Point Fortin Fire Station construction project, \$3 million is estimated for the 2016 expenditure. It is a new project, of course. Is the Minister aware that the total cost of that fire station is estimated without VAT at \$95 million and very little would be done with \$3 million for that project? And what would be the Minister's approach to funding that project in Point Fortin given that it would be in excess of \$100 million and you have provided \$3 million in the estimate?

**Mr. Imbert:** I will answer that. This allocation was made by me and it is designed to get the project going; it is designed to do all of the necessary engineering, planning and tendering to get this project going. And if the implementation proceeds

rapidly, then consideration would be given to providing additional funds to meet the needs of the project during 2016.

**Mr. Karim:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. May I go to page 62? I did not realize we had gone quickly.

**Madam Chairman:** Once you are within the Sub-Head, you can move between the pages.

**Mr. Karim:** Okay, thank you. Air Guard, Item 030 and 046, will the hon. Minister indicate why no sums have been allocated, either for the refurbishment or upgrade of the Air Guard C26 and further to that, what plans do you have for this aircraft or at least two? I think it is two. These are the fixed-wing aircraft.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** I will provide the answer to you in writing.

**Mr. Paray:** Thank you, Madam Chairman. Minister of National Security, on page 65 under Item 156, can you tell me if any of that developmental allocation has been made for the purchase of fire appliances for the Mayaro Fire Station? Thank you.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** The allocation here is to purchase high-volume pumps for the Fire Service.

**5.30 p.m.**

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Siparia.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** It is okay, Madam, thank you.

**Dr. Moonilal:** I am at page 64, under Prison Service. The ongoing project, the fencing project at the prison, is that captured here Mr. Minister, and under what heading would you have that to complete that project?

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Minister of National Security, would you want that answer deferred for a little later in the evening?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** Madam Chair, this is under a different Sub-Head. I just want to find it.

**Madam Chairman:** So can we defer it while you get assistance and we can continue?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** You can do it. Yes Madam.

**Madam Chairman:** You have another question, Member for Oropouche?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Under 031: Acquisition of Closed Circuit Television System, there is an allocation here of \$6.5 million at 031. I want to ask the Minister to tell us what is the total cost of this project? My recollection is that this project was a bit more costly than this. And what scope of works you intend to undertake with \$6.5 million when the project itself may be significantly more? If you can give some information on what exactly the \$6.5 million would do in the context of a much wider scope of works.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** I would provide that in writing for you.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Sure.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Thank you, Madam Chairman. Page 64, under Immigration. I wondered why it is that no moneys have been allocated for the purchase of a launch for the Immigration Division, given the amount of human trafficking we are hearing about and illegal immigrants who are coming into the country for which the Immigration Division has some responsibility?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** A new security apparatus is being looked at to incorporate the immigration and coast guard and so on, so that has not been done as yet. So there is no conceptual clarification to purchase the launch at this point in time.

**Mr. Karim:** Madam Chair, on page 67, I have two issues I would like to raise, 046: Upgrade of Machine Readable Passport to e-Passport, allocation of \$4 million. We recognize this is a new project. If we can get some details as to—

**Madam Chairman:** I am sorry, we are still at Item 004.

**Mr. Karim:** Okay, all right. I will get back to that.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Could the Minister of National Security indicate, I am now looking at 006: Outfitting of PIC 9 buildings for Immigration Division.

**Madam Chairman:** Could you kindly refer us to page, please?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Page 64.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you.

**Dr. Moonilal:** It is at 006 under Immigration. There is an allocation of \$2 million. Mr. Minister, could you indicate whether that \$2 million will complete the outfitting work? To my knowledge, much more is required for the completion. When do you expect that this project would get further funding?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** That is for IT infrastructure. That sum allocated there is for IT Infrastructure.

**Dr. Moonilal:** So this is only for the IT?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** IT infrastructure.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Okay, thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Can we then go on to Item 005: Multi-sectoral and Other Services?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Madam Chair, page 66, 002: Institutional Strengthening of the Forensic. We spoke about that yesterday and I see that there is no allocation for it to help to bring the forensic in line with requirements for accreditation, et cetera. Could the Government or the Minister make any statement as far as whether there is going to be any further need for allocation there?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** I will have to provide that for you in writing.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Do you intend to do some work on it?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** I would provide that in writing.

**Mr. Imbert:** I want to make the point that there is no allocation for the last three years, under you.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** You are in Government now. You are in Government now.

Madam Chairman, next question. There is an establishment of a DNA database for a new project on Item 012. Can you just give us some information on what that database you are hoping to establish?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** Staff is being hired to do that right now and we are in the process of doing that; hiring staff to pursue that right now.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Could you go a little further and tell us what type of database you are trying to achieve; database of whom? It is not a hidden secret, but—

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** That, I would have to provide in writing. I do not have that at my hand today.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** We had passed some legislation requiring the consideration of providing database for employees of the security services at one time. Is that going to be a consideration of the present Government?

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Caroni East, you have directed it to the Minister of National Security.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** We are continuing to develop the database at the Forensic Science Centre.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** You do not want to be a little more clear?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** No, no.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** You cannot be or you do not want to be?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** I have answered you on what we are doing right now.

**Dr. Moonilal:** On page 67, I am looking at 056. Now you have a new project called Joint Border Protection Agency, where you have allocated \$3 million. Mr. Minister is this the \$3 million to be spent on the consultation to kick in that process and other related preliminary discussions, or is this for a building? What is this \$3 million for?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** For preliminary works and setting up the agency.

**Dr. Moonilal:** For preliminary works and setting up the agency. But you indicated to us earlier in the proceedings that you were going to embark on a consultation process before you begin anything. When is that process due to begin?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** There is ongoing discussion among the agencies right now.

**Dr. Moonilal:** So you have started it already.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** That is right, we have started that.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Okay.

**Mr. Karim:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will now return to the question I was going to ask before, page 67, 046: the Upgrade of Machine Readable Passport to e-Passport, \$4 million. I would like to get some details on this, please, in terms of commencement, completion. That is with respect to the e-passport.

The second Item is on 054: upgrade and expansion of the MyPART Programme. When I examined the schedule under the Ministry of National Security, no mention is made of the MyPART Programme. Mention is made of the MiLAT programme, so I was wondering whether there is some anomaly here. I notice that you have a new project and I am not sure because currently the MyPART Programme is resident at the National Energy Skills Centre.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** With respect to your second question, I would have to put that in writing for you, some clarification. On your first question with respect to the machine readable passport, we are pursuing Cabinet approval at this point in time to proceed with that venture.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Madam Chairman, page 67, Item 032. Could the hon. Minister give us an idea of what are the programmes, if he wants, on the Citizen Security Programme that will constitute the \$28 million in expenditure for this year?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** It is a continuation of the same programme that was run in 2015. It is the same programme. It has not changed. So it is the same programme that has been run in 2015. You would notice it is the same figure.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** There are no new projects within the programme?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** No new projects. It is the same programme.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** And part of it is funded by IDB? Has IDB done any review of it so far?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** I would provide that for you in writing.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** We are getting everything in writing. We might as well go home and put everything in writing.

**Hon. Member:** Yes.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Finance, please. So that the response would be given in writing?

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

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Page 68, line Item 008: Acquisition of Naval Assets. I note that the revised estimates 2015, \$557.1 million would have been spent and I see 2016, \$237.3 million projected to be spent for naval assets. Would the hon. Minister be so kind as to tell us—

**Madam Chairman:** 008 on page 68?

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Yes, Ma'am, the last line. This \$273 million, would the hon. Minister tell us what it is he proposes to spend the \$273 million on?

And further, in keeping with the words of the hon. Minister of Finance for locking down your borders and so on, do you have plans for additional naval assets, in addition to what these payments are for? Because I see no other Item for naval assets.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** I would be able to provide that for you in writing; provide the answers for you.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** And whilst you are doing so, would you also indicate whether any new naval assets would be acquired? These are assets that were ordered previously in 2015. Some have come and some are still on hold. Any other naval assets to help you with your border protection that you spoke of? Thank you.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Madam Chairman, page 67, Item 048. I am trying to understand the logistical support for helicopter and the meaning of the words MTH. I notice the allocation has fallen to \$10 million. Can we get an explanation of what this is about?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** That is based on the insurance that has now gone to recurrent expenditure and we are supposed to purchase some inlet barrier filters.

**Mr. Imbert:** The other expenditure items associated with this item are elsewhere, under recurrent.

**Dr. Rambachan:** So the \$10 million is for a specific part or something?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** Insurance has gone to recurrent.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Yeah, I know.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** It is the end of the five-year programme.

**Dr. Rambachan:** But your \$10 million is for what?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** To purchase the inlet barrier filters for the aircrafts.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Caroni Central, did I observe that you tried to get my attention just now?

**Dr. Tewarie:** Just one question I had, which had to do with the Citizen Security Programme. That programme was a successful programme that was positively reviewed and I think that it was due for expansion. I just wanted to ask the Minister whether the expansion is going to be executed in 2016 or you might be considering it or whatever?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** There are plans to look at expanding the programme but that is based on discussions and so on going forward.

**Madam Chairman:** Any other matters on Item 005? If not, can we move on to the Infrastructure Development Fund? We can go to the back of our books. Thank you very much. Can we go to Item 004?

**5.45 p.m.**

**Dr. Moonilal:** Yes, Madam Chairman. I had asked a question before, the Minister was supposed to get back to us, but we found it. Minister, it is on page 284, the Prison Service and the IDF. You have allocated \$8.7 million for the construction of the perimeter fence. I dare not ask when it started, [*Laughter*] but could I ask where is it in the sense that I suspect it is much more than \$8.7 million to complete that project?

**Mr. Imbert:** It is no expenditure in 2015. This is 2014.

**Dr. Moonilal:** It was transferred from the Ministry of Justice.

**Mr. Imbert:** Okay, okay.

**Dr. Moonilal:** You would not know anything about that. So could I ask—

**Mr. Imbert:** You did it. I guess I was—

**Madam Chairman:** Yes, and therefore you should allow him to tell us.

**Mr. Imbert:** Sure.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Yes Ma'am. Through you, Ma'am, to the Minister of National Security. Could I have an indication of the amount of money required to complete this project? This project, I anticipate, was in excess of about \$65 million. How much money is required to complete it? It had started some time ago, and whether this will complete the project, or you will have to get some other moneys by mid-year for it?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** I will have to provide that for you in writing. I do not have that.

**Dr. Moonilal:** You will provide that? Okay, sure.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Page 284, under Fire Service. I noticed in 2016 under Construction of Chaguaramas Fire Station and construction of Arouca Fire Station, and my emphasis on the word “construction”—why is it no funds have been allocated for 2016, and as well for the Tunapuna Fire Station, the Point Fortin Fire Station—the Penal has \$3 million—Black Rock and the Wrightson Road Fire Station. Why is it that no money has been allocated for those fire stations?

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

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** The answer would be different for each one. So I will have to put that in writing for you.



**Madam Chairman:** And as we move on to—can we go now to Item 005, Multi-Sectoral and Other Services? This is at page 285.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Sorry, I should have asked first. Should I go ahead?

**Madam Chairman:** Yes, please, hon. Member for Caroni East.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Under Public Buildings on page 285, 001, Construction of six Purpose Built Supreme Courts of Judicature Buildings. Would that be taken up now by the Judiciary, and is there a vote in the Judiciary for that because there is no vote here?

**Mr. Imbert:** We have given the Judiciary a global allocation. As I indicated in the Budget Statement, we are going to hold extensive consultations with the Judiciary, with a view to allowing them full control and responsibility of their procurement requirements and, therefore, if during 2016 we are able to settle the mechanism—but not if, when, during 2016 we settle the mechanism for the procurement by the Judiciary of contracts for its buildings, an appropriate allocation will be made.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Yeah, but are you thinking of seeking their support to construct these?

**Mr. Imbert:** What I would say is that I listened very carefully to the speech made by the hon. Chief Justice at the opening of the law term. One of the points he made or it might have been in an interview after that, one of the points he made was that—he complained that over the last five years none of these buildings has been built. So it is obviously important to the Judiciary that we build these multi-purpose buildings.

So as one of the people who would be meeting with the Judiciary, I certainly would seek clarification on this, and if, in fact, it is a priority project, then I would most certainly make funds available within, of course, the constraints of the national budget. So we will be meeting with the Judiciary. We will work out the mechanism, and then we will start to make funds available to them for their buildings, including this one, okay?

**Madam Chairman:** Can I consider that Item 005 Multi-sectoral and Other Services is now complete?

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 22 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Madam Chairman:** Therefore, can we relieve the technocrats from the Ministry of National Security? I thank them for their assistance.

Can we now move on to Head 64? The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. I am sure there is need to do some infrastructural changes. Therefore, can we just suspend for two minutes to allow the accommodation? We will be back here at 5.55 p.m.

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

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

**Madam Chairman:** This meeting is resumed, and we are now at Head 64, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

*Head 64.*

I will now invite the Minister of Finance to make a brief opening statement not exceeding five minutes.

**Mr. Imbert:** Madam Chairman, what would ask—I would make a very brief opening statement, explaining the financial relationship between the police force and the Minister of Finance, and then I would ask the Minister of National Security to make an equally brief statement on whatever relationship there is between his Ministry and the police service.

Madam Chairman, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service in recent times has been given its own allocation. The police service thereby applies directly to the Ministry of Finance for releases. So, therefore, there is no financial relationship between the Ministry of National Security and the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. There would be an operational relationship with respect to the police operations.

So with respect to allocations, the allocations are made by the Ministry of Finance in consultation with the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. So in terms of the estimates, it is the Ministry of Finance that would have received the request from the police service and made the allocations. I will now pass over to the Ministry of National Security.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to emphasize that in terms of the relationship between the Minister of National Security and the Commissioner of Police with respect to operations, he reports directly to me; with respect to finance, as mentioned a while ago, he deals directly with the Ministry of Finance. However, he is here to give us that necessary support and we will proceed as required. I just want to put that on the table, Madam Chair.

*Question proposed:* That Head 64 stand part of the Schedule.

**Madam Chairman:** The sum \$3,284,118,000 for Head 64, Trinidad and Tobago Police Service is comprised of money proposed for expenditure under the following Sub-Heads and Items to be found in the *Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure and the Draft Estimates of Development Programme*.

We are at page 399, *Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure*. Might I call Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure?

**6.00p.m.**

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** We now understand the ruling you gave earlier. Would we be allowed to ask any general questions on page 399?

**Madam Chairman:** Once they are related to what is here, certainly.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Yes, thank you very much. Under Personnel Expenditure, page 399, I note the increase of \$1.175 billion and, again, the question we have asked for all Personnel Expenditure is the breakdown, the ditto line that we have for all questions of expenditure.

**Madam Chairman:** So can we get a similar undertaking?

**Mr. Imbert:** Ditto.

**Madam Chairman:** And that would apply to Personnel Expenditure right through this Head?

**Mr. Imbert:** Ditto.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you very much. Okay. So, can we then therefore go on to—I am sorry, the Member for Caroni East.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** I would just draw your attention to the Overtime-Monthly Paid Officers. If you look at the figures they keep increasing from 2014 from \$290 million and the revised estimates in 2015 to \$300 million and 2016 to \$400million. Would the Commissioner of Police who has responsibility for the operation or the National Security Minister—sorry, sorry—be able to give us an understanding of why this increase in allowances continue to move upward?

**Madam Chairman:** But hon. Member for Caroni East, is it not under Personnel Expenditure?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Those are allowances separate from salaries and remuneration and NIS contributions and so on.

**Madam Chairman:** Well, I thought it was salaries, COLA and everything under Personnel Expenditure.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** I think they deserve some explanation.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The question with respect to overtime is based on the operational demand of the police service relative to the shortage of manpower.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Okay, so there is more demand for the increased activity and the increased work by the police service.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** That is correct, yeah.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** And would that go similarly for the Monthly-Paid Officers which have also been continuing to increase from \$280 million in 2015 to \$480 million in 2016? That is another \$200 million. So, allowances in total have increased by about \$300 million from 2015 to 2016 for officers. Is that the same explanation?

**Mr. Imbert:** Let me answer that. That is part of the overall Personnel Expenditure that would involve arrears, increases in allowances and so on. It is part of the ditto answer, and we will explain this increase in allowances under that rubric.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Okay.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Thank you, Madam Chairman. The hon. Minister of National Security just said that part of the need for this high level of overtime, the \$100 million extra, was the shortage of the manpower, people have to work overtime. Can the hon. Minister let us know how many police officers therefore are currently employed? What is the number that reflects a shortage? Is it 1,000, 2000? By how many officers are you short or have you done an analysis to understand how many officers you have, you do not have that you should have? My final question. On any one shift, of the complement of officers you have now, how many officers are on duty?

**Madam Chairman:** Minister of National Security, are you in a position to answer that orally?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** There are 6,711 police officers and right now there is a shortage of 996 police officers. The remainder I can provide in writing for you or that is good enough.

**Dr. Rambachan:** The other part of the question, you probably missed it. Of the 6,711 that are available, on any one shift, depending on eight-hour shift or 12-hour shift: how many officers are on duty in the country on any one shift?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** I would have to provide that for you in writing. It is not fixed, it varies based on situation, based on the operational tempo. So in any one day that could change, in any one month that could change. So, I would have to provide that in writing.

**Madam Chairman:** And, therefore, would we want some time period? Hon. Member for Tabaquite, in relation to that question is the time period for 2016?

**Mr. Imbert:** It would have to be for 2016 going forward. It would have to be based on an estimate of the numbers requested.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** The other 900 that are not within your establishment, could you just give some minimal explanation if it is at all possible of what are your plans to fill these 900 positions?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** I would provide that for you in writing.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** You see, that would link with one of the questions I was going to come with if I could ask it now, and that is the question of training. I see you have reduced the expenditure for training and, therefore, if training is concomitant with bringing new police officers—

**Mr. Imbert:** Madam Chairman, may I ask under what line item training has been reduced? Are you a “seer-man”?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Goods and Services.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay, so we have not reached Goods and Services yet. Members, please.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** I just wanted to bring it if it is interlinked.

**Madam Chairman:** Well, you see then, hon. Members, we would be all about the place.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** So when we reach there ask the question related to—

**Madam Chairman:** Please. You see, then we would just be, we would not have a sense of organization, we would be all about the place.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Ma’am, could I ask the Minister of National Security—he just told us a few minutes ago that 900-plus police officers you have less than what you need. Could you tell us in 2016 alone, how many police officers you intend to recruit and train? What number, 100, 200, 300, no hundred? That is all I asked.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** I would that in writing for you.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Could you put something else in writing too as you reduce that in writing to tell us how much you intend to recruit in 2016 and what is the estimated cost of that?

**Madam Chairman:** Can we therefore, Members, go on to 02, Goods and Services which begins at page 400. Item 001, Police Service (Trinidad).

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you, Madam Chairman. On page 400, several items, basically the same question, so I would state the line item first. Line 01, Travelling and Subsistence, Uniforms, Electricity, down to 09, Rent/Lease—

**Madam Chairman:** So 01 to 09 inclusive?

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** No, Ma'am. I am sorry. May I repeat please?

**Madam Chairman:** Yes, please.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** 01, then 04—sorry, 01, 03 and 04. Then we are looking at 09, 10, 11 and 12. The question is all these items have been decreased. Each line has been decreased by, in some cases, the second one—Uniforms—have been decreased by \$20 million. In 2015 the estimates revised was \$40 million. So, an explanation as to why the decreases in each of these line items. What exactly is being decreased? If we are talking about Uniforms, is it that you have enough and you do not need as many? When we come to Rent/Lease—Vehicles and Equipment, we have a \$4 million decrease. Again, why? Why are we having these decreases? Is it that we have enough of these things and less expenditure? So each of these items have been decreased.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** I would have to provide that for you in writing because it spans a number of different line items.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** If I may just finish the items.

**Madam Chairman:** I am sorry.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** I am sorry, Madam. Madam Chairman, page 401, a similar situation where we have 13, Maintenance of Vehicles also decreased by \$21.8 million; Repairs and Maintenance—Equipment decreased by \$500,000; 16, Contract Employment decreased by \$16.5 million; line 17, Training also decreased by \$12 million; 19, Official Entertainment decreased by \$40,000; 21, Repairs and Maintenance decreased by \$14 million and the other one is Short-Term Employment decreased by \$7 million. All of these. Continuing, 28, Other Contracted Services, a decrease of \$2 million, Extraordinary Expenditure, \$3.2 million; 40, Food at Institutions, \$1.5 million then Medical Expenses decreased

by \$15.8 million. Thereafter promotions, \$1.5 million a decrease; \$5 million decrease in Hosting of Conferences. In fact, it goes on. Madam Chairman, in the global figure under Goods and Services there has been a dramatic reduction in the amounts being allocated and an explanation as to why for the reduction in each of these, and what is being left out as we go forward to put in writing.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** I would ask the Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Imbert:** I have some answers to some of the questions. What I am told—I would use “Uniforms” as an example—the award of contracts for Uniforms goes through a circle. So that you may be at the end of a procurement cycle in 2015, and thereby you would have a large expenditure and then you may commence a new procurement cycle in 2016 and, therefore, the need for money would not be as significant as in 2015. So it has a lot to do with the procurement cycle in terms of the acquisition of these items. There are lots of different explanations here with respect to each item, but I would prefer, rather telling you orally, I just picked out the Uniforms once.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** You said you would give us—

**Mr. Imbert:** I know that, but the fact is that these—I want to reinforce the point that this is an estimate, it is an allocation and this would have been an appropriation that is being proposed by the Ministry of Finance based on a request coming from the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service directly to the Minister of Finance. The Budgets Division would have looked at the procurement cycle and would have made an allocation that is consistent with a consideration of exactly when funds would be required. But in terms of all of the things you have asked for, I think it is best that we give further details in writing. I just picked out Uniforms to explain that to you.

**Madam Chairman:** Just for clarification, would it be that in terms of the details, Uniforms, some of them are coming from the Ministry of Finance and some coming from the Ministry?

**Mr. Imbert:** Some of the answers would come from the Ministry of Finance because it would be unfair to ask the Ministry of National Security to explain why the Ministry of Finance has reduced a certain allocation with respect to the police service, because the Minister would not be involved in those discussions. But some from me and some from him.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** If I may, are you saying that the Ministry of Finance will explain why the decreases? I think I asked a little more than just why. What is being cut? May I complete my question please?

**Madam Chairman:** One minute, please. Can we go on, Member for Siparia?

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** The other part of the question is what exactly is being cut within each of these lines?

**Madam Chairman:** Yes. That is why I think I sought the clarification that some answers would come or some parts will come from the Ministry of Finance and some answers and some parts thereof will come from the Ministry.

**Mr. Imbert:** That is what we said.

**Madam Chairman:** That is why I wanted to make it clear.

**6.15 p.m.**

**Mr. Karim:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I was just concerned—the question really is on page 401, Item 15. We would have seen it highlighted there as Repairs and Maintenance of Equipment. When we did the Ministry of National Security, that Item was really transferred—it was seen as Item 96, new Sub-Item, but we see it listed here on the same page under No. 96, Fuel and Lubricants. I was wondering whether there is any confusion in the accounting, or is it the appropriate line item. Let me just make sure that I am very clear what I am saying.

When you look at what we did before in the recurrent, you would have seen maintenance and repairs of equipment, but you would not have had an item, there are no allocations because it was a transfer to a new Sub-Item, No. 96. I am seeing it twice in here.

**Mr. Imbert:** I am really struggling a little bit. It is quite clear. Previously everything would have been subsumed under the heading “Maintenance of Vehicles, but in this year in a number of Ministries, particularly in National Security and its related agencies, fuel and lubricants have been given their own Item; that is all. I do not see the problem with that. Do you not want to look at fuel and lubricants separately as a specific item?

**Mr. Karim:** Madam Chair, that is not the issue I was raising.

**Mr. Imbert:** What is the issue?

**Mr. Karim:** What I was saying is that for the accounting purposes, when we did the Ministry of National Security, Minister of Finance, you would have noted when I made the comment we were saying that there were no allocations for equipment, repair and maintenance, and that was because that Item was transferred to a new Sub-Item, No. 96. What I am pointing out to you is on page 401 both are represented with allocations, so I was just asking the question—



**Mr. Imbert:** I thought I made myself very clear. There was a total allocation for maintenance. The total allocation has now been split into two parts. Obviously, if you split into two, you will see two allocations where there was one before.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Chaguanas East, please, if I may assist. I do recall the question was why the sum was a smaller sum under the vehicles and the maintenance and so on. We were told that the lubricants and fuel were taken out and put into a new category. That is what I understood the explanation to have been.

**Dr. Rambachan:** I am looking under goods and services, page 41, Maintenance of Vehicles. Of course, the \$10 million would have probably been taken off from there and put under lubricants, so that is how it got to 40. The question I want to ask: this allocation for maintenance of vehicles is it for maintenance of vehicles to be done by in-house personnel or does VMCOTT and other service providers come under this?

**Madam Chairman:** We have a question. Are we getting an answer?

**Mr. Imbert:** I would answer that on behalf of the Minister. What I am told is that approximately 50 per cent of the vehicles are maintained by VMCOTT. There are a number of vehicles where they are supplied by companies and included in the contract for supply is also a contract for maintenance, and that makes up the bulk of the remaining 50 per cent, and then there is a small percentage where there are other maintenance providers that maintain the vehicles.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Mr. Minister of National Security, given this violent slash, where \$21,800 goes, but \$10 million is in fuel and lubricants, where is the next \$10 million that you took away from maintenance of vehicles? Is it that we will reach a stage now where when citizens call for police, the police would say they do not have vehicles or vehicles are not working or they are down, and they have not been properly maintained? Given that \$10 million is missing, 2015, \$61 million, we are down to \$40 million from \$20 million, only \$10 million is in fuel and lubricants, do we have anything to be concerned about, from a national security perspective, not a finance perspective—to be concerned about from a national security perspective, not a finance perspective. From a national security perspective, could you give us a reassurance, Mr. Minister of National Security, that the citizens of this country can be assured that when they call for a police vehicle, the police would have vehicles up and running? Mr. Minister of National Security, as opposed to Mr. Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Maj. Brig. Dillon:** You are asking an operational answer based on the estimates. I cannot give you an operational answer. I can give you a financial answer.

**Madam Chairman:** Having regard to the answer from the Minister of National Security, apparently there is some assistance from the Minister of Finance.

**Dr. Moonilal:** I am satisfied with the answer.

**Mr. Imbert:** Madam Chairman, you have made the point that the public is watching.

**Madam Chairman:** Minister of Finance, if the Member does not want the answer—

**Mr. Imbert:** But the public needs to know.

**Madam Chairman:** I am sure the question will come in another form and we will then deal with it. Can we proceed, please?

**Mr. Imbert:** That is not right.

**Madam Chairman:** Minister of Finance, please.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Madam Chair and hon. Minister, I am a little concerned about the reduction in the training estimates from \$20 million to \$8 million, bearing in mind that we need to recruit and train more police officers over the next period of time, to get the 900, plus those who would be leaving the service on a yearly basis. Is there a reason that you have reduced the training where we need to recruit more and train more? Is it compatible? Ask the Minister of Finance, that deals with finance.

**Mr. Imbert:** I will now use this opportunity to make a general statement on the one before and this one. The fact of the matter is that within the overall context of the \$63 million budget—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** What line Item you are going with?

**Mr. Imbert:** The same line Item you just asked about training. You asked the Minister about training. You wanted to know why there was a decrease in the allocation for training. I will answer.

Within the context of the overall allocation given to the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, it has to fall within the context of the \$63 billion budget and, therefore, some Heads are being increased and some Heads have been reduced. I want to make a statement. The request for allocations for the police service come directly to the Minister of Finance. I want to put on the record—it has always been so—that this

Minister of Finance will give the police whatever they require, within the context of the national budget. So if there is a need for training and funds are available, this Minister of Finance will give the police service what they require, and that goes for maintenance of vehicles too and anything else that the police require.

**Dr. Rambachan:** I have a very simple question, two parts to it. The maintenance of vehicles—this \$40 million that is allocated, how many vehicles are in there in the police service that this \$40 million is supposed to cover, the number of vehicles for maintenance? How many vehicles do you have?

**Hon. Maj. Brig. Dillon:** We will provide that for you in writing.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Secondly, as at September 07, how many police vehicles are functional and how many police vehicles are non-functional? Thirdly, how many vehicles were there at VMCOTT to be repaired and over what time have they been at VMCOTT?

**Madam Chairman:** You are asking from September 07 coming forward?

**Dr. Rambachan:** Yes, September 07; just at September 07. Go into VMCOTT yard, how many police vehicles are there and how long have they been in there and not repaired and returned to the police?

**Madam Chairman:** So that answer will be given in writing?

**Hon. Maj. Brig. Dillon:** September 07 to date?

**Dr. Rambachan:** As at September 07, how many vehicles to be repaired on that date were in the possession of VMCOTT? How many vehicles were there in VMCOTT to be repaired, and for how long have they been there and not returned to you? Of that amount, what is the total number of vehicles that this \$40 million covers in terms of maintenance, and how many vehicles were functional, actually on the road in the hands of officers, on September 07?

**Madam Chairman:** We have captured the question and that will be given in writing.

**Mr. Karim:** Madam Chair, a similar question in terms of the decrease and the impact of that decrease; line Item 21 Repairs and Maintenance, Buildings. We have had a substantial decrease. We have been hearing and seeing as well the request from the police to ensure that they have good—*[Interruption]*

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Chaguanas East, if I am not mistaken, the Member for Siparia—

**Mr. Karim:** Well, she had raised all of those items.

**Madam Chairman:** With respect to questions there are certain questions.

**Mr. Karim:** Decreases, and that will be answered?

**Madam Chairman:** She had just therefore identified the Sub-Items which were to be captured by those questions.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Under Item 16, Contract Employment, of course it has been decreased by \$16.5 million. I want to take Item 22 also, short-term employment. What is the nature of this contract employment in the police service? What categories of persons are employed here? Is it the SRPs? Who is employed under contract employment? What is the nature of the short-term employment also in the police service?

**Hon. Maj. Brig. Dillon:** It is made up, in the main, of civilian contracted officers, like some of the officers behind me, for instance—Civilian contracted officers that support the police administration.

**Dr. Rambachan:** So these positions as contract officers, they are not positions normally advertised, the police service can recruit these persons as necessary?

**Hon. Maj. Brig. Dillon:** They are advertised and go through a process. [*Crosstalk*]

**Dr. Moonilal:** National Security—if you could just give us an explanation, and it must be simple. Medical expenses decreased by \$15.8 million, what would explain such a decrease?

**Madam Chairman:** I think, hon. Member, for Oropouche East, I believe that is also captured by the Member for Siparia, Item 58.

**Dr. Moonilal:** And you have committed in writing to it?

**Madam Chairman:** Yes, yes. Can we go on to Sub-Item 002, Police Service Tobago, page 402.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** 402, once again we see the slashing of expenditures here under Minor Equipment Purchases, first, vehicles—

**Madam Chairman:** We are really at 002 Police Service Tobago.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** I thought that is where I was. I am sorry.

**Madam Chairman:** Yes I am there. On page 402.

**Madam Chairman:** 03 then Minor Equipment Services.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Are we on two or three?

**Madam Chairman:** Can we go on to 03 Minor Equipment Purchases, because that is where you are. Which item is it that you are referring to?

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Ma'am, I do not know if anybody had—

**Madam Chairman:** Well it seems that no one wanted to ask, so you can go ahead with your question.

**6.30 p.m.**

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Minor Equipment Purchases. I note that Vehicles has been cut—there has been a cut of \$15 million. The question will be why—when it is that the revised estimates were \$32 million. So, you have cut by \$15 million. Again, the reasons why. Is it that the Tobago police do not need these vehicles? Sorry. Minor Equipment Police Service (Trinidad). Excuse me. So is it then that the police service does not need, you know, the same amount as last year? Is it because they have acquired many vehicles last year and therefore will need less? So why the cut of \$15 million?

Secondly, under Office Equipment which is a small—which we can pass, but under Furniture and Furnishing, again, a cut of \$2.3 million and Other Minor Equipment a cut of \$5 million. So what is it that we are cutting out under each of these Items, Madam Chairman, in that expenditure in the next year?

**Madam Chairman:** We need some level of detail.

**Mr. Imbert:** Madam Chairman, with your permission. [*Crosstalk*] No. No. No. We have given the police service an additional billion dollars in 2016.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** For salaries.

**Mr. Imbert:** That is not the point. The police can apply to the Ministry of Finance to transfer funds and vire funds. And I want to put on the record, again, it is wrong to say that things have been cut when they got an additional billion dollars, and I want to give the assurance that the police will get what they require in 2016. [*Crosstalk*] Yes. But another one went up by a billion. [*Crosstalk*]

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Siparia.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Madam Chairman, I need your guidance. Am I allowed to ask questions on the line Items that have been slashed? That is what I am speaking about.

**Mr. Imbert:** The Minister cannot answer you.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** We are dealing with the line Items. The Minister of Finance is saying an increase. That is not a line Item, if I am following your guidance. We are under 03 and the subs under the line Items there and they are all slashed. They have all been cut.

**Madam Chairman:** Therefore, the question is to provide an answer for why they have been slashed.

**Mr. Imbert:** Yes, Madam Chairman, and I really would prefer we not use language like “slashed”. There have been decreases. And what I would say—*Crosstalk*] No. She is simply repeating what you said. What I would say is that the equipment needs of the police will vary from year to year. It is based on discussions with the Ministry of Finance and in discussions with the Ministry of Finance in 2016, we will allocate whatever they require within the constraints of the national budget. [*Crosstalk*] I increased it by \$1 billion. So can we go onto 002 Police Service (Tobago) and this on page 403. Can we go on now to 04 which is Current Transfers and Subsidies page 403? Hon. Member for Oropouche East.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Madam Chair, to the Minister of National Security.

**Madam Chairman:** We have Item 001?

**Dr. Moonilal:** We are on Item 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies.

**Madam Chairman:** Yes.

**Dr. Moonilal:** That is where you are.

**Madam Chairman:** Yes. Item 001, Regional Bodies.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Minister of National Security, I noticed—

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche East, are we on 001?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Yes, Ma’am. That is exactly where we are.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you very much.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police and so on.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you.

**Dr. Moonilal:** I have noticed that unlike what obtained before where we had a slash in all the others, we have increases now for Regional Bodies, International Bodies and so on. We have an increase of \$3 million for Current Transfers and Subsidies that deal with International Bodies, the (INTERPOL) and so on, could you just tell us the reason for these increases in light of the slashing of Minor

Equipment Purchases, Police Vehicles Maintenance and so on that has been violently slashed. We see increases here, the reason for the increases to the Regional Bodies, to the Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police and to the (INTERPOL)?

**Madam Chairman:** So you are dealing with Item 001 and Item 004?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Yes.

**Madam Chairman:** Together?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Yes.

**Madam Chairman:** So, anybody who has any questions on these two Items we will take them then. Can the answer be provided now, Minister of National Security?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** Those are the fees payable to these regional bodies, Madam Chair. Those are the fees payable to them. [*Crosstalk*]

**Madam Chairman:** All right. Can we go onto Item 005, Non-Profit Institutions, 007 Households? Hon. Member for Tabaquite.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Non-Profit Institutions, Police Youth Clubs, I see and I totally agree with the increase of \$1 million for police youth clubs, but I hope that under the development fund there would have been provisions for the construction of—

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Tabaquite, I guess we will come to the development fund.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Okay. Sure.

**Madam Chairman:**—and maybe your question would be better placed there. Okay.

**Dr. Rambachan:** I just think that \$5 million is too low.

**Mr. Imbert:** Any other question?

**Madam Chairman:** Could we please move on? And we are now at 007. There was no question. It was withdrawn. The Member will ask his question under the Development Fund. 007 page 404. 009, Other Transfers. Hon. Member for Caroni East.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Chair, my concern is a question of training still. I notice that you have an allocation for the police academy of \$23 million.

**Madam Chairman:** Are we at page 404, Other Transfers 009?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Yes. The Trinidad and Tobago Police Academy.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Twenty three million which has remained steady basically from around 2014 to 2016. Is that part of the training or where does training fit into the police academy? How do they link together? The allocation for training which is a certain amount, and you have the police academy which does training as well for \$23 million. Can you give us a—where one is in relation to the other?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** I included in that estimate recruit training which is done at the police academy, and expenses related to running the academy.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** But how does that relate to the other training we were speaking about earlier on? How is that differentiated from this?

**Mr. Imbert:** This is for the recruits. The other training is for the other ranks.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Okay.

**Mr. Imbert:** Okay?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** The other training is for the other ranks—

**Mr. Imbert:** And other staff—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Staff. Okay.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** This is for the recruits at the academy and the related cost.

**Mr. Imbert:**—and the institution itself.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** All right. You have cleared it up. Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** So, we can now move to the Development Programme 09, and we now go to page 183 of the Draft Estimates of Development Programme. Item 004, Social Infrastructure.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Before we go to the line Items, can we ask the general questions at the start here?

**Madam Chairman:** Once it relates to what is presented here.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Sure it is. Madam, I note that the entire Development Programme has been slashed by \$53.9 million. So there has been a decrease. Given that decrease in terms of allocations for 2016, I know when we go inside we will find these specific line Items were decreased. The question is whether there is



anything—you see, I wanted to ask it under recurrent, I did not ask it on the general part, so I may not be able to at the end. I am taking it at the start there whether there is anything in the Development Programme that is new in the fight against crime for the police service as we go through?

**Mr. Imbert:** May I crave your indulgence. Before that question is answered, that question is wrong. There has been no cut by \$53 million. That is the allocation for 2016—\$53 million. There is no cut of \$53 million.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** You are right. It is \$7 million. A cut of \$7 million.

**Mr. Imbert:** You are putting incorrect information out there.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** 2015 revised and 2016. Yeah.

**Madam Chairman:** All right. So can we—

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** There has been a decrease in allocations in 2016? And I am asking if there is anything new within the Development Programme to assist in the fight against crime?

**Madam Chairman:** Any new project?

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Yeah.

**Madam Chairman:** Any new initiative? I believe that is the question. Is the Minister in a position to answer or can we defer it and you find the answer and give it in the course of the proceedings? Okay? So can we to—

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Ma'am, a second general question?

**Madam Chairman:** Yes.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Is there provision in here for local constabularies? I know when I raised the question under national security I was told that was for the police to do, and I have looked at it and I have seen nothing here about local constabularies.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Imbert:** That falls within the programme of local government reform which we hope to complete—[*Crosstalk*] which I said during my budget statement.

**Madam Chairman:** One minute, please, hon. Minister of Finance. It is my clear recollection that the response to that was local government. That is my clear recollection.

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

**Madam Chairman:** Okay? Can we therefore—

**Mr. Imbert:** I just want to make the point, there will be no allocation until the relevant amendments are made to the legislation, and a new system is implemented—

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Finance—

**Mr. Imbert:**—which will be at the end of 2016.

**Madam Chairman:**—I would really ask if you would save that explanation to when the question is properly asked so we can save some time. Hon. Member for Tabaquite.

**Dr. Rambachan:** 041, can the Minister say where this \$3 million for the Establishment of Police Youth Club Facilities are going to be utilized. I ask that question because the Commissioner of Police had given his permission to break down the old Gran Couva station for the construction of a police youth club there. And I would like to see whether—

**Madam Chairman:** Could you guide me with respect to what—

**Dr. Rambachan:** Yes. Sub-Item 041 on page 185.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you. Okay. Hon. Minister of National Security.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** There are several areas including Maraval, Cunupia, Gran Couva.

**Dr. Rambachan:** And would you please include the furniture for Motta Trace, Tabaquite. The commissioner knows the building up. The police youth club activity centre, but there is no furniture so it cannot be used.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** Noted.

**Madam Chairman:** Can we go on to—[*Crosstalk*] that is it? Right. Hon. Member for Oropouche East.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Well, we are on the Public Order and Safety, Social Infrastructure. Yes. Good. The allocation Improvement Works to Police Stations estimated at \$3 million. I am asking whether or not that is sufficient for the quantum of work that must be done in police stations across the country? \$3 million is estimated.

**Madam Chairman:** This is Item 001?

**Dr. Moonilal:** 001.

**Madam Chairman:** Page 184.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Correct. [*Crosstalk*] Three million. “We does spend that on two police stations. That is why CEPEP have to fix police station.”

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** It is not adequate, but it is being worked on right now.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Minister of National Security, I notice that there is no estimate for the expansion of the Penal Police Station. Is this one of the Items that suffered from your prioritization exercise? I am asking the Minister of National Security.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** That would be the Minister of Finance.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Well then I withdraw the question because I know the answer. Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member, [*Crosstalk*] the question has been withdrawn.

**Mr. Imbert:** That is really allowed? He put a pejorative statement—it is a pejorative statement he made.

**Madam Chairman:** In terms of?

**Mr. Imbert:** He said this thing suffered from my prioritization.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Finance, the question has been withdrawn.

**Mr. Imbert:** The pejorative statement he made?

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Couva South.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Madam Chair, you are on a general under Multi-Sectoral and Other Services, Administrative Services?

**Madam Chairman:** We are still on Item 004.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** “Yuh finish?” Yeah. I know, but—

**Madam Chairman:** So if you can—

**Mr. Indarsingh:** You are moving on?

**Madam Chairman:**—just hold and then when we come to 005. Hon. Member for Tabaquite.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Thank you. Under Social Infrastructure, 018, I notice that under the Expansion of the Homicide Prevention Unit there are no funds allocated for 2016, and this in the face of an increasing rate of murders in the country. Can the Minister explain why such an important unit has not been provided for in the estimates?

**6.45 p.m.**

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** There has been a change in strategy and a change in the way in which the police do business, and therefore it is now the Homicide Bureau of Investigation. So there was no request made under that Heading. The police has changed their strategy in terms of homicide.

**Dr. Rambachan:** And finally, Madam Chair, Item 019. The Expansion of the Mounted Branch Facility moved from \$3 million to \$2 million, but the \$2 million that is allocated in 2016—can we have an understanding of how that \$2 million is going to be used? Is it to buy horses or is it to train people? What it is about?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** It is used to refurbish the facilities.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Okay.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay, hon. Member for Siparia.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you, Madam Chair, page 184, Item 002 Purchase of Vehicles and Equipment for the Police Service. I note there has been no allocation, zero allocation. In 2015 there was a \$15 million. There is a zero allocation for the purchase of vehicles and equipment for the police. Why is this? Is it that they have all the vehicles they need; all the equipment they need?

**Mr. Imbert:** I would answer that question. They will be provided with adequate funds in accordance with their needs.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Why is it zero now, Madam Chair, through you?

**Mr. Imbert:** The police service is being—*[Interruption]*

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Is it that they do not need these things.

**Mr. Imbert:** The police service, I am saying this now for the third time, has been provided with a global allocation of \$3.2 billion. If the need arises to supplement a vote in the normal manner, the police service will make a request to the Minister of Finance for a virement and I am certain the Minister of Finance will approve any pressing requirement of the police service.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Madam Chair, the question again, if I am to interpret, I am trying to find out, why has there been no allocation for vehicles and equipment for the police? The Minister is saying if they need it in future. So if I am to interpret that, does it mean that they do not need it now?

**Mr. Imbert:** No, but Madam Chair, there is something else that needs to be—  
[Interruption]

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Why now? Why now?

**Mr. Imbert:** There is something else that needs to be considered. You see, Madam Speaker, the Members opposite are putting pejorative statements on the record which are not based on fact. This is the development programme. There are other items within the overall police service such as goods and services. So do not say there is no allocation. There is no allocation under the development programme. There are other allocations within the police service. If it is required to put an allocation under the development programme for vehicles we will do so. And if it is you are required to put one in goods and services we will do so.

**Madam Chairman:** I think hon. Minister of Finance you have now clarified the issue.

**Mr. Imbert:** Again, for the fourth time.

**Madam Chairman:** You have now clarified the issue. May I call upon the Member for Mayaro?

**Mr. Paray:** Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. Minister of National Security, Sir, I notice on Item 033 on page 185, Refurbishment of Biche Police Station, could you let me know if the refurbishment has been completed since I see no allocations for 2016? Secondly, Item 039 Expansion of Facilities at Homicide Area, East. Exactly what facilities are being expanded? I do know Eastern Division is one of the best performing divisions in the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, so I will be very interested to know what additional facilities they will be looking forward to this year. Thank you.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** Repairs to the Biche Police Station has been completed. The second part of the question, is not Eastern Division, it is area East, looking at Arouca and such.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Oropouche East.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Yes, to the Minister of National Security. Item 038 Establishment of New Facilities for Traffic and Highway Patrol Branch, you have received an allocation of \$2 million. Could I ask, where are these new facilities to

be housed for the highway patrol branch? And what is the total cost?—because I doubt very much it is \$2 million for new facilities for traffic and highway patrol branch. What is the total cost of the establishment of these new facilities?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** A request has been made to Property and Real Estate Division and they are waiting on the assignment of that property. This is to make the initial, to put it in writing when it soon provides.

**Dr. Moonilal:** So this estimate is just an estimate given to pay down on rent or something like that?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** It depends on what Property and Real Estate Management—

**Dr. Moonilal:** Could I ask if there is any consideration to follow-up on the proposal to use part of the car park of the Brian Lara in south for the highway patrol?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** Not that we have that plan so you will put that in writing.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Okay, sure.

**Madam Chairman:** Can we therefore go on to Item 005 and I call upon the Member for Couva South. I think I had you hold a question under Item 005.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Within recent times, in the very tranquil community of Dow Village, four persons were gunned down, one died, one is still in the Intensive Care Unit and a person was kidnapped in Mc Bean and cremated on Wednesday. And I say that for the Transformation of the Police Service—

**Madam Chairman:** That is Item 003?

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Item 003—of allocated \$3 million and then we speak about the Establishment of a Police Management Agency. I will like some further details in relation to the operation of this agency and Establishment of a Police Service Inspectorate, what it is designed to do, constitutionally, how it will operate? Will there be the need for legislative changes and with \$1 million allocated to the Establishment of Community Safety Partnership, what this is, and could the residents of Dow Village and environs feel safer with this? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** You have asked a range of questions there and therefore I will have to produce that in writing for you and to give you all that you have asked for.

**Madam Chairman:** All right, can we now go to the hon. Member—  
[*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Madam Chair, whilst I am hearing about the communication in writing and so on, the nation has been told in the budget presentation of 2016 of a police management agency and a police service inspectorate and so on. Whilst I welcomed the fact that I would be communicated, I would like national community to hear what is being proposed. [*Crosstalk*]

This is not—Madam Chair, I wish to inform the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West, I am addressing you.

**Madam Chairman:** And I have heard your question. I think the hon. Minister of National Security said that, having regard to the range of issues, he will provide the answer in writing. As I indicated—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Indarsingh:** I am hearing you, Madam Chair, but I am not satisfied in the context of crime being on the front burner.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay, so hon. Member for Caroni Central.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Madam Chair, my question was really about these same new agencies described as new projects, Item 004, 006. I thought the Minister might be willing to explain what the Police Management Agency would be, and what the Police Service Inspectorate would do, and what the Community Safety Partnership, you know, how it is conceived as being established and evolving. Because these are new institutions and we have a police service—we know how it functions now. We have other agencies that are connected with the process and the idea would really be if moneys are being allocated for these things. Do we have a clear concept of how they are going to be operationalized?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** It seems to me it is the same question and therefore I will provide that to you in writing to give you detailed answers to your questions.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay, so, are there any other questions under—  
[*Interruption*]

**Dr. Moonilal:** Yes, Madam Chairman, I am seeing here, Item 037, page 185, Establishment of Divisional Interview Suites.

**Madam Chairman:** We are in Multi-Sectorial and Other Services.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Oh, you have gone past that already.

**Madam Chairman:** Yes, for some time.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Okay.

**Madam Chairman:** I am sorry.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Proceed, proceed.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Siparia.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you, Madam Chair, on the same, with respect to the Police Management Agency, the Police Service Inspectorate and Community Safety Partnership, how would the police service inspectorate compare or work in tandem with something called the Police Complaints Authority? Are they two separate items? Would you require legislation for anyone of these new things to be set up?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. Dillon:** I will be able to provide that for you in writing. Some clarification in writing.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Madam Chair, my colleague asked about this Community Safety Partnership as well? [*Crosstalk*] But I wanted to know that in the context of the reduction in the budget for the Community Comfort Patrols. The Community Comfort Patrols, that budget was slashed to \$20 million to \$16 million. So I wanted to know the relationship to this Community Safety Partnership.

**Madam Chairman:** I think in terms of the question that was answered and the undertaking for the writing it will deal with the issue.

**Dr. Moonilal:** You can proceed, Ma'am.

**Madam Chairman:** And therefore can we go to the Infrastructure Development Fund, Item 004, Social Infrastructure, and it is on page 337 of the *Draft Estimates of Development Programme for the Financial Year 2016*. Item 004, Social Infrastructure. If we can turn to page 338.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Again, Madam Chair, under B, Police Service, the lines there will be Items 002, 003, 004, 005, 006, I think up to Item 007—

**Madam Chairman:** Yes.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** No allocations for—up to Item 008, sorry—

**Madam Chairman:** Yes.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** No allocations and we really appreciate an explanation as to why. And it continues on the same page, Madam Chair, so he could perhaps answer—Items 021, 022—



**Madam Chairman:** Okay, so that the hon. Member for Siparia is asking—

**Mr. Imbert:** I think I need to answer this question. All of these allocations under the Infrastructure Development Fund were done by the Minister of Finance. So what I would do is provide an explanation from Item 01 all the way down—  
[*Interruption*]

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** No, it is just up to Item 009, I believe.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Yes, all the way down to Item 009 in terms of the ones that do not have allocation in 2016. I would provide an explanation.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Minister while you do that, could you check—because all the stations have been completed.

**Dr. Rambachan:** That is instinctively, that could be the answer.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Before I say that, I will check it and provide an answer in writing. [*Crosstalk*]

**Madam Chairman:** Therefore can I now—hon. Members, the sum of \$3,284,180,000 for Head 64: the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service stand part of the Schedule.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 64 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**7.00 p.m.**

**Madam Chairman:** So that the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service is now relieved. I want to thank the Acting Commissioner of Police and all the other support staff for coming to assist the committee. We can now go on to the next Item, Head 48. That is the Ministry of Trade—

**Dr. Moonilal:** Hold on, hold on. Madam Chair, yesterday we were told that we deferred the Office of the Prime Minister to today because the Prime Minister was ill. This is a matter of public record now. Is the Prime Minister still ill? The record reflects that we were told that the Prime Minister is unwell. In fact, we wished him the best as well, and we will do this today. The Prime Minister is not here. Is the Prime Minister still unwell?

**Madam Chairman:** Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Imbert:** The Prime Minister had a dental appointment which is being highly publicized in the news, so let me clear up the record. He had a routine dental procedure.

**Dr. Moonilal:** So, but the Government—*[Interruption]* Hold on. Madam Chairman, the Government indicated to you that the Prime Minister was unwell; he was ill. Today, we are hearing it was a routine dental appointment.

**Mr. Imbert:** That was on the news last night.

**Dr. Moonilal:** So somebody misled this committee yesterday and misled the Chairman.

**Madam Chairman:** Well, I understand ill to—

**Mr. Imbert:** Mean anything. It could mean anything. *[Crosstalk]*

**Madam Chairman:** As I say, I understand ill, particularly in our parlance, to be a range of complaints. I think, from what the hon. Minister of Finance has just indicated, he has given the specifics of the nature of the illness. I cannot speak to that. I could only speak to what I have said. I do not think that I was misled. I did not have the specifics.

Now, Members, it is 7.02—

**Mr. Imbert:** Madam Chairman, we would prefer that you defer examination of the estimates of the Office of the Prime Minister until the Prime Minister can be contacted and asked to make himself available for examination of the estimates. We would prefer that. *[Interruption]* I am not finished, I am not finished. But if Members opposite insist, as Minister of Finance, I will answer the questions.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Madam Chairman, could I indicate that the Government ought to have the highest degree of respect for this committee? Is it that the Prime Minister is still unwell and they request us to defer further the examination of the Office of the Prime Minister? If that is the situation we can consider that. If the Prime Minister is well and much better, the Prime Minister, like any other Minister, ought to respect this committee and attend the committee to investigate and enquire into his allocation. Did the Prime Minister attend the Cabinet meeting this morning in this very building? Is the Prime Minister well in the morning and unwell in the evening? We ought to have respect for the Standing Finance Committee, all Ministers of Government, regardless of whether it is Prime Minister or another Cabinet Minister. Again, if the Prime Minister is unwell and you indicate that to us, we may be prepared to consider that.

**Mr. Imbert:** Did we not just answer that question?

**Madam Chairman:** Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Imbert:** As I said, if you insist, I have been authorized by the Prime Minister to answer questions on the estimates relating to the Office of the Prime Minister. I think I have made myself very clear.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Madam Chair, did the Prime Minister request from you his apology to be excused from this meeting because he is unwell or for any other reason? Or is it just a disrespect for the committee?

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Oropouche East, what I understand the Minister of Finance to say is that we have a choice; either we can consider the Item of the Office of the Prime Minister on another day when the Prime Minister can make himself available. If not, and we insist on dealing with that matter today, the Minister of Finance can deal with it. Our third option is that we go on to another Head. I do not see the hon. Prime Minister here, and therefore, I think these are the choices we have available to us.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Ma'am, we would like to take one of those choices, and the choice you have indicated is that the Prime Minister is not present. That is the fact. We are not told why. Indeed, you yourself have not been informed why, and we would prefer to examine the Office of the Prime Minister whenever the Prime Minister may find it convenient to attend upon us. Whenever he would find it convenient, we will wait to deal with the Office of the Prime Minister. But for the record, I think it is gross disrespect that we are not informed of whether the Prime Minister is still ill, whether he is well, whether he is absent and he has not tendered an apology or an excuse to this very, very significant committee, and I am very concerned about that. Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** And therefore, can I say that we will go on to Head 48, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, and if we can just allow the technocrats an opportunity to take—oh, the Minister is there, I am sorry—their spaces.

**Mr. Imbert:** You will give them two minutes?

**Madam Chairman:** Therefore, this meeting is suspended for two minutes just for everybody to get in place.

*[Two-minute suspension]*

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

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

[**MR. FORDE** *in the Chair*]

**Mr. Chairman:** Okay, Members, may we proceed, please? I would like to welcome the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry, also her technocrats, her permanent secretary and others. Welcome to this House.

*Head 48.*

I will now invite the Minister of Trade and Industry to make a brief opening statement for no more than five minutes. Kindly proceed, Madam Minister.

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** Thank you, Chair. Our nation at this time is facing serious economic challenges and the objective as a Government is to strengthen the economy as its ultimate goal is providing a decent, sustainable standard of living for all of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. Over the last few years our economy has not experienced any form of real growth, most notably in the energy sector. In fact, it is the non-energy sector that has remained the pillar of the economy insofar as recording 15 consecutive quarters by year on year growth until the fourth quarter of 2014.

The focus of the Ministry of Trade and Industry must now, more than ever, be on the non-energy sector *vis-à-vis* increased trading activity, diversification and investment activities. Thank you.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you.

*Question proposed:* That Head 48 stand part of the Schedule.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, the sum of \$158,841,500 for Head 48, the Ministry of Trade and Industry is comprised of moneys proposed for the expenditure under the following Subheads and Items to be found in the *Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure* and the *Draft Estimates of the Development Programme*. We will now proceed, Sub-Head Personnel Expenditure, Item 001, General Administration.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Hon. Deputy Chair, the substantive Chair of this committee had given a ruling, I understand, earlier today, that we can ask general questions before we go into the specific line items. Do I have your permission so to do?

**Mr. Deputy Chairman:** Sure. No more than five minutes.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** I would not be that long. Thank you. So we note here that all recurrent expenditure has been slashed by 86.2—I am sorry, page 327, decrease of \$86.02 million. So there has been a decrease in all items of Personnel Expenditure, of all recurrent expenditure—\$86.02 million. You had estimated in 2015, \$260.7; you have gone down in 2016, \$130.6. So my question is, why has there been this

decrease when we have seen for Personnel Expenditure elsewhere. The Minister talked about this \$5 billion carry forward to pay public officers and so on. Why is payment of these officers not included in that increase? And why do we have a decrease in expenditure across the board under Recurrent Expenditure?

**Mr. Imbert:** Mr. Deputy Chairman, this question has been asked in different forms on multiple occasions and I will give the same undertaking as I gave with every other item of Personnel Expenditure; that an explanation would be given for the adjustment to the allocation.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Mr. Deputy Chairman, I thank the hon. Minister for his answer, but like every other answer he prefaces it with something, and in this case it is wrong. This is the first time we are asking about a decrease in Personnel Expenditure.

**Mr. Imbert:** It does not matter.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** The “ditto” items that we—

**Mr. Imbert:** A change is a change.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Could I finish, please?

**Mr. Chairman:** Go ahead. Proceed, Member for Siparia.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** The “ditto” item that we agreed to in the last few Heads that we looked at was the increase in Personnel Expenditure and we want to get how much was arrears, how much was an increase and so on? This is the first time, as far as I can recall, we are asking for decreased personnel, and recurrent under a new Head of expenditure with the Ministry of Trade and the Items thereunder.

**Mr. Imbert:** Mr. Deputy Chairman, I gave an undertaking that I would give an explanation for the changes in Personnel Expenditure on all Items in Personnel Expenditure under every single Head. And if I am not—I will forgive the former Prime Minister because the Leader of the Opposition was not here all the time, so perhaps did not hear me when I said on multiple occasions that I will give an explanation on the changes in Personnel Expenditure, whether decrease or increase, for all Items of Personnel Expenditure—a written explanation.

**Mr. Chairman:** Okay. Could we then proceed? That undertaking was taken—  
[*Interruption*]

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Hon. Chair, I do not think he is presenting correctly that statement he made. What was discussed and what we had agreed to was that he was going to give information on the increases. There was no discussion on the decreases.

**Mr. Imbert:** Why are you repeating? You are being repetitious.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** He is now doing that, so we will look at that.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** No, no, you cannot make a statement without fact.

**Mr. Chairman:** It was a general statement dealing with all Items under the Personnel Sub-Head.

**7.15 p.m.**

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Hon. Chair, can I now ask a question?

**Mr. Chairman:** Understanding, Member for Caroni East, in terms of when we would have started earlier on this afternoon.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Based on the statement made by the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry, whereas the Government is now going to pay specific attention to the non-energy sector, and trade and industry forms an important part of this movement forward, and bearing in mind that there is a decrease in spending of the \$86 million, is that in keeping with the trend or the thrust towards improvement of the non-energy sector when trade forms an important part of it and you are decreasing the expenditure of trade? It is just the opposite. It is a paradox. So could the Minister explain, or the Minister of Finance explain, a decrease in expenditure and you want to have an improvement in the trade and industry which will improve the non-energy.

**Mr. Imbert:** I would like to answer that. In addition to my undertaking to explain all changes in Personnel Expenditure, all variations, whether they are increases or decreases, in addition to that general undertaking which would apply to this Ministry and every other one. Please note that this Ministry no longer contains Communications.

So, as I said in the budget statement, these Estimates are not wholly comparable. This Ministry no longer contains Communications, and therefore, Communications is dealt with in a separate Ministry, the Ministry of Communications. So before statements are made about reductions, add in what is provided for the Ministry of Communications and see whether there is in fact a reduction or an increase.

**Mr. Chairman:** Members, let us move on to Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services; Item 001, General Administration. We are on page 327. Just at the bottom of the page 327. No 330, sorry. My apologies. Member for Naparima.

**Mr. Charles:** Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Chairman. Under Item 08, Rent/Lease - Office Accommodation and Storage, we see that it has increased from 10.2 to 11.7, and we would like to know which sub-units given the fact they have already lost Communications and others, which units will be occupying those—

**Hon. Member:** What page are you on?

**Mr. Charles:** I am on page 330, Item 08, under 02 and the question is: there is a \$1.5 million increase in lease and rent property, and given the fact the Government has constructed significant offices close to this building, and in addition to the fact that you will be losing Communications and other divisions, what is the reason for this increase and, secondly, from whom will it be leased?

**Mr. Chairman:** Minister?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** Thank you. The increase is largely due because we rented another floor which is Level 19 in Nicholas Towers from April of last year, and that is to accommodate the Consumer Affairs which came from Legal Affairs. So that is primarily it, and also that will include facilities where housing facilities, Trade Zone facilities at El Socorro, in Chaguanas, in the Fernandez Building in Laventille as well, Weights and Measures in Arima, in San Fernando, Consumer Affairs in Point Fortin and also the trade licensing office in Barataria.

**Mr. Chairman:** Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

**Dr. Lee:** Chair, we are still under Goods and Services, Item 66, Hosting of Conferences, Seminars and Other Functions; there is a drastic decrease in that expenditure by \$3 million. Just in keeping with the opening remarks of the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry, given her preamble, I am just asking, given where she wants to take the Ministry of Trade and Industry, why is there such a drastic decrease in hosting of conferences in this area?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** Simply because large conferences are planned and there is nothing on the agenda planned, and therefore, the amount which is there is allocated towards hosting the TIC Conference and also to support Caricom and other little technical meetings. But if in fact we were having a large conference, that would be there but it would have been planned from long before. So, it takes more than a year.

**Mr. Chairman:** Member for Caroni East.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Hon. Chair, page 330, the same Goods and Services, Item 16. I want to refer the hon. Minister to this, Contract Employment on page 330. You will see that Contract Employment, the Estimates for 2016 is \$11.5 million and the

entire salaries and so on for the Ministry of Trade and Industry is \$22 million, 22.746. It seems as though therefore—could you explain why Contract Employment in the Ministry is about 50 per cent of the entire personnel within the Ministry? \$11.5 million here, out of a total of \$22 million, which is basically 50 per cent of the emoluments for personnel. So therefore you have possibly about 50 per cent Contract Employment in the Ministry of Trade and Industry, could you explain that?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** I think there was a plan by your good selves when in office for a six-year plan for contract employment, and I think this will form the basis of it.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** So you are not moving the Ministry to have public officers within the Ministry of Trade and Industry? You have 50 per cent approximately now.

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** We do have public officers and you will notice that vacancies go out as well. So we are continuing to try to fill those vacancies. These are for 61 positions which are already on the establishment, which you would be familiar with.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** And basically how many employees you have, if you can?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** In the Ministry?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Yes.

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** It is in excess of 200, but we have several vacancies as well, in excess of 100.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** So you have vacancies in public service and you have about 61 positions and you are going for six-year contracts?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** No, no, no I did not say that.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** But two three-year contracts.

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** There are 61 positions under contract at this time. I cannot tell you duration of the contract.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** But bearing in mind we have heard comments from then Opposition, now Government, indicating that they did not want to see much contract employment, but you are moving to the position of keeping or probably increasing contract employment within that Ministry which we are speaking about now.



**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** These are contracts that we have met and they are on our books at this time.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** All right. Okay. I just wanted to bring it to your attention in case you probably did not notice it.

**Mr. Chairman:** Member for Siparia.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you, Deputy Chair. Page 331, line Item 65, Expenses of Cabinet Appointed Bodies. Through you, Sir, if we can get a list of the persons appointed to these various bodies that fall under the Ministry of Trade and Industry; a list of the persons appointed to those bodies, please.

**Mr. Chairman:** Right. Noted. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

**Dr. Lee:** Thank you, Chair. On page 332, staying still under Goods and Services, under Head Item Consumer Affairs Division, specifically 08 line Item and also line Item 21, maybe I misunderstood the hon. Minister when she said that Consumer Affairs was moved to a floor in Nicholas Towers. Is that correct, Minister? So I am seeing an increase in rent on 08—

**Mr. Chairman:** Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, is it that we have no other questions under General Administration? Because we have now gone on to Item 003. So let us call it one time. Item 002, Weights and Measures. Item 003, Consumer Affairs Division. You may proceed.

**Dr. Lee:** Thank you, Chair. Again, under Consumer Affairs Division, Item 08, there is a rental increase of \$400,000 approximately, and also Item 21 an increase of \$1 million where that line Item 21 has always budgeted for \$50,000 and there is a steep increase of a million dollars now.

**Mr. Imbert:** We will get clarification and answer that in writing.

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** I can answer the second one. The line Item which you are querying is which one?

**Dr. Lee:** 08 and 21.

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** 21, remember we spoke about contracting Level 19 at Nicholas Towers. Well that figure of 1,075 is for the outfitting of that floor, and that is to house, as I said before, Consumer Affairs as well which came up from Duncan Street.

**Dr. Lee:** Thank you.

**Mr. Charles:** Mr. Deputy Chairman, follow-up to the question from my colleague, the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, and where Item 08, Rent/Lease - Office Accommodation, I am thankful to the Minister for elaborating in which region the Ministry will be renting properties. But has an analysis been done about rent/lease purchase before we expend taxpayers' money in a situation where we have reduced revenues? Or is it that the first option is to rent or to lease?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** A review is forthcoming and will be done in the coming year.

**Mr. Chairman:** Item 004, Research and Planning; Item 005, Consumer Outreach and Protection; Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases. We are now on page 335.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Hon. Chair, I wanted you to go to—oh, yes. Sorry. That is fine. You go ahead.

**Mr. Chairman:** Members please, I am looking up in order to see one of the mikes being lit and then I will proceed accordingly. So we are going now to Item 001, General Administration under Sub-Head, Minor Equipment Purchases. So we are on page 335.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** I was going on Goods and Services 007, which is the Freedom of Information Unit on the same page 48 which you are on now. Page 335, Head 48.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Item 48.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** No. Item 007, Freedom of Information Unit. I see no allocation for—

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** It has gone to Communications.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Oh, it has gone to Communications. All right.

**Mr. Chairman:** We now go Item 002, Consumer Affairs Division under Minor Equipment Purchases. We go on to Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies; Item 001, Regional Bodies; Item 003, United Nations Organizations; Item 004, International Bodies; Item 008, Subsidies; Item 009, Other Transfers.

Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

**Dr. Lee:** Thank you, Chairman. When I looked at 01, Financial Assistance to ExporTT, and I refer also to the State Enterprise Investment Programme 2016, I am a little bit confused given what, again with the preamble of trying to diversify the economy, especially the manufacturing sector, why again there is a decrease of \$1.3 million in this particular area?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** Having regard to economic circumstances we expect to do much, but exercising greater efficiency and acting prudently in everything that we do.

**7.30 p.m.**

**Dr. Tewarie:** Mr. Deputy Chairman, thank you very much. Through you, to the—

**Mr. Speaker:** What number, please?

**Dr. Tewarie:** Under Other Transfers, 009. But before I do that, through you, I appreciated the presentation by the Minister of Trade and Industry in which she highlighted the consistent growth of the non-energy sector over the last four years and I thought that that was important.

In terms of the Other Transfers here and the institutions that are involved, these are going to be some of the key institutions that actually make further growth and expansion possible. But I do not see one institution that was mentioned by the Minister of Finance as having a role in the process and those institutions have to do with the economic zones. Are those under your—they are under the Ministry?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** Yes.

**Dr. Tewarie:** I do not see any allocations for them though.

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** But I believe that is within the Development Programme.

**Dr. Tewarie:** It will be there? I am just asking, I am not sure.

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** It is not under recurrent.

**Dr. Tewarie:** All right. Okay.

**Miss Ramdial:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Chairman. Under 009, 26, National Academy for the Performing Arts (NAPA) Hotel, I see it is a transfer from the Ministry of Tourism and there is an allocation for \$2.5 million. Can we get some clarification with respect to that?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** Sure. That is a recent transfer to the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Now, an exercise had been done quite recently, I believe, a general review of NAPA, so we are awaiting that report—or I think it has been presented, but we are going to analyse that report and see where we can go forward with NAPA. But you would appreciate—I have not done that as well, but it will be done; it is going to be analyzed, so that is just a provision for the hotel.

**Mr. Imbert:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I need to make a point. Just to make a general point, this is simply for the hotel. There are three elements in NAPA as you may know. You have the auditorium, you have the hotel and this is for the hotel which would fall under trade and industry.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Mr. Deputy Chairman, the creative industry; that is Sub-Item 23. Under Other Transfers 009, Sub-Item 23, Trinidad and Tobago Creative Industries Company. My understanding is that the Government had indicated that they are paying special emphasis on a number of these areas in the diversification programme, but here it is we have a diminution or a lessening of the expenditure on the creative industries. If you are saying that you want to make it an important aspect of your diversification, why are you reducing the allocation to the creative industries rather than even maintaining or increasing it to some extent, so that you can achieve your—through that one area, some degree of improvement in the diversification programme?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** As you would know, this is a recurrent expenditure.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** You have somewhere on development.

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** There is money under the development fund as well for special projects as well and when we get there, you would see that there is a bit of an increase.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Thank you. This one last, the Betting Levy Board. Is there a reason for removing the \$10 million, taking it out altogether from the Betting Levy Board, Improvement of the Local Horse Racing Industry?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** The \$10 million, I am told was an abnormal allocation. But in any event—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Abnormal—sorry?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** Allocation. When—you would know about that.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** We do not know about abnormal allocation.

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** But what I can tell you, it is—yeah.

**Mr. Imbert:** If you go back to the prior years, you will see there was no allocation. If you look in the original 2015—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Yes, 2015, there was.

**Mr. Imbert:** Original 2015, it was zero.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Well, no, I see here revised estimate for 2015 \$10 million.

**Mr. Imbert:** I think I said original for 2015, it was zero. So it went up to \$10 million. As the Minister is saying, it was a one-off extraordinary allocation. And all of these things, Betting Levy Board and so on, will now come within the rubric of the gaming and gambling sector, which would be under the purview of the Ministry of Finance. Okay? So it is going somewhere else.

**Mr. Chairman:** Item 010, Other Transfers Abroad; Item 011, Transfer to State Enterprises; Sub-Head 06, Current Transfers to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies; Item 004, Statutory Boards. So, could we now proceed to Sub-Head 09 under Development Programme? Page 155, still under the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Sub-Head 09, Development Programme, Consolidated Fund, Item 003, Economic Infrastructure. We are now in *Draft Estimates of Development Programme*.

**Dr. Lee:** Yeah, thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman. Line Item 014, Business Development of the Creative Industries. Again, in keeping with the hon. Member for Caroni East, in his question in recurrent, I noticed in the creative industries estimate, from 2015, it was \$15 million, and on the revised estimate in 2015 it was \$6 million and then now in 2016, it is \$10 million. Given, again, in the budget statement on page 39 and what the Government is trying to do with diversifying the economy, do you feel that this is sufficient for that particular area that you talked highly about?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** Well, as you would realize, the revised estimate is \$6 million—for expenditure in 2015 is \$6 million. So they are, in fact, getting an increase to \$10 million; an increase of \$4 million. So we are at the point where we are doing strategic plans for the film industry, music industry and also the fashion industry. Work is on the way.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Mr. Deputy Chairman, my colleague must have just gone ahead slightly, but you remember we were saying that we might be permitted to make a general statement on the overall area. And so, therefore, I just want to comment on the question on page 155 which is the entire area on development programme. There is a reduction—

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, please, let us ensure that when we go to the new Sub-Heads, you know, let us ensure that we make those general statements, not before rather than we go into the actual Items.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Right, but my colleague went too fast.

**Mr. Chairman:** Okay, well, proceed. I will give you the opportunity at this time.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Right. So the estimate for 2016 is \$28 million and what was spent according to the revised estimate was \$77 million, so we have a reduction of \$49 million on the Development Programme in the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Again, it brings to me the question, if you want to expand the non-energy sector and move to diversification where trade and industry become an important aspect, here it is, when last year you had an allocation of \$77 million, this year you have reduced that by \$49 million out of the \$77 million. So you have now only an allocation of \$28 million.

How is that in keeping with your overall philosophical approach of saying that you want to diversify and Ministry of Trade and Industry, an important aspect of that which I drew analogy earlier on to it under the recurrent expenditure, and here it is under the development which is supposed to be a more important area for expansion, you have a massive reduction in your allocation. Could you explain that, in keeping with the Government's philosophical approach of improvement in diversification? So it brings true to the fact that you are really not interested in diversification.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Finance, no more than five minutes, eh.

**Mr. Imbert:** Thank you. I just wanted clarity that I had a whole five minutes to respond. Thank you very much. I would not use the whole five minutes. Mr. Deputy Chairman, it would appear to me that the hon. Member for Caroni East was absent when we dealt with the recurrent expenditure for this Ministry because I distinctly said—and he must have been absent—that this Ministry used to have the Ministry of Communications in it. I said that, but I assuming, based on what the hon. Member has asked, that he was not here when I said that. *[Interruption]* You asked—you are making a statement that we have drastically reduced the capital programme, the development programme for the Ministry of Trade and Industry and this is such an important Ministry, and why we are doing that wickedness.

So, I am assuming that the hon. Member was absent when I gave the explanation for recurrent, because Communications has been removed. If the hon. Member will go to page 158—because I am assuming that you were absent when I was talking. *[Interruption]* Well, you had to be absent, otherwise, you would not ask this question.

If one goes to page 158 under 06:016, you will see that under that the Ministry of Communications, you had a Communications Policy and Strategic Road Map, \$40 million; and you also had a Digitization of Government Media Assets, \$3 million, and there are several others. So that if you were present, you would have

heard me say that recurrent has gone down because Communications has hived off into a separate Ministry development; also the Ministry no longer has responsibility for Communications. If you add up, you will get almost the \$49 million that is bothering you. *[Interruption]* So you were obviously absent.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you. Item 005, Multi-Sectoral and Other Services.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman, I am not sure we did page 156, Economic Infrastructure and I am looking at line Item 001, Investment Promotion Initiatives and Development of Collateral Investment Promotion Material. I note that this has been reduced from \$8.4 million in revised 2015 now to \$2 million. And I am asking through you, Sir, why the significant drop with respect to promotion investment? Are we going to find other ways or are we just reducing, promoting investment initiatives and development?

**Mr. Imbert:** I will answer that. In the Development Programme—the development programme is very different to the recurrent programme.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** I know that.

**Mr. Imbert:** No, you do not, because in the Development Programme—*[Interruption]* Mr. Deputy Chairman, why can I not be allowed to answer the question?

**Hon. Member:** Disrespectful.

**Mr. Imbert:** I am constantly interrupted. I am seeking your protection.

**Mr. Chairman:** The Minister of Finance is answering your question. Sir, please proceed.

**Mr. Imbert:** Thank you very much. In the development—*[Continuous interruption]* What is that commentary going on down there?

**Mr. Chairman:** Proceed, Mr. Minister.

**Mr. Imbert:** In the—*[Interruption]* Another one?

**Mr. Chairman:** Members, let us maintain the decorum of the House, please. Right. Let us respect each other. The Minister is on the floor at this time, kindly proceed.

**Mr. Imbert:** Thank you very much. *[Interruption]* I do not know how I am going to begin, you know, they keep talking.

**7.45 p.m.**

**Mr. Chairman:** Members, the Minister is responding to the question. Let us proceed.

**Mr. Imbert:** Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Chairman. The development programme is very different to the recurrent programme because the development programme is comprised of projects. So that projects come to an end and, therefore, when a project comes to an end there is no need for the same level of expenditure in one year as you had in another year. So that, throughout this document, when you see adjustments in the allocation for, it is comprised of projects. So that the projects that are going to be done in 2016 may not be the same projects that were done in 2015. Projects may have come to an end in 2015, which are not continuing in 2016. So throughout the development programme you are going to see variances in allocations because the life cycle of projects has come to an end. It is completely different to recurrent expenditure.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you, through you Deputy Chair, for a general answer. I am asking specifically with respect to the line Item 001: Investment Promotion Initiatives and Development of Collateral Investment, where there has been a decrease in the allocation and I am asking why. I have been told that we would see that a project has come to an end. Am I to say that this project is then winding down? This project, not generally in the development programme. Why?

**Mr. Chairman:** Minister of Finance, with regard to this particular project?

**Mr. Imbert:** Actually I have been told something, that some of the people hired by the former administration were going on joyrides all over the world. So that the allocation has been cut to avoid that kind of extravagance, waste and mismanagement.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** No, no, please, please. Once again, through you Sir, given the response, how much out of the allocation in 2015, \$8.4 on this project, was spent in the joyriding that the Minister is speaking about?

**Mr. Imbert:** We will provide that information in writing.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** How much of that was spent on joyriding and how much was spent on other matters of—*[Interruption]*

**Mr. Imbert:** We would providing it in writing.

**Mr. Chairman:** You would be provided the information in writing. Let us proceed.



**Dr. Tewarie:** Chair, you would appreciate that the concerns about this Ministry really have to do with the fact that the growth of the non-energy sector is absolutely critical to the development of the country. This is a position that the Minister articulated and this is a position that the Government articulated in the budget debate. The explanation given about the reduction in the development expenditure, I may be wrong, but based on the numbers I see here, I think we have a problem. Because you have a reduction from 77 to 28 and when I look at the communications development budget I see for 2014, 3.6 and nothing for 2015 and I see 2016—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Chairman:** Member for Caroni Central, what page are you on and the line item, just for clarity?

**Dr. Tewarie:** Sure. The line item I am dealing with in the Ministry of Trade and Industry—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Chairman:** And page number?

**Dr. Tewarie:** That is on page 158 and it has to do with 06: General Public Services and then the strengthening of the institutions below.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** The Minister of Finance said all those have been moved to a different Ministry, transferred to the Ministry of Communications. They are all moved to communications.

**Mr. Imbert:** This is your Government working for you. This is the \$40 million you squandered—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Chairman:** Okay, Members.

**Mr. Imbert:**—on “Government working for you”.

**Mr. Chairman:** It has been answered. Let us proceed, Minister of Finance.

**Dr. Tewarie:** The point I am making, I do not think has been absorbed by the Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Chairman:** Let us get to the point, hon. Member.

**Dr. Tewarie:** First of all, I do not see any line item in development for the economic development zones. So, if I am wrong just point it out to me. Okay?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** I do not know what line item he is looking at.

**Mr. Chairman:** Are you making reference, Member, to the economic development zone? Yes. Prior knowledge that you have and you are not seeing it identified?

**Dr. Tewarie:** No, it was mentioned specifically in the Budget Statement and I asked the Minister before if the economic zones were under her, I did not see it. She said it is not in the recurrent budget, it is in the development budget. Now, I did not remember seeing it in the development budget but I did not argue with her because the answer was logical, that it might be there, but I do not see it here and I am not trying to make a political point. I just want to understand it.

**Mr. Chairman:** Okay, hon. Member. The Ministers are conferring. Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Imbert:** Yes, I have received an explanation that there was a loan being negotiated with the Chinese Government, but because the previous administration had maxed out the debt ceiling, that loan could not be consummated. So that the projects are being looked at but I am afraid that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago cannot borrow any more money because you maxed out the debt ceiling, like the overdraft.

**Mr. Chairman:** Okay, we now proceed to Sub-Head—[*Interruption*]

**Dr. Tewarie:** Maybe that explains something else but it does not explain the line Item not being here and mentioned that it was stated.

**Mr. Imbert:** The line Item cannot be there unless there is an allocation for it. There cannot be an allocation unless the loan is consummated. The loan cannot be consummated until we deal with our debt ceiling, which you maxed out.

**Mr. Chairman:** Let us proceed, Infrastructure Development Fund, Item 005, Multi-sectoral and Other Services, page 322, *Draft Estimates of Development Programme*.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** In the absence of eTecK, Evolving Technologies and developing the company, no allocation.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Is it there as an Item? What is the line Item?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Item 295, page 157.

**Mr. Chairman:** Members, we are at the Infrastructure Development Fund, Item 005: Multi-sectoral and Other Services, page 322 of the *Draft Estimates of Development Programme*. That is the booklet that we are in. I would just give a couple seconds for us to just get to the page.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** There are three areas I want to ask about here: the Wallerfield Industrial and Technology Park, the estimate for that is \$12 million, as opposed to \$39 million that was spent in 2015. Is there any explanation for

that? Why such a drastic decline in the expenditure for that Wallerfield Industrial and Technology Park? I thought you all were moving towards expansion of technology? Is it under construction, if not, how long would it take to be completed?

**Mr. Imbert:** I am advised that the Wallerfield Industrial and Technology Park was just going on and on and on forever under the previous Government, so that the new Government has decided to put an end to this mismanagement and will be opening the Wallerfield Park on a phased basis, using funds from 293 and 276. In other words, we just would not be squandering money and just spending money, spending money and not opening these parks. So that is your answer.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Chair, the issues that are being raised, which basically suggest that on our side we feel that the development side of the Ministry of Trade is under-funded because of its importance to the diversification of the economy, the reason we are saying that is because when we look, for instance, at Ministry of National Security and we saw all the contract Items having to do with human resources, when we looked at the House of Assembly at the same time, and these are the productive sectors of the economy that really need to be funded and we have to see that in the context in which the development budget was reduced by \$1 billion approximately, a little more than that, but it was reduced to \$7 billion, yet the recurrent budget went up and we had the highest budget of \$63 billion. So it is a very real issue that we are raising here about what are the priorities for funding, if two of the things that you must do is manage your fiscal space and manage your growth. That is what we are raising.

**Mr. Imbert:** As a general answer to the general statement just made, the former administration spent hundreds of millions of dollars on wasteful and extravagant projects. We do not— *[Interruption]* Mr. Deputy Chairman, I did not say a word when the hon. Member for Caroni Central was talking—not a word—and he said all sorts of things. I would like to be able to answer, please.

**Mr. Chairman:** Order Members, order. Kindly proceed.

**Mr. Imbert:** Because the question is, the Member is asking how come the allocations in particular areas are lower this year than last year and it is a simple answer, we are cutting out the corruption, the waste and the mismanagement. You spent billions of dollars and achieved nothing and we are now going to complete these projects using far less money, using proper procurement, with honesty and integrity, and we will do much more with much less.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, the question is that the sum—Member for Siparia. Okay, she gave way.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** I would give way and then I would come after.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** In the Government's thrust for improved tourism.

**Mr. Deputy Chairman:** Which line Item?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** I am just referring you now to the Vanguard Hotel, formerly Tobago Hilton.

**Mr. Deputy Chairman:** 299?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Yes. The Government's thrust towards improved tourism and particularly in Tobago where the Vanguard Hotel—formerly Hilton—is an important aspect of the improvement in tourism. I see no expenditure there and also in Trinidad for the Hilton Hotel. It there is a thrust for tourism. Is there a consideration for improvement in these hotels and for assistance to these hotels?

**8.00 p.m.**

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** With regard to the Vanguard, what we have at this time is a one-year arrangement; year-to year-arrangement. So the focus is on really finding a long-term entity to, in fact, manage the Vanguard Hotel Limited. So that is where we are with it.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you, Deputy Chair. Again, back to page 322, eTecK Development Works on Industrial Estates, Wallerfield Technology Park. Well, the Vanguard Hotel Limited, of course, was the Hilton Trinidad Conference Centre. You have answered on the Hilton, but the others, Sir, the decrease—I am dealing with 276, 293, 297, yeah—

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** I think the Minister of Finance answered 276 and 293, in that we are prioritizing at this stage. Much funds have been—

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** No, I have not even asked the question yet.

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** Oh, sorry, please?

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** I have not asked the question.

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** I am sorry. Go ahead.

**Mr. Chairman:** Proceed.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you very much. So I am looking at Development Institutions, eTecK, okay? We see \$126 million, now down to \$59 million, so the reduction—that was the question before—and the Minister gave the explanation that he was cutting out waste and corruption. So I will like to find out for 2015, the revised estimates brought, \$126.4 million expended. On what

was that \$126.4 expended?—and it is broken down \$32.5 million, \$39 million, \$5 million and \$7 million. On what was it expended?—one. And what per cent, what part of that—how much of that was on corruption? And how much of it was spent on waste? Please identify those specific parts of the expenditure.

**Mr. Imbert:** I will be very happy to give you a detailed written report which we will also publish on the corruption, waste and mismanagement in your expenditure for 2015 on this item. I will be happy to do that. You will get in writing, all the corruption, all the waste, all the mismanagement of your administration. Happy to do it.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 48 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much, Minister of Trade and Industry. Thanks to the technocrats and your senior members. Thank you for coming.

Right. We now move on to Head 68, the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, page 441.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Mr. Deputy Chairman, earlier today and I believe yesterday too, the Leader of the House indicated that we will meet from 1.30 to 8.00 p.m. today. It is now past 8.00 p.m.

**Mr. Imbert:** Mr. Deputy Chairman, I am deputing for the Leader of the House.

**Mr. Chairman:** Okay, hold one second. Remember this morning the Chairman of the Committee said that we will either be doing seven Heads or 12 o'clock. That was made clear by her this morning, by the Chairman.

**Dr. Moonilal:** So, is it now that the Chairman of the Committee has decided, without the consensus of the House or even the Government, when the Committee will meet?

**Mr. Chairman:** Remember, there was no objection when the Chairman made that point this morning.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Yes, there was. I raised the point to her—

**Mr. Chairman:** But there was no question put.

**Dr. Moonilal:**—that we had an arrangement with the Government.  
[Crosstalk]

**Mr. Imbert:** I am deputing for the substantive Leader of Government Business, and I am saying for the record that we shall be going until midnight or we shall do seven Items, whichever one comes first; for the record.

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes. Members, we are now in *Draft Estimates Details of Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure*, and we are on page 441, and we are going to proceed with Head 68, Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs.

Hon. Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs, you and your team; I must say welcome. Welcome to your senior members of staff at the Ministry. We welcome you all to this House. We will kindly proceed at this time.

*Head 68.*

*Question proposed:* That Head 68 stand part of the Schedule.

**Mr. Chairman:** I will now invite the Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs to make a brief opening statement, for no more than five minutes. Can you proceed?

**Hon. Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman. As you know in my budget contribution, and no secret to the country, the Ministry of Sport, now Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, has some investigations with regard to a major programme there. Nevertheless, we will be focusing over the next year to ensure that we clean up the systems and policies with regard to internal aspects of the Ministry and our boards involved.

We will be working very closely with the National Governing Bodies to ensure that they are compliant, and that they also clean up their act with regard to their accounting processes and policies.

We are going to be ensuring that we are data driven when making decisions, which is something that has not occurred before. We want to gather data where we can make the right decisions, also encourage the NGBs—the National Governing Bodies—to do the same. So when they come to us we all will be aligned with regard to moving forward.

There have been issues with regard to the maintenance of what we have right now. We will be implementing a schedule of preventative maintenance and purchasing software to assist us with that. We want to ensure that we finally become OSH compliant. We will be working to cut the wastage, the corruption and the mismanagement that has been occurring. Our main focus as you know this fiscal year is the Olympics and, of course, the World Cup qualifying, and of course working with the young people of Trinidad and Tobago.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, the sum of \$516,807,924 for Head 68: the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs is comprised of moneys proposed for expenditure under the following Sub-Heads and Items to be found in the *Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure* and the *Draft Estimates of Development Programme*.

Sub-Head 01: Personnel Expenditure. Member for Princes Town.

**Mr. Padarath:** Mr. Deputy Chairman, through you to the hon. Minister. In Sub-Item 08, Vacant Posts - Salaries and COLA (without incumbents), the allocation is \$560,000. Could the hon. Minister indicate how many posts are presently vacant? Can he also list the vacant posts? How many are expected to be filled within the financial year? And if also he can give us a description of these positions and in what method they intend to fill these posts.

**Hon. Smith:** Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairman, I am just finding it here. With regard to the staffing of permanent—with the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, we have currently 92 spots of which 31 are vacant, and 51 have acting incumbents.

**Mr. Padarath:** Mr. Deputy Chairman, through you to the hon. Minister. Can the hon. Minister give us some examples of which positions are currently vacant in the Ministry? And within the next financial year how he intends to fill these vacancies.

Now, with respect to the first question, if he can also give us an idea of the description of the positions within that Ministry. We understand that there are a number of positions that are vacant, but if he can give us a description of those positions, and what methods would they be using? Would it be thorough GHRS, would it be advertised? How do they intend to fill these positions? Is it within the Ministry itself or subsets of the Ministry?

**Hon. Smith:** Permanent positions are always through the service commission. However, the rest of your answers we will answer in writing.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Well, it is in keeping with the arrangement of ditto, where there is an increase in Personnel Expenditure, from 2015—2016 by \$28 million. We would appreciate if the Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs will provide the same information, or the Minister of Finance will provide the information on that aspect of the personnel emoluments: salaries, cost of living, which have increased as well, which they agreed to originally.

**Mr. Imbert:** Yes, I repeat for now the 14<sup>th</sup> time that I will give an explanation of the variation in the Personnel Expenditure for all Items, but I wish to draw the former Minister's attention to the fact, that this Ministry is now the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, so youth has been added. So that would naturally cause an increase, but you will get your explanation in writing.

**Mr. Chairman:** Item 001, General Administration; Item 002, Physical Education and Sport Division; Item—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Yes. In the previous Government the Ministry of Sport gave assistance to the Ministry of Education.

**Mr. Chairman:** Which line item, hon. Member?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** This is Salaries and Cost of Living Allowances. I wanted to just ask, the Ministry of Sport was being transferred—certain positions at the Ministry of Sport were going to be transferred to the Ministry of Education, particularly the areas of physical education. I want to know what is the arrangement now because that was going to be effected close to end of the last fiscal year, and if there is any arrangement now where the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs is going to be helping the Ministry of Education on that physical education aspect.

**Hon. Smith:** Mr. Deputy Chairman, we will put that in writing, right? Thank you.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** You would put what in writing?

**Hon. Smith:** The answer to your question.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** You all are “ah joke yes”. [*Laughter*]

**Mr. Deputy Chairman:** Item 005, Youth Affairs; Item 006, National Youth Development and Apprenticeship. We will then proceed to Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services.

**Mr. Padarath:** Mr. Deputy Chairman, through you to the hon. Minister. Item 16, Contract Employment, we see that there is an increase of \$1.9 million. Could the hon. Minister indicate to us in the Ministry, what areas of contract employment are they looking at, and whether or not this is specifically with respect to the Ministry itself or any of the subsets within the Ministry?

**8.15 p.m.**

**Hon. Smith:** Mr. Chairman, we will answer in writing.

**Mr. Charles:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Under Item 22, Short-Term Employment—



**Mr. Imbert:** We are not going to fall for your tricks.

**Mr. Charles:**—a decrease of \$1.64 million. Could you give an indication of which jobs have been excluded which would result in this \$1.6 million decrease?

**Mr. Chairman:** Which line Item is that again?

**Mr. Charles:** 22, Short-Term Employment.

**Mr. Chairman:** Page 444, line Item 22, Short-Term Employment.

**Hon. Smith:** That is several different—that is a lot of information there, Mr. Chairman, so yes, you will get that in writing as well.

**Mr. Imbert:** I would give you a general answer though. A lot of people were hired on three-month contracts for the general election and, therefore, the incoming administration—this is an answer with respect to Contract Employment. Mr. Chairman—

**Mr. Chairman:** Members.

**Mr. Imbert:** I have five minutes to speak.

**Mr. Chairman:** Members, the Minister of Finance is answering the question. Kindly proceed.

**Mr. Imbert:** Thank you. Under the specific head of Contract Employment, the former administration—Short-Term Employment—had a number of people on very short contracts hired in the context of the general election, and we are not going to condone that sort of waste and mismanagement. So, we are doing a review and we are going to be reducing expenditure on Short-Term Employment.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Chairman:** Silence please, Members.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to ask a follow-up question to the Minister of Finance first, if he could provide us in writing with this policy of short-term contract for general election purposes, and whether there was an ad in the newspaper: “Please apply herewith for the general election for three months”. I want to see the ad in the newspaper to that effect.

**Mr. Deyalsingh:** It was on Facebook.

**Dr. Moonilal:** My question to the Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs, I invite you at the beginning to put it in writing the provision for graduate employment if you could just give us a note of the policy objectives, the

qualification, apart from just being graduate, and the number you intend to hire over the period of time.

**Mr. Chairman:** And the line Item is?

**Dr. Moonilal:** The line Item is 16. If you can indicate to us the policy objective, the amount of people in fiscal 2016 you intend to hire, the overall criteria, apart from graduate alone, in writing. I would be very happy.

**Mr. Imbert:** I would answer that. We put a line item as indicated in budget statement of \$55 million for graduate employment in Ministries and the Tobago House of Assembly. It works out to approximately \$2 million per Ministry, give or take. The purpose of the graduate employment—there are a lot of graduates who are unemployed who are in highly specialized fields. I gave an example in a commentary that, for example, there are people with degrees in Petroleum Geo-Science who have been victims of the worldwide collapse in oil prices. So that we felt that we have these graduates outside there who have done very specialized programmes—you have people doing accountancy and so on—so we have decided in each Ministry related to its core functions—so that the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries would be hiring primarily persons who have a specialization in energy-related studies. So we would not be hiring people with a degree in English in the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries, for example. It is not a programme of apprenticeship, but it is a programme of development of these graduates to assist them to become leaders in their respective fields. So that is the answer.

**Dr. Moonilal:** I want to thank the Minister of Finance very much for that clarification, because what the Minister is saying is that the graduate programme, to use the Minister of National Security thing, the conceptual clarity, is that it is for graduates, meaning post-graduate with specialized—

**Mr. Imbert:** Those who have a first degree.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Okay, you see a first degree is a gateway degree if you are looking for the highly specialized, as you use the energy sector as an example.

**Mr. Imbert:** It is like an internship. A person with no experience who has qualified in a specialized field would be put into a special training programme to enhance their skills to become leaders in their field.

**Dr. Moonilal:** My two questions to follow up that, so you are looking at, our maths would tell us 100, 160?

**Mr. Imbert:** About 500 people.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Five hundred people divide it in how much Ministries?

**Mr. Imbert:** Twenty-three Ministries.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Twenty-three, it is how much, 500 into 23? That is how much persons you are looking at per Ministry.

**Mr. Imbert:** Yes, yes.

**Dr. Moonilal:** About 20.

**Mr. Imbert:** Approximately 20 per Ministry.

**Dr. Moonilal:** So, 20 persons per Ministry on this programme. So, it is not a mass of people. The question is this: how does that differ fundamentally from the graduate recruitment from the OJT?

**Mr. Imbert:** We will give you a detailed explanation with the underlying philosophy, but since you seem to want the answer now, it is very different, because the On-the-Job-Training Programme is not specifically designed to function as an in-service training programme in order to create leaders in their respective fields. But we would give you an underlying philosophy in writing so you will understand what we are see seeking to do. But I must tell you the unemployed graduates outside there are very, very, happy about this programme.

**Dr. Moonilal:** I am sure they are.

**Mr. Padarath:** Mr. Chairman, through you, to the hon. Minister. The hon. Minister of Finance is giving us an example with regard to the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries. We would like to have some clarity with respect to some of these areas of study that we will be focusing on with respect to graduate training programme in that we are looking at approximately 20 positions in every Ministry; and if the hon. Minister can indicate if there are any further follow-up programmes that would create sustainable employment within the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs and also in the related field apart from those 20 jobs or if that is the primary focus you are looking at, at this point. So we are looking at specific specialized areas in the field of sport as the Minister of Finance has indicated in the area of energy, but we are looking at specialized areas in the Ministry of Sport where we want examples of. What sort of “renumeration” we are looking at with respect to that and any further follow-up programme within the Ministry that the hon. Minister has identified that will create further sustainable employment or is it that we are just sticking with 20 jobs per Ministry?

**Mr. Imbert:** Firstly, it is remuneration not “renumeration”.

**Mr. Chairman:** Answer the question please.

**Mr. Imbert:** I did answer the question, Mr. Chairman. The fact is that this is not going to be a one-off. This is intended to be a rolling programme and what we are hoping, there are so many vacancies in the public service and vacancies within the state enterprise sector for people with specialized skills. So what we expect to get out of this programme as we take in the specialized graduates and we put them into an intensive training programme, a targeted training programme, they will be able to fill the vacancies within the public service. They will be able to work in the state enterprises and give us that critical mass of trained specialists that we so sorely need in this country. So, it is a rolling programme and I might tell you, to forestall any similar questions, the Ministry of Finance is going to give guidelines to each Ministry with respect to what is defined as a specialization and the kind of skill set the person should have in order to qualify for this graduate employment programme.

**Mr. Charles:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sub-Item 08, Rent/Lease - Office Accommodation and Storage. I note that there has been a decrease of \$2.5 million, but \$50 million of taxpayers’ money is still being spent for that expenditure. I would like to know how many properties are being leased or rented. Two, has there been an analysis of purchase option, lease option, rental option? I would like the address of each space being rented and/or leased and the monthly rental cost for each office.

**Mr. Chairman:** Item 08, page 444, Rent/Lease - Office Accommodation and Storage.

**Hon. Smith:** Right now, Mr. Chairman, we currently have a building at No. 12 Abercromby Street that has been the Ministry of Sport and now it is, of course, the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, where we pay approximately \$300,000 there a month. We also have eight Cuban coaches from the previous regime that rent apartments in Tunapuna to the cost of \$32,000 a month.

The Ministry, as you would have known, Mr. Chairman, the former regime took youth away from the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs and formed the gender, child and youth Ministry which is in this building which they do not pay any rent for here. Then there is the Sport Company, SPORTT, and their office is on Park and Henry Street and their rent is approximately \$250,000 of which, of course, as you know, Henry Street is in Port of Spain. They have to pay for parking for their staff and any visitors, which is approximately \$10,000.

**Hon. Member:** Per month.

**Hon. Smith:** Yeah, per month. It is a lot here. The list goes on for several pages, Mr. Chairman, so that is just to give you an idea.

**Mr. Chairman:** Commit to it in writing, please.

**Hon. Smith:** Yes, yes.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Mr. Chair, the point that the Minister of Finance was making about the graduate programme, as far as I can recollect—

**Mr. Imbert:** Which line Item are you on? Which line Item are you on?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** You were speaking, but my colleague went on to another point, but I had my hand up.

**Mr. Imbert:** I just want to ask what line Item are you on, 116?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** And the graduate programme, you said approximately \$2 million is going to be given per Ministry, and \$2 million you said they want to employ at least, how much, 20 people at the beginning?

**Mr. Chairman:** Twenty persons per Ministry.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** If it is 20 people at \$2 million, it means that one person is going to be employed at, is it \$250,000? The \$2 million at a salary of \$10,000 per person will give you 200 employees. So, where is the calculation that the Minister said that he wants to spend \$2 million and employ 20 people? That is incongruous.

**Mr. Imbert:** Mr. Chairman, I know it is late. I know the Member is tired. I know he was apparently absent when I explained this many times before. He must have been absent, because it is approximately \$2 million per year per Ministry, divided by 20 you get \$100,000 per person. Divide that by 12, you are going to get—all right. I have said this four times. Like you are not here when I am talking.

**Mr. Padarath:** Mr. Chairman, through you, to the hon. Minister, we see a slight increase with respect to item No. 27 on Official Overseas Travel. Could the hon. Minister indicate to us that with respect to some of these upcoming international events whether or not this slight increase was because of that anticipation?

**Hon. Smith:** Mr. Chairman, again, this is an extensive list, but the Sport Company with regard to the Olympic and internship at international stadia and the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, the 10th Commonwealth Youth Forum in

Malta in November this year and the Caricom UN and there are other meetings that are coming up. Again, this is an extensive list that I could send to you again, yes in writing. We spent all night doing it.

**Mr. Padarath:** Mr. Chairman, through you, could the hon. Minister indicate those persons who would be qualifying to attend on behalf of the Ministry? It has been the practice in the past where we have chosen persons from within the sporting fraternity, outside of Ministry officials, to attend and represent Trinidad and Tobago. Would a similar approach be adopted?

**Hon. Smith:** As I said, at the beginning when the Chairman asked me to give brief remarks, we are reviewing everything that happened in the past, and we are collecting data with regard to that. We only make decisions based on best practices internationally. What is best for the Ministry and for the country?

**8.30 p.m.**

**Mr. Chairman:** Member for Princes Town.

**Mr. Padarath:** So, Minister, in effect what you are saying, you can give no commitment at this time to members of the sport fraternity that they will be representing Trinidad and Tobago in some capacity even though if it is in addition to members of the Ministry or the SPORTT Company, there is no commitment.

**Hon. Smith:** Chairman, again, I said there is a commitment to review.

**Mr. Chairman:** Member for Naparima.

**Mr. Charles:** Thank you, Chairman, Item 17, Training, which has been increased by \$36,000, and Official Entertainment which has been increased also by \$36,000. Is the Minister telling us that there is an equal priority towards official entertainment as it is to training? Thank you.

**Mr. Imbert:** I just want to point out that this is the merger of two Ministries so there would naturally be an increase in both.

**Mr. Charles:** Yeah, that explains the increase, may explain the increase but not the prioritization.

**Mr. Chairman:** Member for Caroni East.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** There is a Division of National Youth Development and Apprenticeship and a Division of Youth Affairs—

**Mr. Chairman:** What line Item and what page, please?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** As we moved along the different line items, the National Youth Development is Item 006 and the Youth Affairs is Item 005. Is it possible—

**Mr. Imbert:** What page?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Pages 444 and 443. What is the difference between one area and the other?—Youth Affairs and National Youth Development and Apprenticeship—National Youth Programme and Apprenticeship and Youth Affairs.

**Mr. Imbert:** This is under Personnel?

**Hon. Smith:** Mr. Deputy Chairman, I thought we passed that already.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hold on, the Member is making a comparison with regard to page 444 and making reference back to page 443.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** No, they are two different sectors of the Ministry of Youth—

**Mr. Imbert:** They are still Personnel.

**Hon. Smith:** Okay, one is residential and one is not. That is what they boil down to.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** One is the youth camp?

**Hon. Smith:** Yes, youth camp, one is residential and one is—

**Mr. Karim:** They call them the YDACs.

**Hon. Smith:** Yeah.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** You see how easy it is to answer it?

**Hon. Smith:** But I thought we passed that.

**Mr. Chairman:** Item 001, Item 002, Physical Education and Sports Division, page 445, the bottom half of page 445. Item 003 Dwight Yorke Stadium.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Want to commit yourself in writing to letting us know what is—

**Mr. Imbert:** Mr. Deputy Chairman, may I ask on a point of clarification, we had already completed the examination of Personnel Expenditure, are we now setting a precedent that we can allow Members to go back to Personnel Expenditure?—we are on Goods and Services.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister, the Member was making a clarification from the present item we were dealing with to a past item, so I gave him the opportunity to proceed. Right? We are now on—

**Mr. Imbert:** No, But, Mr. Deputy Chairman, both items were under Personnel Expenditure, both of them. They are both under PE.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** We have not gone on to Goods and Services.

**Mr. Imbert:** What!?

**Mr. Chairman:** Members, let us proceed. We are now on Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services, and we are on Item 003, Dwight Yorke Stadium. Member for Princes Town.

**Mr. Padarath:** Mr. Chairman, through you again to the hon. Minister, on line item 16 we see Contract Employment in the financial year 2016 being increased by over \$60,000 at a tune of \$337,500. Could the hon. Minister indicate to us, through the Dwight Yorke Stadium, which areas of contract employment they are looking at, how many positions are we looking at as well, and in terms of if he can give us an idea of what sort of skill sets we are looking at in terms of filling these vacancies?

**Hon. Smith:** Mr. Chairman, that is a lot of information again, so we would put that in writing.

**Mr. Chairman:** Okay. Item 004, Youth Centres. Item 005, Youth Affairs; Item 006, National Youth Development and Apprenticeship. We now move on to Sub-Head 03.

**Mr. Padarath:** Mr. Chairman, if we can return to National Youth Development and Apprenticeship—

**Mr. Chairman:** That is Item 006. Well we are on that one, go ahead.

**Mr. Padarath:** Yes, Sub-Item 22, again, we see short-term employment. If the hon. Minister would indicate to us how many positions that they are looking at, what areas, where, in terms of Trinidad and Tobago, in terms of the sports facilities, whether or not this would be in Ministries, whether or not these would be in the SPORTT Company, whether or not it will be through any of the other facilities, whether it be the National Aquatic Centre, where is this Short-Term Employment going to be instituted, how many positions, and, also, if we could get a description of the remuneration packages for these persons.



**Mr. Imbert:** Mr. Chairman, I am advised that Short-Term Employment is not associated with the positions, it is employment that is for a period of six months or less for situations that arise from time to time as a result of unforeseen matters, and this actually has come from the Ministry of Youth, it is not in the Ministry of Sport. If you want a better explanation, I am sure we can provide that to you in writing. Okay?

**Mr. Padarath:** Mr. Chairman, I think that will be most useful if the hon. Minister can give us that in writing so that we can get a clear indication of where this is coming from.

**Mr. Imbert:** And what Short-Term Employment is, and so on. No problem.

**Mr. Chairman:** Member for Tabaquite.

**Dr. Rambachan:** I was trying to get your attention, Mr. Chairman, but I did not. The Dwight Yorke Stadium, there is a line item for that here, are there similar line items anywhere for Ato Boldon and Manny Ramjohn and so on? I did not see any of those and I am wondering how are those being maintained and, as we are on the question, there are a number of very good recreation facilities which were built recently across the country, and does the Sport Ministry have any inclination to providing financing in order to ensure that those do not get dilapidated very quickly also?

**Hon. Smith:** Mr. Chairman, the Dwight Yorke Stadium is under the Ministry of Sport, the other stadia that he is speaking about is under the SPORTT Company, so that is the difference there.

**Dr. Rambachan:** SPORTT Company? They need to do a better job.

**Hon. Smith:** We plan to improve from the past five years. Yes, correct. We are going to manage it much better.

**Mr. Imbert:** The company that you managed for the last five years, we will do a much better job than you.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, we move on to Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases; Item 001, General Administration. Member for Princes Town, you caught my eye.

**Mr. Padarath:** Chairman, through you again to the hon. Minister, with respect to Item 01, Vehicles, we see here that there has actually been a removal of this line item in terms of its expenditure and its allocation. Could the hon. Minister indicate to us: how do they intend to operate and function without any allocation being given with respect to these vehicles?

**Hon. Smith:** Chairman, I have been advised that four were purchased last year and we do not need any. We are trying to cut down on the wastage so we are good there with the four.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you. [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Padarath:** Mr. Chairman, could the hon. Minister indicate when these vehicles were bought? And was it—

**Hon. Smith:** In May.

**Mr. Padarath:**—and also the type of vehicles, and the cost of these vehicles, and whether or not they was bought specifically for the Ministry of Sport.

**Hon. Smith:** I am being told it is two Prados and two Wingroads, no Porsche.

**Mr. Padarath:** Okay, so that means that the Partnership Government would have provided for the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, thank you.

**Mr. Chairman:** Item 002, Physical Education and Sport Division—

**Mr. Imbert:** You bought vehicles that they did not need, taxpayers paid for that.

**Mr. Chairman:** Members, page 449, Item 002, Physical Education and Sport Division.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** That is the area that I was asking the Minister to clarify. Where are the physical education officers who were in the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, and there was a decision to move some of them to the Ministry of Education, where is that? Is it in limbo? Has it been clarified?

**Hon. Smith:** They are still in Sport, but, again, as I said before, we are reviewing and we are having discussions with the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** They are still in Sport?

**Hon. Smith:** Yes, they are still in Sport, safe in Sport. Just to clarify, Mr. Chairman, the former regime did not purchase, the taxpayers' money purchased the vehicles for the use of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. I just want to clear that statement.

**Mr. Chairman:** Item 003, Dwight Yorke Stadium. Item 004, Youth Centres. Item 005, Youth Affairs—

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Deputy Chairman.

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, Couva South.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Is there any allocation in terms of furniture and furnishings, and so on, for the California Youth Facility?

**Hon. Smith:** Chairman, I do not want to get into specifics because each constituency could ask that. You will get that in writing.

**Mr. Chairman:** Item 006, National Youth Development and Apprenticeship. We now move on to Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies. Item 002, Commonwealth Bodies. Item 005, Non-Profit Institutions.

**Mr. Karim:** Mr. Chairman, may I, under Item Non-Profit Institutions, line item 32. There is an increase of \$2.5 million, would it be possible for us to get a listing of what constitutes those bodies—29 and 32.

**Mr. Chairman:** It is 29 and 32.

**Hon. Smith:** Sure, we will get a listing to you. That is grant funding so you have to wait until—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** You can give us a few examples of what you consider non-profit organizations, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Under Institutions, hon. Minister?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Sub-items 29, 32.

**Hon. Smith:** Like the NGBs, the National Governing Bodies, the Youth bodies, and so on.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Okay.

**Hon. Smith:** Right? So when they come to us for the grant funding we will—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** It is sporting bodies—national sporting bodies.

**Hon. Smith:** And youth as well.

**Mr. Chairman:** Member for Tabaquite.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Mr. Deputy Chairman, the regional complexes, nothing has been allocated to them. Is it that items 12 and 20, for example, come under SPORTT Company also?

**Mr. Imbert:** Mr. Chairman, the Member is not reading properly, \$10 million has been allocated.

**Mr. Chairman:** Line item 34.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Oh, it is down below?

**Mr. Imbert:** It is not down below. It is on the line.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Yeah, well, okay.

**Mr. Chairman:** Yeah Sub-Item 34, it is \$10 million.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Yeah, well there was a 12 up on top also, Regional Complexes. You saw it? There is a Sub-Item 12, Regional Complexes and there is nothing allocated—

**Mr. Chairman:** Oh, the other one. Okay you are at 12.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Yeah, well is the 12 and the 34 the same?

**Mr. Chairman:** Page 451, Sub-Item 12 is Regional Complexes, and then we have line item 34, Regional Complexes.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Community Development.

**Mr. Imbert:** Mr. Chairman, a number of things have been merged from other Ministries. If you look at the whole line item you will see there was never any allocation there under Regional Complexes under this Ministry, the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs. This newly created Ministry now has an allocation of \$10 million for regional complexes. It would not have had it before, it did not exist before.

**Dr. Rambachan:** So the Chaguanas Regional Complex will come under this?

**Hon. Smith:** Mr. Chairman, we will give you a list because, again, all the constituencies could start asking that.

**Mr. Chairman:** All right, point taken.

**Dr. Rambachan:** All right, but, Mr. Chairman, what about St. Paul Street Gymnasium, would that fall under that also?

**Hon. Smith:** Mr. Chairman, did I not just say we will give a list? We do not want to start nitpicking and—

**Dr. Rambachan:** We are not sure we will get the list, you know.

**Mr. Chairman:** Member for Tabaquite, assurances have been given that all information will be provided in writing, and I anticipate that it will be done.

**Mr. Imbert:** We will try to do it faster than them; they sometimes took years.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you. You have a question again, hon. Member for Tabaquite?

**Dr. Rambachan:** The Boxing Board of Control is getting almost \$2.7 million and they are always saddled with all kinds of confusions it seems, that we read in the public. What is the approach of the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs towards ensuring that the Boxing Board of Control functions properly?

**8.45 p.m.**

**Hon. Smith:** Chairman, we are cutting out the waste, the corruption and the mismanagement and they probably would have a new board in there pretty soon, so it will stop by then.

**Mr. Chairman:** Item 007, Households.

**Mr. Padarath:** Mr. Chairman, through you to the hon. Minister, we are looking at Item No. 2.

**Mr. Chairman:** Silence, please.

**Mr. Imbert:** Mr. Chairman, could I just make a comment? The Member for Caroni East just told us across the floor that we have no moral authority. I do not know what line Item he is talking about. Could you control him, please? He should not say these things.

**Mr. Chairman:** Member for Princes Town.

**Mr. Padarath:** Mr. Chairman, through you to the hon. Minister, line Item No. 3 under Households. If we can get an idea, a sense from the hon. Minister, we know it is being transferred from the Minister of Gender, Youth and Child Development. Over the next year \$2 million has been allocated for hosting of vacation camps. If we can have an idea, especially with the Government's emphasis on rural development, how much of this will be allocated to constituencies that are considered to be rural, and how long it intends to be run and how many children do they intend to facilitate through these summer camps?

**Hon. Smith:** Very good question, Chairman, again it is only three weeks and we have a team working on that and they will be providing a list for us shortly.

**Mr. Chairman:** Item 009, Other Transfers.

**Mr. Karim:** Mr. Chairman, may we get an explanation to this significant decrease, line item 04, the Sport Company of Trinidad and Tobago?

**Mr. Imbert:** We are cutting out the corruption, the waste and the mismanagement, and it was particularly bad. That is the Ministry that had LifeSport in it. I think we could save a lot of money.

**Mr. Padarath:** Mr. Chairman, again through you to the hon. Minister. Under Other Transfers, 009, I see we have the Sport Company of Trinidad and Tobago. Could the hon. Minister indicate to us how soon we will be seeing a new board in place, one, and also the vacancies that exist in the management of the Sport Company of Trinidad and Tobago, how soon could we see that being addressed in terms of finalizing persons within positions, one, or two, advertising for positions that are currently vacant or have persons acting within those positions?

**Hon. Smith:** Chairman, you would have seen the speed at which we have been accumulating our boards, unlike the former regime which took over a year, so I think he could be a little patient to wait on us. It will be done in the next few weeks with regard to the SportTT board.

**Mr. Chairman:** Item 011, Transfers.

**Mr. Padarath:** Mr. Chairman, so at this point we can say that we are without a board for the Sport Company?

**Hon. Smith:** Chair, we will put it in writing.

**Mr. Padarath:** Also with respect to the management and the positions that are currently vacant, one, or two, persons acting in those positions, could we have that in writing as well?

**Hon. Smith:** Sure.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Item 001, Transfers to State Enterprises; 01, First Citizens Bank Limited, repayment of loan on the Brian Lara Cricket Stadium. Could the hon. Minister tell us what is the outstanding balance on the loan for the Brian Lara Stadium? Number one. What is the total cost of the loan? I am going through slowly. What is the cost of the Brian Lara Stadium so far? *[Interruption]* What is the total cost of the loan? What is the amount?

**Mr. Chairman:** One Member at a time, please.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** What is the outstanding balance on the loan, and the present Government, what are their plans for the Brian Lara Stadium for the future?

**Mr. Imbert:** I believe the cost of that project is somewhere around the amount of money stolen or wasted in the LifeSport programme, but we will give you the particulars that you have asked for in writing. I think it could be close to the amount of legal fees that you paid to lawyers; about the amount you paid to lawyers.

**Mr. Chairman:** Would you care to provide it in writing?

**Mr. Imbert:** We will put it in writing; just giving him an idea.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** You are ashamed to give the cost of the Brian Lara Stadium.

**Mr. Chairman:** Members!

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** You should be ashamed. [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Chairman:** Let us proceed to Sub-Head 09, Development Programme. Member for Caroni East! Minister, I would like to proceed to Sub-Head—

**Dr. Moonilal:** Mr. Chairman, as the epitome of diplomacy here, let me gently speak, as someone who has always remained calm in this House. [*Laughter and crosstalk*]

**Mr. Chairman:** Members! Members!

**Dr. Moonilal:** If I respond to you, I will make three editorials, so could I ask the question. [*Laughter*]

**Mr. Chairman:** Member for Oropouche East, it is getting late, kindly proceed.

**Dr. Moonilal:** On that item, could I also ask the Minister, in writing of course—I do not want to ask the Minister—

**Mr. Chairman:** Which line item?

**Dr. Moonilal:**—on the line item of Pathway Programme, the loan repayment; there is nothing there. Could I ask the Minister if that loan payment has come to an end, and if it has, why have they not removed it as a line item in the first place?

**Hon. Smith:** I could answer that. That loan was paid off for obvious reasons.

**Dr. Moonilal:** So they could remove it as LifeSport?

**Hon. Smith:** Yes.

**Mr. Imbert:** You do not want to see LifeSport in the documents? I understand why you want it out.

**Mr. Chairman:** Sub-Head 09, Development Programme; Item No. 004, Social Infrastructure; and we proceed to the *Draft Estimates of Development Programme 2016*, and we are on page 209. You all are with me, Members? Nice, excellent.

**Mr. Padarath:** Mr. Chairman, through you to the hon. Minister, line item 122, Establishment of the Sport Institute of Trinidad and Tobago: \$1 million has been allocated to this project, it being identified as a new project. Could the hon. Minister indicate to us exactly where they intend to function and operate this Sport Institute out of, would it be a new building or would it be a new facility

being established? I wish to also suggest that if it is a new facility being established that we would also want to look at several of Trinidad and Tobago's leading and premier sports personalities coming from south Trinidad, and seeing that this Government has placed so much focus on rural development, that they may wish to consider constituencies like Naparima and Princes Town, Oropouche East, et cetera, to establish a sports facility of Trinidad and Tobago; whether or not they have considered utilizing the Brian Lara Stadium or any other facility for this purpose.

**Hon. Smith:** Mr. Chairman, what is the question?

**Mr. Padarath:** Where, when, who and how of the establishment of the Sport Institute of Trinidad and Tobago, Item 122. They have identified \$1 million for that, we are asking whether it is a new facility. Is it for the start-up, for the construction of a new facility? How do they intend to establish this? How do they intend to run this? How do they intend to man this? What exactly is this Sport Institute of Trinidad and Tobago about? We are also making the recommendation that seeing they have focussed so much of their energies on rural development, they may wish to consider some of the southern constituencies where there is available land use and so on.

When you look at line item 124, you see the construction of Diego Martin Sporting Complex, but you see nothing in several of the southern and central constituencies.

[MRS. ANNISSETTE-GEORGE *in the Chair*]

**Hon. Smith:** Chairman, clearly that question is very long, so obviously the answer will be very long, so we will put that in writing.

**Mr. Padarath:** Madam Chairman, we can clearly see again, that there is no planning.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Princes Town, I do not think that is a fair conclusion to the answer that you were given, please.

**Mr. Imbert:** Since we put this thing in the allocations, the Sport Institute of Trinidad and Tobago, we are talking about line item 122, Establishment of a Sport Institute of Trinidad and Tobago. Page 209, 09 Development Programme; 004, Social Infrastructure; 122, Establishment of a Sport Institute of Trinidad and Tobago. This is a brand new project. It was a manifesto commitment and it is in the budget statement, and the \$1 million is the start-up funds to do the planning for this institute which is an entity. It is not a building; it is an entity like UWI. It is an institution; UTT is an institution. This is an entity; so the \$1 million, is start-up funds to do the planning, because this is a brand new entity.



**Mr. Charles:** Madam Chairman, I would like, through you, to ask the Minister of Sport, Item 124, Construction of the Diego Martin Sporting Complex, \$25 million, if he could give us an idea of who this would serve and what would be the facilities offered and when could the constituents of Naparima look forward to a similar facility?

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Naparima, in terms of who it will serve? As it is a line Item I will allow that, but I do not see anything for Naparima here, to allow that second part to your question.

**Hon. Smith:** It is clear in the line Item. It is a Diego Martin Sporting Complex, so I think it is clear as day that it will be serving the people of three constituencies of Diego Martin.

**Dr. Moonilal:** A small question. I am seeing here under Recreation/Culture, Mr. Minister, you have the upgrading of the swimming pools and so on. I am wondering if under this heading as well: is there any funding for the construction of the swimming pool in Laventille which the UDeCott is now pursuing as part of a budget commitment? Are you also involved in the construction of the swimming pool in Laventille that UDeCott is now designing? Because the client Ministry would do that.

**Mr. Imbert:** You will have to assist us here since you were the Minister for UDeCott. Would that not be under a UDeCott establishment? Would it not be under the UDeCott allocation?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Normally how it works is that the client Ministry would have the allocation, and they would work with Finance and send the funds to UDeCott. But if you are building a swimming pool anywhere, this is a matter of the Ministry of Sport.

**Mr. Imbert:** But the one that you referred to, was that under the Ministry of Sport previously?

**Dr. Moonilal:** It was an announcement made in the budget, and the UDeCott is now moving—in the budget debate—

**Mr. Chairman:** Which budget?

**Dr. Moonilal:** In the recent debate I think the Member for Laventille West—

**Mr. Imbert:** I announced that?

**Dr. Moonilal:**—announced a swimming pool—mentioned it. UDeCott is now actually moving I think with good haste to look at construction of the swimming

pool in Laventille. I am wondering if you are the client Ministry for it, or if there is another client Ministry? You are not?

**Hon. Smith:** Chairman, no we are not, but we are happy to hear that UDeCott is moving forward with that project.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** On the question of swimming pools, would that be upgrade of swimming pools for use of students from the Ministry of Education? Does that include swimming pools for education needs?

**Hon. Smith:** Chairman, yes it does.

**Madam Chairman:** Can we go on please? Can we go on to 005, Multi-Sectoral and Other Services, page 211?

**Mr. Padarath:** Madam Chairman, just to go back to 004—I was trying to get your attention earlier—if the hon. Minister would be kind enough to explain to us line item 005, the Development of a Youth Employment Policy, for \$500,000. If he can give us a synopsis of what that entails, please.

**Madam Chairman:** That is at page 210.

**Hon. Smith:** Madam Chair, as I said, only three weeks, we met with the youth arm, and they are working on this as well. We will get this in writing to you as soon as possible.

**Mr. Padarath:** Madam Chair, through you, can the hon. Minister explain his words when he says the “youth arm”, what youth arm he refers to?

**Hon. Smith:** The Tobago Youth Council and the Trinidad Youth Council, I met with them. I am actually one of the few Ministers to meet with them, and I am planning to go their actual meetings next week with them at their different locations.

**Madam Chairman:** Can we go on to 005, page 211, Multi-Sectoral and Other Services.

**9.00 p.m.**

And therefore, can we go now to the Infrastructure Development Fund? And if we move to page 346—no 347. Social Infrastructure: 004.

Hon. Members, the sum of \$516,807,924 for Head 68: the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs stand part of the Schedule.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 68 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Members, can we on behalf of the committee thank the members of Sport and Youth Affairs and relieve the technocrats who have attended. Thank you, please.

Members, can we just agree that as we have the hon. Minister of Finance in the Chair here, we shall go onto Head 20 and Head 02.

**Hon. Imbert:** Madam Chairman, when you were not present with us there was a discussion with the Deputy Chairman, and we had discussed a 30-minute break at this time. We crave your indulgence to have a 30-minute break. I think the Members opposite might be agreeable. [*Crosstalk*] No. No. Not with you. We spoke to the Deputy Chairman. [*Crosstalk*]

**Madam Chairman:** Excuse me. I would like to ask that if I give a 30-minute break if we are going to 12.30 p.m. [*Crosstalk*]

**Dr. Moonilal:** These are small Items.

**Madam Chairman:** No. Well we will just continue, Member for Oropouche East, to reach to 12 Items. That is all. I can arrange for Members to stream out.

**Hon. Imbert:** You see, Madam Chairman, I cannot stream out. I have to stay. I cannot stream. [*Crosstalk*] I mean, you took a break. [*Laughter*]

**Madam Chairman:** Well we can skip Auditor General and—

**Hon. Imbert:** I still have to be here for all.

**Madam Chairman:** You still have to be here for all. So all right. I think to be humane to the hon. Minister of Finance, we will have a 20-minute break and return here. So we will resume here at 9.23 p.m.

**Hon. Imbert:** Thank you so much.

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

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

**Madam Chairman:** Members, the Standing Finance Committee meeting now resumes, and we are at Head 20: Pensions and Gratuities. This is at page 118. Yes? All right. So Head 20: Pensions and Gratuities - \$50 million.

*Head 20.*

I will now invite the Minister of Finance to make a brief opening statement not exceeding five minutes.

**Hon. Imbert:** Madam Chairman, this is the Head that provides for the payment of pensions and gratuities to public officers, widows and orphans, some teachers, naval and military pensions, judges' pensions, prime ministers' pensions, our pensions, and so on, fire service pensions et cetera. Actually, fire service is accounted for elsewhere. I would simply say that it is just a general principle that as salaries are increased, an increased allocation has to be made for pensions because quite often collective agreements go backward. So, you might reach agreement on the period 2011 to 2013, for example, in the year 2015. So it means an increased pension payment for persons who would have been retired in those years. That is it basically.

*Question proposed:* That Head 20 stand part of the Schedule.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Members, the sum of \$50 million for Head 20: Pensions and Gratuities is comprised of moneys proposed for expenditure under the following Sub-Heads and Items to be found in the *Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure* and the *Draft Estimates of Development Programme*.

Sub-Head 04: Current Transfers and Subsidies. We are at page 118, Item 007: Households.

**Hon. Imbert:** Actually, Madam Chairman, I heard you referring to a figure of \$50 million. I was a little surprised because I simply thought it was more than that. It is really \$2,664,2—sorry—\$2,664,000 under Households alone. Then you have other Items which it is more like \$3.1 billion. Okay. I am now being told that this is a direct charge, so that all we have to appropriate is \$50 million.

**Madam Chairman:** It is Item 10.

**Hon. Imbert:** It is just that the way it is done in the estimates, even though we are appropriating a certain amount, we have been, throughout this examination, have been examining everything whether it is appropriated or not. So, I just wanted to make the point that the allocation for Pensions and Gratuities is, in fact, \$3,112,500,000. The Item that we are appropriating is for Gratuities to Technical and Professional Contract Officers, but the total is \$3.1 billion.

**9.30 p.m.**

**Madam Chairman:** The Item under consideration is just that Sub-Item 10.

**Hon. Imbert:** Page 118.

**Madam Chairman:** We will consider all the Items.

**Hon. Imbert:** Yes, this is what we have been doing as we are going through. We have been looking at everything, so I have no problem with that.

**Madam Chairman:** So, under 007, Households.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 20 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Madam Chairman:** Can we now go on to Head 02: Auditor General? And if you give me one moment, please. Page 5. Head 02: Auditor General, \$43,944,260.

*Head 02.*

*Question proposed:* That Head 02 stand part of the Schedule.

**Madam Chairman:** The sum of \$43,944,260 for Head 02: Auditor General is comprised of moneys proposed for expenditure under the following Sub-Heads and Items to be found in the *Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure* and the *Draft Estimates of Development Programme*.

Sub-Head 01: Personnel Expenditure. Hon. Member for Siparia.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you very much. Madam Chair, in accordance with your ruling, just to remind us of the ditto rule under Personnel Expenditure, there is a decrease here of about \$26 million, the ditto rule.

**Hon. Imbert:** Madam Chair, I thought I would be allowed to make a brief introductory statement, just for certain clarification that needs to be made.

**Madam Chairman:** All right, and we have really followed that procedure, I am sorry.

**Hon. Imbert:** Just very, very brief. The Auditor General's Department is responsible for auditing Ministries, departments and statutory bodies, not state enterprises.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** And the THA.

**Hon. Imbert:** Yes, and the Tobago House of Assembly, but not state enterprises. You know, there is a belief that the Auditor General could audit anybody, that is not so. They do not audit state enterprises. The state enterprises audits are sent to the Ministry of Finance for laying in Parliament, and referenced to statutory authorities like Port Authority, Airports Authority and so on, and the audits of state enterprises are laid in the Parliament and sent to the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee. I just wanted to make that clarification.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you very much. The Member for Siparia.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Yes, general statements income—question, sorry.

**Madam Chairman:** We are at page 5, under 01. That is where we are.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** So, no general statements?

**Madam Chairman:** No general statements. I am sure you could rephrase your statement to fit into here.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** I thank you for the confidence, I hope I can live up to it, Madam.

**Madam Chairman:** I am sure you can.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** I am looking at Personnel Expenditure, 01, General Administration, and I asked about the ditto rule to account for the decrease of \$4.1 million. That is the first question. And the second will be, are there any public service posts vacant for this fiscal year? Thirdly, does the Auditor General's Department have sufficient staff to conduct the required audits of the numerous Ministries and departments? And, what attempts, if any have been made to recruit qualified staff at this department? All under General Administration.

**Madam Chairman:** All right. Hon. Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Imbert:** Fortunately, as the former Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, I have some understanding of the tremendous challenges facing the Auditor General's Department, which currently has approximately 100 vacancies out of a staff establishment of approximately 300. And I want to say at the outset, again as a result of my stint as Chairman of Public Accounts Committee, and also the visits we made abroad to have interaction with other Public Accounts Committees and Auditors General overseas, during this fiscal year I would be in consultation with the Auditor General's Department, because we need to fill these vacancies and we also need to give the Auditor General's Department the wherewithal to do value-for-money audits. Because, the number of staff that can be allocated to do value-for-money audits at this time is quite small, and that has come up at various times over the last five years.

So, I want to say I am making a commitment. No, they do not have enough bodies. They need the staff. We are going to make every effort to fill those vacancies and use whatever mechanism that is appropriate to do that to assist them. We would be bringing in people on contract to help them, try to work with the Public Service Commission and so on to see if we can employ as many qualified people, auditors, forensic auditors and that sort of thing, and also do whatever we can to assist the Auditor General's Department to fulfil its mandate. I just wanted to make that statement.

**Madam Chairman:** Can we go on to Item—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Madam Chair—

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

**Dr. Gopeesingh:**—in keeping with what the Minister of Finance is saying, under line Item 26, the Vacant Posts - Salaries and COLA (without incumbents) Direct Charges, we see that you increased it to \$64,000 only. So, would that be in consonance with what your thinking is? I mean, \$64,000 is nothing. You are bringing in increased staff so you have to give more allocation here.

**Hon. Imbert:** What I am being told is that as far as the Auditor General's staff is aware, they do not have any vacant posts that are direct charges. They do not have any vacant posts that are direct charges, so this might in fact be a typographical error. I will check that, but what I want to say, I just want to make the point that I will be giving attention to this department, and if we have to vire funds and give them additional funds, we will do so.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Madam Chair, I think you will—just a little fast-forward, dealing with that same—

**Madam Chairman:** Therefore, can we go on to 002? Item 002 which is Tobago Services.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Yes, Madam, again 01 thereunder, speaks of a 24 per cent decrease with respect to Tobago. The issue of the audits for Tobago has come up consistently, and I think with the Auditor General's Department now under scrutiny, we would want to ask when was the last audited statements by the Auditor General for Tobago?

**Hon. Imbert:** What I have discovered is that because of the severe staff shortages and for other reasons, the complement of staff from the Auditor General's Department—and this is historical—in Tobago, who have the responsibility to audit the THA and the Central Administrative Services, is extremely small and this is the reason—

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** How many people?

**Hon. Imbert:** Three. It is actually three people

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Three.

**Hon. Imbert:** Just three. I mean this has been happening for some time, so that now that I am in this seat as Minister of Finance and I have discovered that there are just three people to audit the THA, which is a multibillion-dollar

allocation, that is again another area that I will be looking at very carefully to see how we can assist the Auditor General to beef up their staff in Tobago to expedite the auditing of the THA accounts.

With respect to the last year, I prefer to give you that answer in writing. I prefer to get accurate information, the dates and everything, and when the accounts were submitted to the Auditor General's Department, for which years, and I give an undertaking that you would get that very shortly.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** So, we do not know when was the last audited statement and for what year?

**Hon. Imbert:** I prefer not to make a statement. Because, when we were dealing with the THA Head, the Chief Administrator indicated to me that they had submitted accounts up to 2013.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** That is what they did. This is Auditor General.

**Hon. Imbert:** I know. I know. So, I want to double check that information, see how long those statements have been with the Auditor General's Department and just find out what the true picture is. Because, with that limited staff they may have had accounts there in their possession for a long time, I do not know. I do not want to prejudice or prejudice the issue.

But, I give an undertaking, this is very important, and you will get in writing what is the last audited statement, and since then how many statements have been submitted. You see, let us say for example, hypothetically, if the THA submitted accounts all the way up to 2011, for example, and it has been there for years, who is really at fault? So, I would like to—and they are not at fault either because of the staff shortage—give a proper explanation of what is happening. I will give you in writing and I will give you full disclosure on what is happening. Okay?

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** I thank the hon. Minister for the undertaking and would ask him to include in that written report on this matter the last audited report, what were the constraints there apart from staff, because I know there were difficulties in the—what was being submitted by the THA, so can we also get that in the report.

And if the Minister does discover, as he is indicating, that for subsequent years down to 2013 the THA has submitted statements, what are the constraints within those statements that the Auditor General is lacking in order to give a proper audited statement.

**Hon. Imbert:** No problem. I would find out what has happened, what are the constraints the Auditor General's office suffers under—



**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Apart from staff.

**Hon. Imbert:** No, no, everything. What are the issues in terms of what prevented them from producing the audits in a timely fashion? Whether it is that they got them late, they did not get them at all or they are there and they just do not have enough staff to deal with them. I will answer everything, what are the problems, whether they just do not have the staff or whether there are other problems.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Mr. Minister of Finance, do you not find it unacceptable that you cannot in five seconds tell us when was the last Auditor General's report on Tobago—

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** The Auditor General is next to you.

**Dr. Moonilal:**—with the Auditor General next to you?

**Hon. Imbert:** This is a live session and I would prefer to put it in writing. There is many a slip between the cup and lip, so I do not want to slip up on this. So, you will get it in writing.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** You do not want to slip up with the truth.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Perhaps we should put all our questions in writing and go home.

**Madam Chairman:** All right, can we move on, sub—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Yes.

**Madam Chairman:** The Member for Caroni East. [*Interruption*]

**Hon. Imbert:** And you know you could have found that out over the last five years.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Finance. The Member for Caroni East.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Yes, in consonance with the—

**Madam Chairman:** No, I believe—are we on to 02?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Yes.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** No, no, 02—yes, Goods and Services.

**Madam Chairman:** All right, could you allow me to call the Head, because I thought you were still at Sub-Head 01. So, Sub-Head 02 Goods and Services. Hon. Member for Caroni East.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In consonance with what the hon. Minister of Finance was speaking about in terms of the deficiency of employees at the Auditor General's Department, and we have an Item 16 for Contract Employment, but he is aware that there is a deficiency, but yet still he has only put in \$24,000 increase for Contract Employment, and then for Short-Term Employment there is no increase whatsoever, and he has two line items which he could have used for this budgetary allocation cognizant of the fact that there is a deficiency of staff in the Auditor General's Department.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** He has decreased Salaries and COLA and these have not been increased. There is no increase anywhere for staff.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** No, no increase for Salaries.

**Madam Chairman:** But, this is under Contract Employment—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Contract and Short-Term Employment. I think this is an area he could have brought people in, knowing that there is a paucity of employees in the Auditor General's Department.

**9.45 p.m.**

**Hon. Imbert:** I am advised that at present, in the Auditor General's office, they have a legal officer and an IT Technician paid under Contract Employment. They also have auditors that they have brought in under Short-Term Employment which is Item 22. And the point I am making, this is something that have been subsisting for years and, with my experience in the Public Accounts Committee, I do intend, in consultation with the Auditor General's Department, to give them the necessary resources to beef-up. So that this allocation, I am giving you the assurance as I said a little while ago, that I am going to work with them and if we need to supplement this appropriation we will.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** So you would support the Auditor General in these two line Item areas: the Short-Term Employment—

**Hon. Imbert:** Among others.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** And contracting development.

**Hon. Imbert:** Anything they require, within reason.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Siparia.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** We are still under Goods and Services, line Item 01, Travelling and Subsistence. Again there is a decreased allocation for Travelling and Subsistence, about 35 percent less than last year, \$1.3 million. Again, what accounts for that decrease in allocation?

**Hon. Imbert:** I am told it is associated with collective agreements.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Secondly, how many officers are currently entitled to Travelling and Subsistence? What is the policy for the payment of Travelling and Subsistence?

**Hon. Imbert:** Travelling officers are entitled to travelling, and certain categories of officers within the public service, and it would be in the establishment book, would be entitled to subsistence.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Would you be kind enough to let us know who they are?

**Hon. Imbert:** Sure, I will provide that in writing for you. I do not want to tell you tonight—

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Sure.

**Hon. Imbert:** I will provide it in writing for you. Well, I do not want to give you the names of the travelling officers—*[Interruption]*

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** No, no I am not asking for the names.

**Hon. Imbert:** I will tell you how many travelling officers, what positions and which positions are entitled to subsistence.

**Madam Chairman:** Can we move on to Item 002—*[Interruption]*

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** And, of course, why the drop?

**Hon. Imbert:** Well, it has to do with the collective agreements and part payment of arrears and so on. That is what I am told, it is collective agreement, part payment of arrears. But I will give you the detailed answer.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** I cannot see them decreasing their own travelling and subsistence.

**Hon. Imbert:** No, it is part of a collective agreement.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Okay, accepted, Sir.

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

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Well, we heard the hon. Minister speak about the same paucity for the Auditor General's Department in Tobago services. And we have the same, line Item 16, Contract Employment, but there is no allocation for 2016, and even Short-Term employment. But he just a while said—*[Interruption]*

**Madam Chairman:** The hon. Minister just a while ago—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** The hon. Minister of Finance just a while ago said he is aware that there are only three officers for Tobago providing services for the Auditor General's Department, but yet still does not put any funding for contract employment on Item 16 and Short-Term Employment on Item 22. What happened, they were not consulted—[*Interruption*]

**Hon. Imbert:** The question is finished? You finish the question?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Yeah, yeah.

**Hon. Imbert:** Okay, today is October 15. The estimates were sent to the printery about September 30. I was appointed Minister of Finance on September 11. I have only just discovered, tonight, that there are severe staff shortages in the Tobago section of the Auditor General's Department. When these estimates were prepared that information was not available. Now that it has become available, I am giving you the assurance that—I have already said this about three times today, hon. Leader of the Opposition, I am giving you the assurance as we dig into this thing and we get more information, we will supplement the appropriation. Okay?

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Siparia.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Item 17 on that same page, page 6 under the line Item 17, Training. Does the allocation for training include, capacity—

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Siparia, we are at Item 002, Tobago Services.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** So we finish with Goods and Services?

**Madam Chairman:** "Oh!" So you are under Training, Item 001. Yes, please proceed.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Just that allocation under Training, line Item 17, include capacity development for audits; one. Two; does it include training for value for money audits? Yes, Madam Chair, those two questions under the Training, line Item, capacity development for audits and training for value for money audits. We do not hear about value for money.

**Hon. Imbert:** Yeah, in my understanding, this is for routine training and that we will come to it, but there is an allocation for institutional strengthening under the *Draft Estimates of Development Programme for the Financial Year, 2016*.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** DP?

**Hon. Imbert:** Yeah.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you.

**Hon. Imbert:** And again we will supplement those votes as required.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Still on the same page, line Item 23, Fees. I notice that there is a significant increased allocation by \$139.2 million for fiscal—

**Madam Chairman:** One hundred and thirty-nine—

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** One hundred and thirty-nine thousand, two hundred and thirty-five in fiscal 2016 as compared to 2015. The increased allocation, what is it intended to pay for? Further, can it be used for external auditors to be procured using fees allocated here and can a breakdown of fees expected to be provided under that Item?

**Hon. Imbert:** I am advised, when I answer this question you may not still require the breakdown but you can get it if you wish. I am told this is for licensing, for software and those are the fees. It is not legal—[*Crosstalk*] yes, in order to use proprietary software, auditing software, this is a very complex and very expensive software. I mean, it is right through the Government, the Microsoft system that the Government uses, we have to pay millions of dollars in annual fees throughout the public service and this is specialized auditing software that require annual licence fees to be paid. If you want a breakdown of what the programmes are, how much the fees are, we will certainly provide that to you in writing. But it is for proprietary, complex accounting software that you have to have annual licensing fees for. So you still want the breakdown?

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Yes, it sounds reasonable what you are saying, but it would be kind to still see it.

**Hon. Imbert:** No problem. If you want the breakdown we will give it to you.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** On the same page under 28, Other Contracted Services. Again, what accounts for the increased allocation for this line Item, Other Contracted Services from \$359,000 in 2015 to \$768,000 in fiscal 2016. What accounts for that increase?

**Hon. Imbert:** In recognition of the limited capacity of the department, this is to contract out audits to auditing firms who would conduct audits on behalf of the Auditor General's Department under the supervision of the Auditor General's Department. So it is an increase of allocation to allow them to improve their capacity and their rate of auditing.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** So it can be used to contract the external—

**Hon. Imbert:** No, it will be used to contract out external auditors and so on.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Can we get a breakdown of the services expected to be provided? And can we get a list of the service providers if it is available?

**Hon. Imbert:** Well, this is a 2016—[*Interruption*]

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Yeah, estimate.

**Hon. Imbert:** If it is available, we will make it available. [*Crosstalk*]

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** And the selection process used for each provider?

**Hon. Imbert:** We are going forward, eh.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Yes, we are going forward, 2016. What is the selection process to select these providers?

**Hon. Imbert:** We will provide that information in writing.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Line Item 62 as well.

**Madam Chairman:** Can we go on to—

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Same page, Item 62, Promotions, Publicity and Printing. Again, what accounts for the allocation for promotions, et cetera, of \$45,000 in 2016, which was nil in 2015. What are the individual projects and costs being undertaken or to be undertaken under this Item?

**Hon. Imbert:** Promotions, Publicity and Printing? That is the Item?

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Line Item 62. I have three questions, if I may. One; what accounts for the allocation of \$45,000 for 2016 which was nil in 2015? What are the individual projects and costs being undertaken under this Item; and, thirdly, what types of promotion, publicity are expected to be conducted under this line Item?

**Hon. Imbert:** All right, as you can see the 2015 original estimate was \$70,000. It was not utilized. We have given them \$45,000. This is for the advertisement as part of the procurement process, the public procurement process for the engagement of external auditors. So this is to place advertisements in the newspaper, and so on, inviting proposals for persons to be contracted as external auditors.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Forty-five thousand dollars to place advertisements?

**Hon. Imbert:** Yes.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** That is the only project that this \$45,000 is for, for advertisements?

**Hon. Imbert:** Yes.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** To advertise—[*Interruption*]

**Hon. Imbert:** Well, from time to time they would need—[*Interruption*]

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** The need for contract —

**Hon. Imbert:** Well not need, they will want to engage the services of external auditors so they would advertise and invite proposals for the contracting of external auditors. This would happen from time to time over the fiscal year.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** So that is the only—[*Interruption*]

**Hon. Imbert:** That is what I am advised.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you, Sir.

**Madam Chairman:** Can we move on then to Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchase which we would find on page 8, Item 001, General Administration?

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** I am looking at Item 21, I am looking at—

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member for Siparia.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Madam Chair, give me one moment to find the page. Thank you. We are looking at Item 001, General Administration, page 8, yes. Page 8, Item 01 Vehicles, if I am not mistaken. Yes, Item 01, there, Madam Chair, on page 8, Vehicles. I note that there is an allocation for vehicles of \$450,000 in fiscal 2016, there was nil fiscal 2015. So what accounts for that? How many vehicles are going to be purchased, if it is for purchase of vehicles? And what is the official use these vehicles are being purchased for? Three questions on that line Item 01, Vehicles.

**Hon. Imbert:** And since the former Government refused to purchase a vehicle for the Auditor General's Department, thereby rendering them inefficient, this new Government, in recognition of the fact that you refused to buy a vehicle for them, has allocated \$450,000 for a fairly large vehicle for the Auditor General's Department. Right now, they are scrambling, they begging, they borrowing vehicles from other people.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Very good.

**Hon. Imbert:** So we are doing what you did not do.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** And what is the official use—I congratulate you for that, eh.

**Hon. Imbert:** For field audits, for general administration, for deliveries, for all sorts of things.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** I hope the Auditor General—make sure you live up to your promises.

**Hon. Imbert:** Yes, I am not a UNC. We deliver.

**Madam Chairman:** Can we move on to Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies?

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Madam Chair, before we get there, there is an Item, under Item 03, line Item 24, Furniture and Furnishings. Again increased allocation for that Ministry.

**Madam Chairman:** That is line Item 03?

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

**Madam Chairman:** Yes. Item 03, Furniture and Furnishing?

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Yes, Ma'am. Under Item 03, 03. What accounts for the increase of allocation here, fiscal 2015, \$400,000 we have an increase, \$356,9,000? Are there new office accommodations to be furnished or is this a replacement of existing furniture furnishes? I hope it is a nicer place for the Auditor General.

**Hon. Imbert:** This department has suffered from a paucity of appropriations over the last five years. So we are giving him a vehicle, we are giving him proper equipment, we giving him furniture and furnishings so they would not have to use the old furniture that you gave them and we are giving them other equipment so that we bring them up to the standard of a modern and efficient First-world auditing office. So it is just to improve their working conditions. They have old furniture; no vehicle. This is what you did to them. So we are trying to help them.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** I wish you very good luck and I am very happy for the Auditor General's Department.

**Madam Chairman:** Members, have we exhausted Sub-Heads 03? Can we move on to Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies, still on page 8, Item 001, Regional Bodies?



**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** I have no problems with that, nothing.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 002, Commonwealth Bodies. Item 004, International Bodies. And, therefore, can we go to the *Draft Estimates of Development Programme for the Financial Year, 2016*, Sub-Head 09, page 2, Development Programme. Sub-Head 09, Item 005, Multi-Sectoral and Other Services.

**10.00 p.m.**

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Page 2, 005, Multi-Sectoral and other Services, General Public Services, Administrative Services. 001, therefore, thereunder Institutional Strengthening of the Auditor General's Department, there is a decline of about 28 per cent from fiscal 2015 allocation to fiscal 2016. I know we are in the business of improving everything for the Auditor General's Department, and why is there a decline in this institutional strengthening allocation? That is the first question. Secondly, in what ways will the department be strengthened with the allocation they are given? And thirdly, what is the expected time frame for completion of this project for institutional strengthening.

**Hon. Imbert:** I thought that the former administration would know that the auditors in the Auditor General's Department have been trained by the National Audit Office of the Government of the United Kingdom, and that accounts for the expenditure in 2015. So I am advised that all of their auditors have been trained by the National Audit Office and the \$500,000 will now allow those persons who have been trained to impart their knowledge in a mentoring programme with some of the new persons coming into the department. So it is adequate but, as I said, I give the commitment if the Auditor General needs more, he will get more, within the context of the national budget. [*Interruption*] Police getting more, Auditor General getting more, okay? Judiciary getting more.

**Hon. Member:** Cut out waste, corruption, mismanagement and you could pay the deficit.

**Hon. Imbert:** Once we cut out the corruption, we could balance the budget.

**Madam Chairman:** Are there any other questions on Item 005?

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 02 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Madam Chairman:** May I say thank you to the members of the Auditor General's Department for coming and assisting the committee. Please reach home safely.

*Head 12. [Crosstalk]*

Excuse me, please. We are at page 52 of the Draft Estimates, Details of Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure for the Financial Year 2016—page 52.

*Question proposed:* That Head 12 stand part of the Schedule.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Minister, you are invited, but you may decline, to deliver a short statement of not less than five minutes. This is page 52, Head 12. This is the Public Service Appeal Board.

**Hon. Imbert:** I will decline to make a statement on this.

**Dr. Moonilal:** You disappoint me.

**Hon. Imbert:** I am so sorry.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Members, the sum of \$3,855,180 for Head 12, the Public Service Appeal Board is comprised of moneys proposed for expenditure under the following Subheads and Items to be found in the *Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure*: Subhead 01, Personnel Expenditure; Item 001, General Administration. Can I take this as a “ditto”, with the same general assurance—?

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Madam, we will take the Public Service—

**Hon. Imbert:** Madam Chairman, I actually can give detailed answers right now.

**Madam Chairman:** You have detailed answers?

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Well, you have no questions.

**Hon. Imbert:** I hate to waste time with any “ditto” here.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Madam Chair, can we indicate that we have no questions and we allow the Public Service Appeal Board to do their work?

**Hon. Imbert:** And no “ditto”.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** No, Madam Chairman, already put the “ditto” in.

**Hon. Imbert:** No, I have the answers. Because that is a question.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Put it in writing.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Put it in the “ditto” rule. Put it in writing.

**Madam Chairman:** Let me just ask this. Do I take it from the hon. Members on this side, just for my clarification, are there no questions under Subhead 02 and Subhead 03?

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Save and except the “ditto” rules.

**Madam Chairman:** Which is under Subhead 01.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Yes, Ma’am.

**Madam Chairman:** And seeing that that is the only Item, I therefore would allow the Minister of Finance to answer the questions on 01—Item 001, General Administration.

**Hon. Imbert:** I wish to thank the public servant, the very diligent public servant, allocated to assist me with respect to this Head, who has advised me that the increase in expenditure is for the hiring of a court reporter and a driver/courier in fiscal 2016.

**Hon. Member:** Excellent.

**Hon. Imbert:** Very good person.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Progress is forthcoming.

**Hon. Imbert:** I have answers to every other Head too, in here.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 12 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Madam Chairman:** Members, it is now 10.07 p.m. I think we have two hours to 12 o’clock. Might I ask the Minister of Finance, do you have any other technocrats here under any other Head?

**Mr. Imbert:** No. And I had a discussion with the Opposition Chief Whip and we reached agreement that we would cease and desist after the Public Service Appeal Board for tonight.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay, thank you. This meeting shall be suspended—

**Mr. Imbert:** And there is another arrangement I sought and received agreement from the Opposition Chief Whip, that because the public servants from Tobago, who deal with the Central Administrative Services (CAST) they came over with the THA in anticipation that their matters would be held jointly—perhaps there was a miscommunication—they are still here, and they would like to return to Tobago tomorrow, so I spoke to the Opposition Chief Whip who, very kindly, agreed that we would deal with the Central Administrative Services early in the morning and send them on their way back to Tobago.

**Madam Chairman:** So that means we will take them first?

**Mr. Imbert:** We could take them first, yeah.

**Madam Chairman:** All right. And they have been notified that they will be taken first.

**Mr. Imbert:** I have been so advised.

**Madam Chairman:** Right. And therefore we start at 10.00 a.m. tomorrow?

**Mr. Imbert:** With the Central Administrative Services.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Tomorrow we will continue—*[Interruption]*

**Mr. Imbert:** With Finance and so on.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Tomorrow we will continue until what number? What are the Heads we are dealing with? We have a list here but we must be absolutely clear.

**Madam Chairman:** Yes.

**Dr. Moonilal:** We will do Central Administrative Services, Tobago; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Works and Infrastructure; Equal Opportunity Tribunal—

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** And if the Prime Minister is available.

**Dr. Moonilal:** No, the Prime Minister may not be available. We cannot count on that. But we are not factoring in the Prime Minister at all.

**Madam Chairman:** Yes.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Equal Opportunity, I said.

**Madam Chairman:** Yes.

**Dr. Moonilal:** We also have carded the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries; and I think that would make seven, if I am not mistaken.

**Madam Chairman:** I only have five.

**Dr. Moonilal:** The Tax Appeal Board and the Industrial Court.

**Madam Chairman:** Can we not be ambitious and strive for a little more tomorrow?

**Dr. Moonilal:** The President.

**Mr. Imbert:** I just want to point out, Madam Speaker—sorry, go ahead.

**Mrs. Robinson-Regis:** Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. Might I indicate that the Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister who has responsibility for CAST has indicated that they would like to start at 1.30, not 10.00 o'clock tomorrow?

**Madam Chairman:** So we would put Central Administrative Services—  
[*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Imbert:** I was under the impression they would like to start first thing in the morning, but they want to do it at 1.30 p.m.

**Madam Chairman:** They want to reschedule.

**Mr. Imbert:** Yes, at 1.30 p.m. They want to reschedule at 1.30 p.m.

**Madam Chairman:** So therefore we are starting with the Ministry of Finance at 10.00 o'clock tomorrow morning.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** This has been fixed according to the Standing Orders.

**Madam Chairman:** Yes, but the Orders are not being changed, hon. Member.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Yes, Ma'am, because we will have to do other matters before we get to 1.30 p.m.

**Madam Chairman:** No, well, and therefore we start at 10.00 o'clock with order nine.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Which is Finance?

**Madam Chairman:** Which is the Ministry of Finance.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** So we will go from that hour until 1.30 p.m.?

**Madam Chairman:** No, we will go with Ministry of Finance, and then the next schedule item is 11.00 a.m., Central Administration Services.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** So we expect to finish, to do them at 1.30 p.m. We expect that we will spend from 9.00 a.m. or 10.00 a.m. until 1.30 p.m. on Finance?

**Madam Chairman:** Well, I would expect that we would break for lunch sometime in between there.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** No, we did not break for dinner, so anything is possible in the haste to do these things.

**Madam Chairman:** But I think, though, dinner was provided.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** But we did not break. I am sure lunch, too, will be provided.

**Madam Chairman:** I would think that we would break for lunch tomorrow.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** No, no, we are—why not 10.00 o'clock?

**Mrs. Robinson-Regis:** Excuse me, may I say something, please? We had a discussion with the Opposition Bench to start proceedings tomorrow at 1.30 p.m. You would recall, 1.30 p.m. and start on Saturday at 10.00 a.m. You could recall? Thank you very much. Madam, we will be starting at 1.30 p.m. tomorrow. [*Crosstalk*]

**Madam Chairman:** We start at 1.30 p.m. tomorrow and we would start with the Central Administrative Services.

**Mrs. Robinson-Regis:** We will start with CAST. Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Members, I want to say thank you for your cooperation today.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Ma'am, could I say something before you adjourn?

**Madam Chairman:** Yes, please, Member for Oropouche East.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Earlier, a few minutes before, we went through a list of Items we expect to complete tomorrow. That was on the mistaken information given by the Minister of Finance who, inadvertently, misled me an hour ago.

**Hon. Member:** Misspoke.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Misspoke, misled, misinterpreted, misunderstood—and we listed Items on the basis of starting at 10.00 a.m., but now we are being properly advised by the Leader of the House that we will start at 1.30 p.m. It cannot be that we are dealing with these 12 items tomorrow at the same time.

**Madam Chairman:** I do not have them as 12. We have Ministry of Finance, Central Administrative Services, Ministry of Works, Equal Opportunity, Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries, Tax Appeal Board, Industrial Court, President, which are eight. And having regard to the level of cooperation we had from Members today, I think it is attainable.

**Mrs. Robinson-Regis:** May I just add to the discussion, very briefly—[*Crosstalk*]

**Madam Chairman:** Members, please.

**Mrs. Robinson-Regis:** If I may just add to the discussion very briefly. The intention was CAST did think that they would be on today, and that is why they came today prepared, but given what happened today they are still going to be here. So it would have been seven tomorrow, Ma'am. So it is eight only because CAST has been carried over.

**Madam Chairman:** So it evens out.

**Mrs. Robinson-Regis:** Yes. So it evens out as you rightly put it. So 1.30 p.m. and we will be doing eight.

**Madam Chairman:** This meeting is now suspended. We will resume tomorrow at 1.30 p.m. Thank you very much.

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