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**OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)**

THE HONOURABLE WADE MARK
SPEAKER

THE HONOURABLE NELA KHAN
DEPUTY SPEAKER

Tuesday 23rd September, 2014

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 23, 2014

APPROPRIATION (FINANCIAL YEAR 2015) BILL, 2014

[Eighth Day]

The Standing Finance Committee of the whole House resumed its deliberations on the Bill and Estimates.

[*Chairman: Mr. Mark*]

10.00 a.m.

Mr. Chairman: May I call the Standing Finance Committee to order and to make a few opening remarks as it relates to the next step in this new process of oversight of the budget. The assurances given to this committee and the details in relation to the proposed expenditure will form the basis of the work in the ensuing year of the new oversight committee, of one of the new oversight committees established under the revised Standing Orders, that is the Public Administration and Appropriation Committee. Therefore, the oversight process does not end here with this Standing Finance Committee.

At the Standing Finance Committee, Ministers share with this committee their plans for the expenditure to be appropriated and during the year, accounting officers will be asked by the new Public Administration and Appropriation Committee to give updates in relation to implementation or to account for their failure to implement. From time to time, the Public Administration and Appropriation Committee will report back to this House on these matters. The ultimate aim is to ensure proper administration of public finances. As we find our way in this new environment, the Chair continues to appreciate your amazing cooperation with this reform effort and commend all Members for their contributions.

Hon. Members, I would like to apologize if in trying to move the proceedings along yesterday to ensure that the committee completed its work schedule, I may have overlooked some persons who were trying to make interventions. May I suggest that a Member wishing to make an intervention should so indicate by raising his or her hand when I call the relevant Sub-Head? That way, I will see you. Of course, that would not preclude a Member from making an intervention if they did not indicate in the beginning.

So, I just want to let Members know that this is not the end of the road.

You know, there is an old saying: a bend in the road does not represent the end of the road. It is just a turn that you have to take to continue your journey. So I want Members to know that after this exercise is over, the Public Administration and Appropriation Committee will be monitoring and tracking the spending and implementation of all proposals before this honourable House, approved at the appropriate time when the budget is passed.

We now go to Head 67 and we invite the accounting officers to join the hon. Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development.

Head 67.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, I will now invite you if you so desire to make a brief opening statement for no more than five minutes, if you so desire, by giving this committee an overview of your priority areas if you so desire. It is up to you.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Mr. Chairman, I would like to take the opportunity to give an overview of the work that we have been doing at the Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development and to locate that within the context of the budgetary allocations that have been made over time and in particular with reference to this budget. As you know, the budgetary process is guided by a set of core priorities, although it is not limited by that, established by the Medium-Term Framework and those five priorities are: crime, law and order; agriculture and food security; health care services and hospitals; economic growth, job creation, competitiveness and innovation; and poverty reduction and human development. The priorities in allocation based on the entire appropriation's process both on development and the larger budget is in a way influenced by this. At the present time, the Ministry is working on the Medium-Term Framework 2015—2021 and so far we have added to these five priorities, infrastructure development and governance.

So, in terms of this particular Ministry, the Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development, there are three particular areas on which we focus: economic growth and innovation; national spatial development which is really Town and Country Planning driving this process; and research and data management which is driven by the Central Statistical Office.

In economic growth and innovation, the Economic Development Board and the Council for Competitiveness and Innovation play an important role, and they support two key things: the process of diversification in the seven areas that we

have identified and they support the five growth poles across the country as well. It is important to understand that the growth poles are not meant to be funded by Government, they are meant to be facilitated as growth poles by Government, and they also support the National Innovation Policy through idea2innovation programme.

The National Spatial Development, Town and Country Planning Initiative: as you know, Mr. Chairman, we have laid before this Parliament, the National Spatial Development Strategy which in fact guides the whole development framework in terms of physical planning for the country.

For research and data management, Cabinet has agreed to the recommendations of the consultants engaged with the Central Statistical Office for transformation of that particular entity into an independent entity, and we have also developed on the basis of the census a national population policy which we will share with the population before long.

In terms of the development plan 2015—2021, we proceed with that so that there will be continuity in the governance process and so that there will be continuation of policy in the governance process, and once a first draft of that plan is available, we will make it available to the population at large for general discussion and engagement.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, hon. Minister.

Question proposed: That Head 67 stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, this sum of \$307,219,830 for Head 67, the Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development, 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; Item 001, General Administration, Item 003, Technical Co-operation. [*Crosstalk*] Yes, I am.

Dr. Rowley: Sorry to stop you, Mr. Chairman, I thought you were still opening up the innings. I would like to place a couple of questions to the hon. Minister who has joined us this morning under 01/001, 01, with respect to Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance. Given the work programme that the Minister has outlined which we are fairly familiar with, could the Minister indicate what is the meaning of the decrease in the allocation for salaries and COLA with respect to the Ministry's staff? What is the intention here? Are we

expecting to reduce staff, reduce effort? 001/01 Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance.

Mr. Chairman: That is on page 357, Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development.

Dr. Rowley: There is a decrease of \$1.2 million there. And this is with respect to the vacant posts with incumbents. There is an increase in the general Personnel Expenditure, but under salaries and COLA, 01, which is the first Sub-Item specific to salaries and COLA, there is \$1.2 million reduction. What does that represent?

Mr. Chairman: Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: I mean, there is no reduction in staff that I am aware of and as far as I can see the reduction may have to do with the fact that—as far as I can see, it may take into account vacant posts that may or may not be filled and it may take into account SRC estimates for what might be needed and as a result, in trying to be accurate, it may have led to a decrease in request—a request for a decrease.

Dr. Rowley: Let me rephrase my enquiry because in 2014, the Ministry would have had a certain complement of staff and you required \$12.9 million to service that staff. Somebody took a decision to reduce that allocation, either deliberately or otherwise, to reduce it by \$1.2 million which means that you cannot then retain the same complement of staff that you utilized in 2014.

So what I am asking is: what was the basis for that decision? Is it that you do not expect to have that staff with you?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: The difference, I am advised by my Deputy Permanent Secretary, is that we overestimated what the SRC would estimate and when we got the accurate figures, it led to a reduction, a decrease.

Dr. Rowley: So you are saying that the Revised Estimates of 2014 is further revised to \$11,648,000.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Yes.

Dr. Rowley: Okay, thank you very much.

10.15 a.m.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Yes, and I just want to give the hon. Leader of the Opposition the commitment that there is no intention whatsoever for a reduction of staff at the Ministry, given the work it has to do.

Dr. Rowley: But then it brings me to another question: why then was the Revised Estimate increased from \$11.5 million to \$12.9 million in the first place? When you did your revision, why was it revised upwards?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Because we were not sure what the estimate was, what it would be. So in order to protect yourself, to make sure that you are properly covered, you know, you give an estimate that might be slightly larger. But when you get the accurate figure, we reduce it.

Dr. Rowley: Minister, you are the Minister for the CSO and that is why I am pressing you on this matter. In these documents, the Revised Estimate normally says to the rest of us, lesser mortals, that you have in fact got a better handle than the appropriation estimates, because the budget documents themselves are estimates. Later down in the year, you the operator get a clearer view and then you do a revised estimate which, over the years, we take to mean that this is a much clearer picture, and when you did that you upped your estimates by over \$1 million. Now you have brought it back down. So, I am saying it is a little unclear to us. But the bottom line is that there is no intention to any staff reduction?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: There is no staff reduction. My Permanent Secretary just indicated that in 2014, in particular, there were a number of arrears—*[Interruption]*

Dr. Rowley: Extraordinary payments.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie:—that we needed to cover.

Dr. Rowley: Okay, that might be a bit more palatable.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Yeah, and this is rooted in the fact that the Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development derived out of a situation which you had planning housing and the environment, then economic and social restructuring and gender affairs, planning and the economy, and so on. So, as these changes took place they had to be—*[Interruption]*

Dr. Rowley: Understood. May I ask you, Minister, under Sub 23, what are Salaries - Direct Charges? What does that mean?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Yes, I understand these to mean the legal officers in the Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development.

Dr. Rowley: How many legal officers do you have?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: I think we have on the establishment eight, if I am not mistaken. Okay, we have two on the establishment and six on contract. I do not think all—*[Interruption]*

Dr. Rowley: Two on the establishment.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Yes, two on the establishment.

Dr. Rowley: Two on the establishment and six on contract.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Yes, one is a Senior State Counsel.

Dr. Rowley: And do you still utilize external legal support for your litigations?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Sometimes, sometimes.

Dr. Rowley: So, do you have any idea what your Ministry might have spent on legal support in total? Because here you spent \$900,000. What was the overall picture, including external lawyers?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Well, what happened, a lot of the work of the Ministry is done in-house and generally it would have to do with Town and Country Planning-related issues, although not limited to that. When there are matters other than that, then external Counsel might be brought into the picture, through the Office of the Attorney General and they would then address that.

Dr. Rowley: So whenever you have the requirement for external Counsel that decision is made by the Attorney General's office?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Yes.

Dr. Rowley: And when they make that decision, their budgetary consumption then, meaning the charges, are applied to that office or your office?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: I think it is usually AG.

Dr. Rowley: To the AG's office?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: The AG's office.

Dr. Rowley: Okay. So, once the AG directs legal help to your case, he takes over the matter—*[Interruption]*

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Yes.

Dr. Rowley:—in terms of payment to the lawyers.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Well, we relate to the AG as the advisor of the Ministry and the Government so, the agents that he hires would be acting on his behalf.

Dr. Rowley: And at that time are any of your eight lawyers involved as instructing attorneys?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: The Senior Counsel in my office in whom I have a lot of faith, is always involved.

Dr. Rowley: I was going to make a comment, but I will keep it. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Chairman: Okay, any further?

Dr. Rowley: Yes, Mr. Chairman we are still under 01. No, I think, given how we intend to best use our time today, I better leave you to go on to 003.

Mr. Chairman: All right, so we will go to Item 003, Technical Co-operation; Item 004, Central Statistical Office.

Dr. Rowley: Before we get there—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Chairman: Before, I think I recognize the Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair, I give way to the Opposition Leader then I would ask my question.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, under Item 003, the issue of Vacant Posts, which recurs throughout the document, not only in this Ministry but elsewhere, what is the story with respect to vacant posts in your Ministry? Where are these vacant posts, the ones that are represented under 003/08, specifically who are you referring to here?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: For instance—it depends on the division—there are four vacant posts in legal for instance.

Dr. Rowley: In legal?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Yes.

Dr. Rowley: Over and above the eight that you already have?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: No, we have eight positions in legal, four are filled, three positions of legal officer have been advertised and the business operations, the administrative person, that is also vacant. In communications we have one vacancy. In information technology we have two. In the National Transformation Unit we have 12. In Project Planning and Reconstruction we have two. These are the vacancies. So it spreads?

Dr. Rowley: Okay, I understand. Any intention to fill these positions? I see half a million dollars. That would not fill all those positions you mentioned there. But let me just ask you, the question I want to ask you, how do you proceed to fill these vacancies?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Well, basically what happens is that these positions are advertised. The Public Service Commission is involved, sometimes the GHRS they are involved in the process and it usually follows the public service procedure for the filling of vacancies.

Dr. Rowley: But given the long list of vacancies you just mentioned just for this one department, is it that you are being hamstrung by the fact that these vacancies exist within the establishment and there are no bodies there? For example, let us take Town and Country. There are always complaints about the speed in which things are done. Is it that you have these vacancies and outside of your control, the bodies are not put there because these agencies are not sufficiently responsive?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: We do not have sufficient staff in some areas that are critical. That is true, and I must say that the staff makes up for it really by higher levels of productivity. But, for instance in the case of Town and Country Planning, if I am not mistaken, advertisements were done last year. Applications were done. The process, I think is either completed or near completion and it is just that we were waiting for the new allocations in order to be able to hire these people.

Dr. Rowley: But the other area—incidentally, I was Minister of Planning a few years ago and at that time, I had, in that Ministry, one legal officer and one legal advisor. I noticed that you have pretty much a full-fledged legal department. Could you clarify that? What is that?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: The increase in the legal department?

Dr. Rowley: Yes, because it has moved from one officer since you had the backup of the AG's office. But from the numbers you have just mentioned, which is eight—*[Interruption]*

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: It is eight of which I have four.

Dr. Rowley: So you have a full-fledged—you have an establishment of a full legal department.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Yes. Well, remember you have both what you call officers on the public service payroll as well as contract officers. Two of the officers in the legal department are on the public service payroll, the Senior Counsel and the other lawyer in the system who is the deputy. And we have hired lawyers on contract. We have eight contract positions. We have two additional hired and we have four of which three have been advertised, but we have not filled. So,

basically, that is the position. I think, hon. Member, you would agree with me that one lawyer for an institution like Planning and Sustainable Development is really inadequate.

Dr. Rowley: I know that and I agree but I am saying that when you have a legal department I would expect that the department would be more effective in reducing the outlay that you would incur going outside for legal help.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: There are very few—during my three years or so in the Ministry—instances in which we have gone outside our legal department. If I am not mistaken, it may not be more than two occasions, yes.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, we can move on.

Mr. Chairman: Yeah. Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Miss Hospedales: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Based on the estimates that we have before us, in 2013, \$15,625,072 was allocated to—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Chairman: That is Technical Co-operation, right Item 003, or you are dealing with CSO?

Miss Hospedales: CSO 004.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, good.

Miss Hospedales: 004, Sub-Item 01, Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance. Sir, what I want to find out from the Minister, in 2014, \$15 million was allocated and this year as well, whether or not the allocation is adequate and what accounted for the decrease in the allocation for 2014 and 2015 and that is to the Central Statistical Office.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: The decrease you are speaking about, hon. Member, is it a decrease of \$625,000?

Miss Hospedales: Yes, Sir.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Yes?

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: I mean, I cannot remember thinking back now what the thinking might have been, but we have found \$15 million to be reasonable and it is possible that it is an under-allocation but we feel that it is adequate to meet the challenges that we have. As you know, in the operations of a Ministry, generally what happens is that when you find yourself with something that demands more

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financial support, you have a certain amount of flexibility and freedom to move funds around. But we feel \$15 million will be adequate.

Mr. Warner: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under 004/08, how many vacant posts are there at the CSO?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: At the CSO? Just one second. We have 11 vacant posts in contract positions at the CSO.

Mr. Warner: For how long?

Mr. Chairman: What about on the establishment?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: On the establishment, there are approximately 50 vacant posts.

Mr. Warner: Fifty?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Yes, but that cannot be done without the Public Service Commission acting, and it is not for want of requests that they have not been filled.

Mr. Warner: So 50, plus 14, that is 64 posts vacant?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Fifty, plus 11.

Mr. Warner: Plus 11?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Sixty-one, yes.

Mr. Warner: Could you tell me how long this has been going on?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: This has been there—we have been trying with the CSO for some time to recruit staff. You have two problems. One is the Public Service Commission itself taking the action to proceed. It took me a year and a half to simply get them to act on the appointment of the acting director and deputy director. The process can be extremely trying and very slow.

10.30 a.m.

When the persons were selected, it took another six months before the process of actual appointment took place. So it took me two years to deal with that, and this matter is out of the control of the hands of any Minister as you know, and there is a limit to which you can engage the Public Service Commission in these matters. The other part of the equation is that for some of the skills, you need highly technical people, and sometimes they are not available for the kind of really low salaries that are available in the Central Statistical Office.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. So we will go now to Item 005, Urban and Regional Planning Division; Item 008, Project Planning and Reconstruction; Sub-Head 02; Good and Services; Item 001, General Administration; the Member for Diego Martin West.

Dr. Rowley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to engage the Minister under this Sub-Head, but with respect to similar Sub-Heads that come a little later on, on the question of contract employment in the Ministry, because I see that we have moved from 2013 of \$6 million to \$9.7 million for Contract Employment, and that there is also another \$3 million for short-term contract employment, and elsewhere there is another few millions dollars for Contract Employment. So I would like to ask the Minister, who determines who is hired on contract in your Ministry? And what is the procedure that is used to fill these contract positions?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: We have a very transparent process.

Dr. Rowley: If you may say so yourself.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: No. We have a very transparent process that is driven by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, and the normal process is to identify what are the posts we are going to advertise, advertise them, and at the point of advertisement, the Permanent Secretary takes a decision whether it will go through GHRS or some other form, and ultimately it is the public service system that takes over, which is that committees are established, the process of interviews is done and so on, and as you know, ultimately, three recommendations will come to you as a Minister for signing off.

Dr. Rowley: And what is the role of the CPO in determining the emoluments and—*[Interruption]*

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: The same role that she has always played, which is that she would give guidelines on the matter, sometimes it is not possible to get people in contract positions for the—under the kind of terms and conditions that the CPO advises, and then there is a negotiation process, but all of this lengthens the process by which you can hire somebody, and while you are negotiating this with the CPO, the person might well get another job and go somewhere else.

Dr. Rowley: So you are saying that the process gets to a point where three names go to the Minister, and the Minister selects one or—*[Interruption]*

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Well, generally they are ranked, you know, they are ranked. A Minister would have to have an extraordinary reason for jumping the ranking.

Dr. Rowley: So what goes to the Minister is a ranking?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Yeah, it is a ranking—

Dr. Rowley:—of 1, 2, 3?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie:—of 1, 2, 3, yes.

Dr. Rowley: But are there instances where the Minister would have chosen No. 2 or No. 3, or does the Minister generally accept what is recommended?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: I think my Permanent Secretary would answer that I generally approve whatever is the first ranking person. [*Crosstalk*]

Dr. Rowley: I understand that an assistant is trying to guide you off the track. You stay on the track. [*Laughter*] But could you provide us before the end of the proceedings or as you are able to, with the list of all the contract officers in your Ministry?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: The names of the people you mean?

Dr. Rowley: The posts and names of persons in them and their packages, right, and also a summary of the vacancies that exist.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: A summary—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Rowley: Like, for example, a summary of the posts that are vacant.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: That are still vacant.

Dr. Rowley: Yes. And the Short Term Employment, who qualifies for Short Term Employment in the Ministry?

[*Hon. Dr. Tewarie confers with the Permanent Secretary*]

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: The Permanent Secretary has advised that generally as we need a skill, and we are not able to—or we need a skill for the time, and we do not really need to hire someone full-time for it, people like that would be brought in for specific purposes. So for instance, you know, we had to change the management situation in Town and Country Planning, we brought in a specialist for that, using the same transparent procedure, you know.

Dr. Rowley: Under 28, Sub-Item 28, Other Contracted Services, I see you have had a generous increase for 2014. What did that pay for, the allocation that you used in 2014 for Other Contracted Services? What services are covered by that, and what did we get for that? Because I also observed that you had a significant reduction for 2015. What is going on there?

[*Hon. Dr. Tewarie confers with the Permanent Secretary*]

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: They were small contracts usually janitorial and security. I do not know what else—[*Hon. Dr. Tewarie confers with the Permanent Secretary*] We had—listen, we have an HR Unit that is in a separate building. [*Hon. Dr. Tewarie confers with the Permanent Secretary*] It is on Henry Street, and we had a serious problem in which the place was infested with—I do not know if it was rats or whatever it is. We had to bring in Rentokil, we had to get some repairs done, we had to do various things, and ultimately, I think, we moved them. [*Hon. Dr. Tewarie confers with the Permanent Secretary*] We did not move them. It really was a challenge, so we had to bring in—contract these services in order to deal with a situation which the employees were complaining, really.

Dr. Rowley: A million dollars on rats and cockroaches in one office?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: No, I do not think you could say so. I said janitorial services. I said security. I said, you know, Rentokil, I do not know if it was Rentokil or who it was, but various things. What I want to do is to assure you that these are not contracted officers, these are contracted services, right.

Dr. Rowley: Well, Mr. Chairman, I defer to you.

Mr. Chairman: All right. We—

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Chair, with your permission, I will give the details, some of the details anyway: cost to service; 10 water coolers, petty contracts, \$8,000 a month; disposal of e-waste, \$200,000; Columbus Communications, \$12,000; Rentokil, \$9,000.

Dr. Rowley: That is a million dollars, eh.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Yeah, but they add up, you know.

Mr. Chairman: Let us proceed. We go to Item 002, Library Service Unit; Item 003, Technical Co-operation; Item 004, Central Statistical Office. Which one, Member for Chaguanas West?

Mr. Warner: I am talking about 08, 004, 08, Rent/Lease - Office Accommodation.

Mr. Chairman: All right. Yes, do you want to raise your concerns?

Mr. Warner: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, in 2013 the rent/lease was \$569,000 roughly. In 2015, it was \$5 million, can you tell me what caused this phenomenal increase, and where these offices are, and if you have any proposed offices in mind?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: It is simply explained, hon. Member. In 2013, the CSO would have had their offices in their building on Independence Square. Once that building was condemned, it means that you had to find office space for 800 officers of the Central Statistical Office. Office space has been found for some, but we have not yet found the office space for all 800 officers; some of them operate from home.

We have since though, with the help of Property Management, secured a building for which negotiations are now ongoing, and if those negotiations are effectively concluded, in about four months we should be able to prepare and occupy the building in January. So the additional cost is really for the spread of CSO all over Port of Spain.

Dr. Rowley: Sub-Head 16, Mr. Chairman, what I said earlier on about Contract Employment, I would like to have that applied to this, because it is very important.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: What?

Dr. Rowley: Contract and short-term contracts, right.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Yes.

Dr. Rowley: We would like to see those, and just to ask, the provision here under 16 for Contract Employment in the CSO, given your present state of flux, and it does not sound as if you would solve it in a matter of a month or two. are you proposing to increase the CSO's staff under this Contract Employment arrangement?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Well, we need strong technical capability and we will have to hire some people. It is possible that some of those can be filled on the basis of vacancies that exist on the books, but it may be because of the demand for more reasonable salaries that we may have to give contracts to some of these officers, but we do need some of the technical competence. Also, with the addressing of some of the issues that we have to address which require fieldwork officers, I think that there would be need not just to retain some of the people who have the skills, the knowledge, the experience in fieldwork, but perhaps to train a few more, so that we can be more effective as we try to get things on a more timely basis in the CSO.

Dr. Rowley: You mentioned that negotiations are taking place with respect to a building. Could you tell us where this building is?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: It is on Frederick Street, it is No. 47 Frederick Street.

Dr. Rowley: As a Member of the Cabinet, you are aware that the Government has been paying for One Alexandra Place now for years, was any consideration being given for using that building?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: We at one time tried to have that building assigned, but I think it has subsequently been assigned.

Dr. Rowley: Assigned to whom?

Mr. Chairman: The Member for Oropouche East.

Dr. Moonilal: The matter is under the Property Division of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development. I do not know if the Member would want an answer now, or raise that later in the proceedings.

Dr. Rowley: No, no, I want it raised in the context of CSO looking for office, because what we are facing here as the taxpayer, is that we have a bill up there paying millions for what I knew—*[Interruption]*

Dr. Moonilal: What I can say is that the Member may be aware of the enormous difficulties we have had with that building because of a lack of proper approvals and so on. Before the former administration entered into arrangements to rent that building a few days prior to the general election in May 2010, subsequent to that, we have completed about 95 per cent of the outfitting now, and the Ministry of the People and Social Development is carded to go to that building, to free up an important building adjacent to the Red House for the office—for expanded facilities for the Director of Public Prosecutions. So as it is now, the Ministry of the People and Social Development would—a decision has been taken to relocate. We are 95 per cent complete, and I expect in a few days that Ministry to move in there.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, all right.

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, I recognise the Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Miss Hospedales: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Sub-Item 08, I was trying to get your attention earlier on this one. The Minister indicated that approximately 800 workers were displaced, and he said that some of the workers are actually working from home. Could the Minister indicate to us how many of those workers are working from home, and over what period of time? How long have they been working from home?

10.45 a.m.

Mr. Chairman: Did you get the question, Minister? How many workers are working from their homes and what is the number involved; and over what period of time.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: I think the number of 800 that I used was inaccurate. I was thinking of something else. That is in the Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development, sorry. There are about 400 workers in the CSO—350 to 400. So I want to correct that for the record.

Of the 350 to 400, I would say about 40 or 45 per cent would be working from home and operating what you might call in shared spaces, so that they shift from time to time. What we have tried to do is to ensure that the field work is able to go on, so that the process involved in collecting and assessing the data is not as compromised; and, secondly, we have made sure that the technical capability staff, the high technical requirements are not dislodged so that that work can be ongoing and properly monitored. The staff, so to speak, in the middle, we have found a way of—I do not know—making the best out of a bad situation.

Mr. Chairman: All right we go to:

Item 005, Urban and Regional Planning Division

Item 008, Project Planning and Reconstruction

Sub-Head 03: Minor Equipment Purchases

Item 001, General Administration

Item 002, Library Service Unit

Item 003, Technical Co-operation

Item 004, Central Statistical Office

Item 005: Urban and Regional Planning Division

Item 008: Project Planning and Reconstruction

Sub-Head 04: Current Transfer and Subsidies

Item 001, Regional Bodies

Item 002, Commonwealth Bodies

Item 003, United Nations Organizations

Item 004, International Bodies

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Item 006, Educational Institutions

Sub-Head 06: Current Transfers to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies

Item 004, Statutory Bodies

We now go to *Draft Estimates of the Development Programme*:

Sub-Head 09: Development Programme

Item 001, Pre-Investment

I recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Imbert: I just wanted to make sure you did not reach Item 29, so I put up my hand. I have a question on the IDF on page 181.

Mr. Chairman: We have not reached there as yet, but I will make sure you are recognized when we reach there.

Mr. Imbert: I just wanted to make sure.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Member for Diego Martin West.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, I want to make sure that you recognize me. I just would like to join you, Mr. Chairman, on 09 and down at 003, the Seismic Microzonation Studies. In 2014, I see that we have appropriated, and I presumed used, \$2 million there approximately for that programme. Could the Minister give us a bit of information as to how that programme has progressed and where we are with respect to the microzonation study?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: We have almost completed Port of Spain. Let us say it is being finalized.

Dr. Rowley: Who is doing this work?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: This is the Seismic Research Unit and the person who is the lead researcher is a professor who has been trained in seismic studies in Japan—as in earthquakes. So they are leading that study. Port of Spain is almost complete. They are doing the major cities first so—San Fernando, Chaguanas, Arima, et cetera, the main urban centres—and then they will move to six others. There are 10 areas that have been identified.

The entire study is 10 years long. We have gone from 2011 now—so three years have been completed—so I will say progress is reasonable because for the others like Chaguanas, San Fernando, Arima, they would have made progress as well although they are not close to the end yet.

Dr. Rowley: Are we waiting for a report at the end of the programme?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: No—

Dr. Rowley: Are we going to get sectional—

Hon. Dr. Tewarie:—we will have interim reports on each location.

Dr. Rowley: As a location is completed, you will get that.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: We will share that with the population.

Dr. Rowley: How is that feeding into the national building code work?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: It is essential to that and that is why we started with Port of Spain, which is our main urban centre and where you are likely to have the tallest buildings. So one of the things, for instance, they found with the microzonation study, which may seem obvious now but it was important to have the documentation, is that the place where a building is safest might be East Port of Spain and the place where a building is most vulnerable would be West Port of Spain. But you now have the data to tell you that and it has implications, of course, for development and the microzonation studies are going to feed into the building codes.

Dr. Rowley: When you say Port of Spain, is that confined to the city limits or is it Port of Spain and environs?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: No, Port of Spain and the environment, so it would take in Westmoorings and it would take in like Morvant.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Point Fortin.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Thank you very much. With regard to economic infrastructures, there is your four growth pole development and with regard to, in particular, this—

Mr. Chairman: No, we have not reached there yet.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: I am so sorry.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Laventille West.

Mr. Hypolite: Chair, we are on page 176?

Mr. Chairman: No, we are on the Item Sub-Head 09 Development Programme. Let us move on.

Item 001, Pre-Investment

Item 003, Economic Infrastructure

I recognize the Member for Point Fortin.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Thank you. If there is no one else before me, with regard to the growth poles development, I notice there is an increase here. But I speak to the south-west peninsula in particular, because I do not know that any work has been done on the development of the south-west peninsula except for a meeting which was held very late in your term. So this only took place a few months ago. Where have you reached with that and why has south-west appeared to have been sidelined as well? I ask this in conjunction with the sustainable and emerging cities. How does that fit into this same growth pole development project and which of these emerging cities as well?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Chair, I think a lot has to do with a misunderstanding of the growth pole concept and the role of Government in it. You have a situation in Trinidad and Tobago in which you have a two-tiered economy because of petroleum. You also have a situation in which Dutch disease is a factor because of the cyclical nature of the oil economy; and you also have a challenge of Trinidad and Tobago being what you call a high-income country and, therefore, you are caught in what is known as the middle-income country trap.

So the question is: how do you make diversification possible in that context? That is why seven sectors have been selected, but five geographical poles have also been selected as well to spread the development possibilities. What it means is that Government identifies the growth pole area in the context of a national development plan. It then puts the infrastructure in—whether that be road or drainage or water or whatever infrastructure is necessary. It might be schools; it might be higher educational institutions. Government spends on those things and you then work one Ministry with the other so that the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Investment then establishes economic zones for which it then creates the conditions for the private sector to invest.

In addition, what you do is that you basically—we have done studies on all of these including the south-west in which you know what are the anchor industries in an economic zone or in a growth pole and what are the cluster possibilities of industries there. With Government, the Ministries working together with the private sector, both existing and coming in to invest, the growth poles are then triggered in terms of growth possibilities in the economy.

So Government does not have to allocate large sums of money for the growth poles, but you will see money allocated for the economic zone because that is

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where you would have to put infrastructure for the investment. The growth pole thing is something that is facilitated—that is why the consultations are so important to bring people together to understand what is happening, what is possible, what is desirable and how this can be achieved through collaboration.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize Port of Spain South, then the Leader of the Opposition and the Member for St. Joseph.

Miss Mc Donald: Mr. Chairman, I am even more confused over the response given to my colleague, the Member for Point Fortin. Back in 2011, the then Minister of Finance and the Economy, Member for Tunapuna, when he came to this House, in his budget presentation he was very clear. He said what the Government was doing was opening up new economic spaces to facilitate sustainable development and growth.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: I did not say anything different.

Miss Mc Donald: He identified five growth poles. My interest is in the East Port of Spain growth pole. I am asking the question because this has been in the budget from year to year, ending with this last budget on September 08, where the Minister said that technical work is still going on in the growth poles. He did not say which one. Growth poles—all five.

My question to you this morning is, Sir: what is happening with the East Port of Spain growth pole? What is going on there? What is the technical word because the Minister did not answer the question—that is the Minister of Finance and the Economy, not you—when I did my budget contribution? I want to find out: what infrastructure was done in East Port of Spain? What is happening?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: In East Port of Spain, as you know, there are several agencies that are responsible for different things. Under the East Port of Spain Development Company, between 2011 and 2014, about 37 projects have been completed completely and there are 46 projects that will have been completed by 2015.

There are a number of collaborative engagement projects—the East Port of Spain Development Company as well as the Port of Spain City Council. There are projects under—the Sustainable Cities Dimension is not a project, it is a programme of projects, so the Women’s City Initiative is under the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development. The initiative having to do with flood control and management is under the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources. It is being funded by the IDB. The Linear Park is something that

requires completion of some of the flood work before you can begin along the East Dry River. The project at the top, with the canon, what is it? Fort Picton. They did the feasibility study. They have now tendered for the project and I think that project is about to be given out and started. The idea behind Fort Picton is that it would begin the process of restoration of some of the heritage sites.

11.00 a.m.

Development is a difficult process in a situation in which you are working with the communities that exist and the legacy that you have inherited, and you are not breaking down, demolishing in order to build anew. And, therefore, it is very painstaking in trying to get these projects connected to one another and getting so many institutions to collaborate. So, rest assured that the Sustainable Cities project is on. Part of the requirement is private sector investment, and I want to say to you that for the East Port of Spain area, there are two or three very important private sector players in the country that are prepared to invest in that particular area, notwithstanding the challenges.

Miss Mc Donald: All right. Just one further question. Minister, are you aware that not one single cent—we found out here yesterday—was allocated to East Port of Spain development in the budget.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Yes. I do not want to speak for the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy. We detected that very early and I wrote a letter to the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy. I know it came up here in the Committee. I am sure he is going to address it. I think it was an oversight, quite frankly.

Mr. Chairman: I think, Member for Barataria/San Juan, you want to make a point in connection with the growth poles?

Dr. Khan: Yes, I just want to ask something to the Minister since I am hearing all about the growth poles and where the growth poles are going to be. I have been in this Parliament since 1995 and since 2001 I have been hearing the then PNM Government, through the Member for San Fernando East, speaking about the East Port of Spain growth poles and—in fact I did not hear much about growth poles. Can the Minister indicate what was done prior to 2010, between 2001 and 2010, if there were any growth poles.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman. [*Crosstalk*]

Dr. Khan: No, no, I have my time here now. I have my time here now. I want my question answered.

Dr. Moonilal: So, he cannot ask a question. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: Please! Please! No, please!

Dr. Khan: And if at all, Mr. Chairman, have they done anything—
[*Interruption*]

Mr. Chairman: Members! Members, order! Order!

Dr. Khan: Because they did nothing—[*Continuous crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: Members! Members! Members!

Dr. Khan:—and now they are questioning the Minister about growth poles. “They never had no growth poles.” When they were there they had no growth poles.

Hon. Member: Nobody can talk here or what?

Miss Mc Donald: This is our question time.

Dr. Moonilal: Whose question time? This is not question time.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: It is a committee. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: Members! Members! Members, listen, this is not a market. Please! This is not a market! [*Interruption*] No, no, this is a standing—

Mr. Imbert: You cannot take up our time.

Mr. Chairman: Member for Diego Martin North/East and Barataria/San Juan. [*Interruption*] Wait! Wait! Please! This is a meeting of the Standing Finance Committee, and any Member is entitled to raise questions. [*Desk thumping*] It is not only confined to the Opposition, it is confined to all Members who make up the Standing Finance Committee and so it is unfair to say that a Member of the Government cannot ask a question. They can ask a question.

Mr. Imbert: Chairman, I have a question.

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: What year, what period can the questions be directed to?

Dr. Khan: You all went back to 2010. Member for Diego Martin North/East, you went back to 2010.

Mr. Imbert: I was stopped from asking about 2013. What year?

Dr. Khan: No, no, no. *[Interruption]* You all are going back and we cannot go back? I want to find out what was the growth pole that you all did. Nothing. *[Crosstalk]*

Mr. Chairman: All right. Okay! Order! Order! Please! *[Interruption]* Member for Port of Spain South, please, and Member for Barataria/San Juan. Listen, you can make reference to 2010, but he is correct, we are not going back. *[Desk thumping]* What we have here is not going back, but you can make a reference to 2010.

Dr. Khan: Okay. Could I ask a question then?

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Dr. Khan: From January 2010 to May 2010, which is 2010, what growth poles were developed by the Member of Parliament for Point Fortin, the Member for Port of Spain South and the Member for Diego Martin North/East? *[Interruption]* That is 2010. Mr. Chairman, that is 2010.

Mr. Chairman: No.

Dr. Khan: January 2010 to May 2010, what was done by that Government?

Mr. Chairman: All right, listen!

Dr. Khan: Nothing.

Mr. Chairman: Listen!

Dr. Khan: That is 2010.

Miss Mc Donald: That is not in the accounts.

Dr. Khan: That is 2010.

Miss Mc Donald: It is not in the accounts.

Dr. Khan: But it is 2010.

Miss Mc Donald: It is not in the accounts.

Mr. Chairman: Member for Port of Spain South, please.

Dr. Khan: I could go back to 2010. January 2010 to—You did nothing.

Mr. Chairman: I do not think that I would allow Dr. Tewarie to go there. Please. Let us not go there, please.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, if this goes on, this exercise would be defeated.

Dr. Khan: It is not going to be defeated.

Mr. Cadiz: Why?

Dr. Khan: When I ask questions it would be defeated?

Mr. Chairman: Member for Barataria/San Juan, please!

Dr. Khan: No problem. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Chairman: Yes, but I am saying just allow—there is order here. Okay! You have spoken—no, no, you have spoken. Just cool it! Let the Member for Diego Martin West speak.

Dr. Rowley: Could I ask, Mr. Chairman, where are we in the proceedings, because I would like to return to the proceedings of the Standing Finance Committee?

Mr. Chairman: Yes. We are under item 003: Economic Infrastructure.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, I crave your indulgence. If you are on Item 003—anyway, just to make it clear, I crave your indulgence on page 176, to just put a very simple question to the Minister, 176, 001, the Feasibility Study for the Development of San Fernando Waterfront, where are we with that? I have heard that the project is progressing, but I am seeing provision here in 2014 for the feasibility study. Has that study been completed and what do we have in hand?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: The study has now been completed, about five or six, I do not recall exactly, consultations have been held leading to its completion. It was revised on each occasion that there was a consultation, and where we are now is that in the recommendations of the study there are projects that can be initiated immediately and completed. There are medium-term projects and there are long-term projects, but the projects, once more, in keeping with the philosophy of this Government, is not a waterfront development in which Government is the sole investor. It is a project in which there is public/private participation.

Dr. Rowley: So, does that mean that we have in hand now, or are about to have, an approved master plan which would carry the requisite approvals so the private sector could invest in a development?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Yes, we do not have the approvals yet.

Dr. Rowley: How soon do you expect to have this master-plan approval?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Well, as I said, the study is completed and I did promise that I would go back for one final presentation, in consultation mode, with the completed study and that is going to be done very soon.

Dr. Rowley: But, the final out-turn of all this exercise would be an approved development plan—

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Yes, for San Fernando.

Dr. Rowley:—which would be known to one and all and, based on that approved plan, investment would take place in the waterfront international project?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Yes.

Dr. Rowley: Do you have any idea as to what public sector project will take place within there over and above any private sector interests?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: The public sector projects would have to be, first of all, the realignment of public establishments in the San Fernando area. So, for instance we might have to move where the market is or where the bus is, things like that. You would probably have infrastructure investment there; you would have to deal with relocation of the fishermen or satisfying their needs in some form; you would have to deal with the issue of squatting which you would have to regularize or solve in some form. These would be issues that the State would have to address.

Dr. Rowley: Do you have sight of the report, because I want to ask you, does it include reclamation?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Reclamation has been suggested as one option. Yes.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Laventille West and then we will come back to—

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Chairman, I want to go back to a point that I was making before.

Mr. Chairman: On infrastructure?

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, Member for Laventille West.

Mr. Hypolite: Chair, two questions. With respect to the same Item the Opposition Leader was speaking about, we saw where the figures moved from \$1 million to \$2.7 million, can the Minister indicate what would have caused that increase or overrun? That is the first question. Second question would be with respect to 003/004: Growth Poles Development, the Minister would have made mention about East Port of Spain Development Company and having completed

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some 37 or so contracts or projects, can the Minister indicate or send a listing of those projects to us? The completed ones, in addition to those that are expected to be done within the year ahead?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: I can identify all the projects right here if you wish.

Miss Cox: Let him send a list.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: I have a list of all the projects.

Mr. Hypolite: We would prefer a list.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: You do not want the public to know?

Hon. Member: I would like to know.

Mr. Chairman: No, wait. If the Member can answer the question, it would be accepted—

Hon. Member: I am eager to hear it.

Mr. Chairman: And, of course, the Member can also pass on a hard copy, but remember you have five minutes.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: The East Port of Spain—

Mr. Hypolite: For the first question—

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Which is?

Mr. Hypolite: With respect to moving from \$1 million to \$2.7 million?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Oh, that was the—oh, you mean for the feasibility.

Mr. Hypolite: Yes. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Chairman: Member for Couva South, could we cool it behind there?

Mr. Hypolite: Overrun?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: What happened on that occasion is that we had—

Mr. Indarsingh: The Member for Diego Martin Central—

Mr. Chairman: Yes, well you and the Member for Diego Martin Central cool it. Okay?

Dr. Browne: Mr. Chairman, I am not involved in that.

Mr. Chairman: Well, it does not matter, I am hearing your voice.

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Hon. Dr. Tewarie: One million dollars had been allocated for the feasibility study and when the bids came in \$1 million could not satisfy it, so the Central Tenders Board basically said to us that we had to open up. We had to go through the process again and based on what we saw—we saw, I mean, obviously, that you needed more money which is where the increase was given.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, could you go on to Part II now with the projects? You have five minutes.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: I would like to start with the ones that are finished. Okay, restoration of Fort Picton, tenders were evaluated and preferred bidder selected, recommendation of the evaluation committee was considered and approved by East Port of Spain, so that project will go.

Mr. Hypolite: Chair, I am talking about completed projects.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Well, you see I—

Mr. Chairman: Listen, you cannot be interrupting the Member. You asked a question, let him answer.

Mr. Hypolite: Yes, but he—

Mr. Chairman: After he answers then—

Mr. Hypolite: We asked about completed projects.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, but allow the Minister to respond. You are interrupting him.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: I am trying to find it. I am sorry.

Mr. Chairman: All right, whilst you are looking for that—

Hon. Member: He found it, he found it.

Mr. Chairman: You found it? [*Interruption*] No, no, hold on, Member for St. Joseph, I know you are anxious to raise your question. Hold on.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: All right, Sea Lots East play park: completed. That is with the help of the National Commission for Self-Help, so they worked together; Pit Latrine Eradication Programme: 100 per cent completed, 40 pit latrines replaced with wet core containing septic tanks, et cetera. This is throughout East Port of Spain. Pit Latrine Eradication Programme, Phase II: we are doing 20 in Beetham Gardens, 15 in Sea Lots and 20 in East Gonzales. Those are the areas right now. David Street: steps and drains, completed; concrete stairs, walkways, slipper and

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storm water drains; Pashley Street, Harlem: box drains, completed 100 per cent; St. Martin Welfare Association: completed, 100 per cent, existing facilities including ceiling, painting, air condition, refurbish and welding shop; Rocket Park, Beetham, Phase IV: construction of re-enforced drain, crossing and pave labour, installation of handrails, landscaping and concrete tables and benches, 100 per cent completed; Bason Street Youth Facility: 100 per cent completed. This includes a two-storey structure. A new roof was replaced, window, furnishing, there is a computer centre in there as well; Beetham Gardens Community clinic: 100 per cent completed, refurbishment of existing private building, construction of bandstand and change rooms; Beetham Gardens Phases I to V: cleaning streets and drains, 100 per cent completed; restoration of Fort Picton, I mentioned that before. Desperados: two tender documents had to be revised; George Street and environs: designs in progress for facility; East Port of Spain Heritage Walk: discussions have been held with the Ministry of National Security; Blue Diamonds Pan Theatre upgrade: contract signed, contractor is expected to take possession of site during week of September 22—

Mr. Chairman: All right, hon. Minister, I think that you can circulate the rest. I think that your five minutes is up, you can circulate. [*Interruption*] I now recognize the Member for St. Joseph, and that would be the last question on this one—[*Interruption*]—oh, same one on infrastructure?

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: That is right.

Mr. Chairman: So, you go first and then the Member for St. Joseph.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Thank you. Minister, you made good conversation on the growth poles development, in particular I was concerned about the south-west growth pole.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Yes.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: But, I want to make the point that we have a highway to Point Fortin, it looks like it would be completed in a year or two [*Desk thumping*] but at the same time you have abandoned the development of the e Teck Park, and you speak to diversification but you have no provision for the development of the industrial site. That has been overtaken by the hospital. Further, the UTT campus which was meant to include COSTAATT, MIC and SAM which are all geared for further development, there has been no provision for that as well, so I cannot understand having a highway and not going along with the other developmental projects as well.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: The other developmental projects are very much in train. You have in Trinidad and Tobago today in the year 2014, the very happy situation in which a community can ask for both a hospital and an industrial park at the same time, and a highway and get it. [*Desk thumping*]

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: The industrial park is not coming, and as far as I am concerned the hospital is now placed on that same site.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: No, I will clarify for you. There was a piece of property that had been designated for the industrial park. There is also a demand in Point Fortin for a hospital. The question is, where would have been the best place to put the hospital. It was decided because infrastructure had been put down on the industrial park—

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: For the e Teck park?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Yes—that it would make sense to locate the hospital there. The hospital, however, will not take the entire piece of property under its charge given the hospital that is being built. And I think what is happening now is that, if I am correct, there is discussion and negotiation between the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Investments and Communication, to figure out how the people of Point Fortin might get both. So, it is not that—

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: On the same site?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: It is possible, on the same site.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Will Town and Country Planning allow the hospital to be placed next to the industrial site?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: It depends. I do not know, they will have to look at it. [*Interruption*]

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: It does not make sense to me. I had asked you further about 005, are there any identified emerging cities?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: No. The emerging city of Port of Spain is a nomenclature that we use for—the sustainable city of Port of Spain, sorry.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Okay, fine. Yes, I am okay with that.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Are you okay with that?

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Yes.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: And the emerging city is really Chaguanas, and we see the potential as well for Arima.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, I recognize the Member for St. Joseph.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Thank you, Chair. I have about two or three short questions, would the Minister prefer I ask all or one by one?

Mr. Chairman: No, you ask all three.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Under Support to Industrial Development Initiatives: 001, Invaders Bay Infrastructure Development, 2013 there was allocation actually spent of \$1.479 million; 2014 Estimate, nothing; 2014 Revised Estimate, nothing; 2015 Estimate, nothing. What is the fate of that Invaders Bay Infrastructure Development? That is question one. Question two, the hon. Minister would remember one of his previous statements when he said that the East Port of Spain development project was inextricably linked to the Invaders Bay project.

Hon. Member: Where he said that?

Mr. Deyalsingh: In the Senate. If it is now, what is the fate of the Invaders Bay project? Is it now delinked from the East Port of Spain growth pole? Those are two questions. Other question—

Mr. Chairman: No, the third one.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Third one, sorry. The growth pole for the north coast which was predicated on a tunnel from Tunapuna to Maracas, what is the fate of that north coast growth pole development project predicated on a tunnel from Tunapuna to Maracas? Is that growth pole still on the cards? Is the tunnel still on the cards? That is the third question.

Mr. Chairman: You are right. Okay, three questions. Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Chair, I would try to answer the hon. Member but first I must dislodge the load from the questions. [*Laughter*] So, I will try to answer the questions. On the question of the north coast, a study has been done on the north coast. The north coast area has only 3,000 people living in it, but a number of natural assets including green forests and, of course, beaches that we know very well, and the people in those areas—you have very low skills in those areas, but skills directed towards things like agriculture, fishing, et cetera. And a development strategy is being pursued that would take into account the 3,000 people living there. The reality, that you need to populate the population to make

development happen, and therefore there must be attractors, and again, it is a strategy involving public as well as private sector funding. Or, if you like, public sector spending as well as private sector investment.

The growth pole concept seems to create a lot of problems. East Port of Spain has its own jurisdictional area. The growth pole concept has to do with a geographical zone that is targeted for growth, and it may or may not involve overlapping things in it. So, that is the situation in Port of Spain and the East Port of Spain set of projects is under the jurisdiction of East Port of Spain. I want to make one thing clear in relation to East Port of Spain. Although there was that issue of the operational cost being left out, there is, in fact, a \$30 million allocation in the IDF for the East Port of Spain Developmental Company, and I think another \$5 million for soft projects, that is to say human support projects in the area. Okay, I would just like to clarify that.

On the Invaders Bay project, what this reveals really is that despite all the charges that have been made about Invaders Bay, there is very negligible Government spending in Invaders Bay. There is very little Government expenditure, state expenditure, or public funds in Invaders Bay. And what has happened with Invaders Bay now, as we have proceeded to negotiate on the basis of Cabinet decisions with the people who have been selected, is that the project has been passed over to UDeCOTT, now that the land allocation has been made possible by the President of the country, which is what prevented the situation from happening before.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Could I just ask one quick—

Mr. Chairman: You wanted to raise another question?

Mr. Deyalsingh: No, just a clarification, because part of my question was, is the north coast growth pole still predicated on the tunnel from Tunapuna to Maracas? That part was not answered.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: I do not think it ever was.

Mr. Chairman: All right, well let us move on. Member for Chaguanas West.

Mr. Warner: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I heard you say just now that Chaguanas is an emerging city, can you give me a status report, since I do not know about that?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Well, Chaguanas, based on the census, is an area in which there has been an 11 per cent—based on 2011 census—growth in the population

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of that area. I think you know that a lot of Government infrastructure spending has been on things like educational institutions, et cetera, in that part of the country, because of decentralization and I think you also know that there are a number of private sector housing developments in that area as well as a number of state housing development projects in that area. Because of all of that, that part of the area which has always been a retail and commercial centre, is emerging really as a city and is worthy of city status.

So, what we are seeking to do, is working with collaborators across the board; the borough council in Chaguanas and the Ministry of Local Government, the Ministry of Transport, local private sector chambers in the area, the downtown merchants in Chaguanas, the community at large through consultation, the vendors in the area who play an important entrepreneurial role in the area, we are trying to work together so see how we might cooperate and collaborate to make that possible.

Mr. Chairman: All right, let us move on. Members, you would allow me to move on. I know that I have to go on to infrastructure. Item 004, Social Infrastructure; Item 005, Multi-Sectoral and Other Services, and we go to Infrastructure Development Fund, I recognize the Member for—

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair, Item 004, you moved on so quickly.

Mr. Chairman: You are what?

Miss Hospedales: Item 004.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, quickly. We have to move on, eh.

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair, under Sub-Item 045, we are told that the CSO Physical Transitioning to new facilities—they are physically transitioning to new facilities. Could you tell us exactly where those facilities are?

Mr. Chairman: No, no, he answered that question already. Let us go on to Infrastructure Development Fund. I recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East. *[Interruption]* No, no, you must pay attention to what is taking place. *[Interruption]* No, we are moving ahead. Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair, I have other questions under this Item.

Mr. Chairman: Oh, you have other questions, good, continue.

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair, I would like to find out when exactly those staff members are going to be accommodated because the Minister did indicate that

there are 157; 45 per cent of the 350 staff members are at home and I am not sure if the Minister is aware that these people just go and they sign and they go back home. They have been on extended vacation; so we would like to know exactly when will they be accommodated?

Mr. Chairman: No, the Minister answered that. Listen, do you have any further questions? If not, I recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair, it is the time frame I am talking about. These members of staff have been home for a long time.

Mr. Chairman: No, the Minister has answered that. He said that there is a building somewhere on Frederick Street and he is hoping that by January it would be outfitted and it would accommodate the 300 to 400 members. He said that; so to go back through that is not making sense. We are wasting time. I now recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East. Could we have silence and allow the Member to speak? Member for Diego Martin North/East, please.

Mr. Imbert: There is some noise over there.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, I recognize that myself.

Mr. Imbert: Page 18—would you all stop it?

Mr. Chairman: Members, could we have silence and allow the Member to speak?

Mr. Imbert: Page 181.

Mr. Chairman: Page 181.

Mr. Imbert: 005.

Mr. Chairman: 005.

Mr. Imbert: 029 Boardwalk Phase II, when I add up the expenditure from 2013—I do not know what happened in 2012—you get \$58 million; \$10 million in 2013; \$35 million in 2014 and \$13 million projected for 2015 for this Boardwalk project and it says Phase II. What is the cost of this Boardwalk project, phase I and phase II, expected to be at the end of it all?

11.30 a.m.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: It is almost complete now, Mr. Chairman, hon. Member for Port of Spain North/St. Anns—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Chairman: Diego Martin North/East.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Sorry, Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Imbert: Just the cost please. The total cost of this Boardwalk project; phase I and phase II altogether.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: I can provide that for you. I do not remember what the figures are.

Mr. Chairman: Do you have any further questions before I go to the Member for Diego Martin West?

Mr. Imbert: It seems to me it is at least \$100 million.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: No, it is not.

Mr. Chairman: He will provide the answer to us.

Mr. Imbert: Yes, I have another question on the IDF now.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, you have the floor.

Mr. Imbert: The IDF—*[Interruption]*

Dr. Khan: Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: The Member is on the floor, please.

Mr. Imbert: The IDF with respect to the Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development. I notice an allocation on page 293, 001 Economic Infrastructure, there was \$50 million allocated to the Invaders Bay project. What was that for?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: What we had hoped was that the contracts, et cetera, with the private sector would have been completed, and that we would have provided to UDeCOTT this basic infrastructure money for them to begin the infrastructure responsibilities that were the responsibilities of the State. The private sector has their own responsibilities under the contract, and this was the money allocated for that.

Mr. Imbert: All right. You are saying this \$50 million was for infrastructure.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: It was not spent.

Mr. Imbert: I realize it was not spent.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: But the \$50 million was allocated for infrastructure that was the responsibility of the State.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: But you just—in answer to a question from the Member for St. Joseph—said the expenditure by the State is almost zero.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: But if the money was not spent, and we did not spend any besides the money that was not spent, then the limit of expenditure would have to be extremely low by the State.

Mr. Imbert: Going forward, you said the expenditure will be very small.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Going forward, I expect that there would be some state expenditure for basic infrastructure works such as water, lights, et cetera.

Mr. Imbert: Right. So there will be expenditure along the line of this \$50 million, perhaps, on an annual basis.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: Okay, all right.

Mr. Chairman: I think I recognize the Member for Barataria/San Juan.

Dr. Khan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted, on that note, whether the Minister could tell us what was the cost of the *MV Su* and whether the—
[*Interruption*]

Mr. Chairman: No, no. [*Crosstalk*] Out of order! Out of order! No, no, Member it is irrelevant. I rule you out of order.

I recognize the Member for Diego Martin West. [*Crosstalk*] Could we conduct ourselves properly in this meeting? [*Crosstalk*] That is out of order, man. Yeah. I recognize the Member for Diego Martin West. And, please, let us stop the crosstalk, please.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, it is clear that the intention of some of my colleagues is to disrupt the proceedings. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Chairman: Please, please.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, I am talking to you. Could I be protected from the rest of my colleagues, please?

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Dr. Rowley: Good. Under 005, 001—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Chairman: What page?

Dr. Rowley: Page 181, 001. I would want to deal with a few items there so if you could bear with me, Mr. Chairman.

The allocations to Cariri, hon. Minister, what exactly are we getting for that with respect to that outlay? How is that going?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Okay. Actually, CARIRI is one of those institutions that I would say has been undervalued in terms of its potential for contribution. I can say right now, based on the services that CARIRI has provided traditionally and where their business has grown, CARIRI is now paying its way. I want to say that. So, it is now covering its cost. It is generating enough income for that. Where this money goes, as you can see, it is for infrastructure and the purchase of equipment. So, for instance, I can tell you one of the things that they have been able to purchase recently has been a 3D, equivalent of a Xerox machine, in which you draw the material that you want—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Rowley: A hologram.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: And you get a prototype. So what it means is that a person does not have to spend the time making the prototype. This is also linked to a number of things. It is linked to a collaborative project involved with the World Bank that is Caribbean-wide in scope to find entrepreneurial initiatives that are also climate-change solutions; it is linked to a collaboration with Microsoft for the establishment of the 111th Microsoft Innovation Centre in the world in Trinidad and Tobago in a few weeks' time; it is linked to the enterprise development centre which is an incubator for the projects that come out of the idea to innovation programme where those ideas are nurtured over the period of a year to become businesses with new entrepreneurial initiatives in the country.

It also has to do with the creation of an app centre in which they are bringing people with IT knowledge to develop software applications which is a very important part of the new development thrust in ICT in the country. It is those kinds of things. All right.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, I would like to go to 018 Surveillance of the Chaguaramas Peninsula—018 under 005. Now, we did appropriate in 2013 \$300,000 for this assignment. I now see an appropriation was made for \$1 million in 2014 and we spent \$5 million. Could the Minister explain how we could have had an appropriation for \$1 million and we spent \$5 million on Surveillance of the Chaguaramas Peninsula? Could you explain that please?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: The increase in allocation would have been by virement. Remember when you are talking about the Chaguaramas peninsula, you are talking about the peninsula itself and five islands. We took a very early decision that if you were going to open up Chaguaramas to the country—because that is what it has become. It is a place where, if you live in Cedros, for instance, you might want to come to Chaguaramas and spend a day with your family. If we took a decision to open up the peninsula like that, security was, perhaps, the most important thing. So the early decision was to make sure that we had surveillance equipment all over the peninsula and on the islands and, more than that, to expand the police force, the police fleet and the police mobility capability within Chaguaramas. So that was an early decision.

Dr. Rowley: So this is not just surveillance, it is surveillance and security.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: And security.

Dr. Rowley: Okay, understood.

Could I go to 024, Strategic Plan for Chaguaramas Development? What number plan is that? Is it no. 9, 10, 12 or 15?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: I do not know. I take your point.

Dr. Rowley: I am coming to this. I seem to recall in my short tenure around public life that there are a number of Chaguaramas development plans. Why is there a need for another strategic plan for Chaguaramas?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Okay. For the same reason that we had to do a plan for the Waterfront Project for which there had been I think 11 plans before, which is that as time moves on, as communities develop—different notions of what they want for a development—what happens is that they require consultation and inclusion all over again in the process.

So what we did in San Fernando was, we took the 11 plans and the first draft of the plan, which has now become the master plan, was an inclusion of a number of items from the 11 plans plus new things that we would suggest that could fit together, and that was the beginning of the consultation process.

In Chaguaramas, what they have done as well is to go back to the old plans, but with the thinking of how do you make Chaguaramas a sustainable peninsula in which the environment considerations are dominant, and in which you basically create a kind of green park for family enjoyment and with ancillary and support entertainment facilities that could include men, women and children. What kind

of plan would you need? And I think that is what is going on now. It should be finished in about four months.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Minister—Mr. Chairman, through you—everything that you said cannot be challenged, but given the fact that there have been a number of comprehensive plans for Chaguaramas, and now that we are returning to the issue of a plan for Chaguaramas, do you really feel that \$12 million is a reasonable figure?

We spent \$2.3 million on that same plan, and this is a plan that comes after and must by necessity involve review of the previous plans. We have had a number of comprehensive plans for Chaguaramas. There are only so many ways you can turn mud into bricks and, therefore, when you assign your officers or whoever contractor you assign to give you your new plan, even though it is 2013, the groundwork that the previous plans would have incorporated, there must be somewhere useful. For in 2013, we spent \$2.3 million on that plan; then we estimated \$1 million more, but we ended up spending seven and a half million dollars in 2014. How do we justify spending seven and a half million dollars on a plan which is based on a series of other plans where a lot of previous work would have been done, where we had estimated \$1 million, we spent seven and a half million dollars and we are now appropriating another \$2 million, which in total would be \$12 million on a plan which would be the last of a series of plans?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: No. This is what you call a Chaguaramas master plan and it is going to have a—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Rowley: All the others were master plans.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Yeah, but there were problems with the plans. Remember 10 years ago, people were not thinking about sustainable development, you know?

Dr. Rowley: Says who?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: The environment was not as dominant a concern as it is now.

Dr. Rowley: Minister, 10 years ago, I might have been the Minister of Planning.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Yes.

Dr. Rowley: People were thinking about sustainable development, because I do know that there are plans that are comprehensive for Chaguaramas, and to the

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extent that any new plan is required, we are saying here that we would have spent between 2013 and 2015, \$12 million. So I want to ask you: could we get a breakdown of how this money was spent, who was paid and what they were paid for and what they produced?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Yes, I could tell you. Let me consult the people involved in this. All the information can be transparent. We will give you.

Dr. Rowley: You do not have to give it to me now. I am asking for a complete breakdown.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: First of all, the plan is done in phases. Okay. So, initially, what you do is—I forget what you call it. What do you call those plans where you—you would have had an initial draft of a plan which says that, look, given 15,000 acres of land, so and so, this is what, and that would be the basis, and then you go into detail about every cove, every nook, every cranny, which is what is being done now.

This is a 15-year master plan and, at the end of the day, it will basically say over a 15-year period these are the things that you can do and the options you can take for development.

Mr. Chairman: All right. Hon. Minister, could you submit.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Yes, yes.

Mr. Chairman: All right. I think that I want to move on now.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, I just want to be clear as to what I am asking for and what I expect, which is a breakdown of how the \$9 million was spent, who was paid and for what and what did they produce and, of course, for the other \$2 million to come.

11.45 a.m.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East, and these are the last for you.

Mr. Imbert: Yeah. One last question on 005.

Mr. Chairman: After that we are moving on.

Mr. Imbert: Sub-Item 031, in the context of the Minister's statement that Chaguaramas is open to everyone and you are trying to open it up to everyone and so on, why have you abandoned the Water Taxi Terminal at Chaguaramas? Item 031; why have you abandoned it?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: No.

Mr. Imbert: But it is gone, it has disappeared, so it must be abandoned. Why is there zero now?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: It is a question of priorities and the utilization of the space—

Mr. Imbert: No, but that is not an answer. It was there, it is gone. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, please. Please. Please. Please. Please, let us have order. The Minister is going to answer, please.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: It is a question of what do you prioritize, what do you spend money on; there is nothing that prevents the water taxi from docking in Chaguaramas and having the people—

Mr. Imbert: What! There is no berthing facility.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: The water taxi moves from here to Chaguaramas—

Mr. Imbert: Not efficiently.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: It goes there every weekend.

Mr. Imbert: But not efficiently.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: No, I do not see how you can say that, it does.

Mr. Imbert: I could say that, I am aware of it.

Mr. Chairman: All right, okay—

Mr. Imbert: It is a low priority—

Mr. Chairman: I think I recognize the Member for Arouca/Maloney—

Mr. Imbert: Access to Chaguaramas—low priority.

Mr. Chairman:—and then after, the Member for Point Fortin. The Member for Arouca/Maloney, please.

Miss Hospedales: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair, Sub-Item 029, with respect to Phase II of the Boardwalk, I would like to find out exactly what is the total cost of that Boardwalk and when it will be completed.

Mr. Chairman: No, that was answered already and he will supply the answers to that. I recognize the Member for Point Fortin.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Just a further question on the Chaguaramas plan and one other question. [*Crosstalk*] With regard to the plan, was it included in here—

Mr. Chairman: Please, let us have order, please. [*Crosstalk*]

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: With regard to the Chaguaramas plan, Minister—

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Mr. Chairman: Yes, order, order, please. I am trying to hear what the Member for Point Fortin is saying, please. Member.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Was it included then, the sale of Pier II? And if that did occur, did it include that?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: No, it was not.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Or did it occur? It did not occur?

Mr. Chairman: No, it did not occur.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: I want to say that under this watch, nobody can walk into Chaguaramas and buy anything just so.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Right. Okay.

Mr. Chairman: All right, I take your answer. Final question.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Okay, thank you. Under 069, you made an appropriation in 2014 for the VIII Americas Competitiveness and your appropriation was \$6 million. That figure jumped to \$31 million, is it that you did not contemplate a conference in 2014 and you made no such appropriation?

Mr. Chairman: No, it is—

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon:—Or were there cost overruns? Humongous, huge cost overruns. What is this about?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: No, nothing of the kind. A conference like this takes a long time to plan and organize. The first thing is, internationally, you must get support for the conference, so that is done like two years in advance. Okay? Once that was done, what we had to do was to begin the preliminary preparations, including beginning the process of establishing a secretariat. The thing takes place in 2014, that is when most of your expenditure is going to take place because you have to conduct the thing in a certain way; it is international in scope, you are bringing people from all over the world and you want to make sure that it is run properly.

So the secretariat expands, which means that contract workers, for a limited time—and I want to say that they were only being given 11 months' contract; I think they were hired for it. So this would have covered their salaries and will cover it until the end of possibly November, the conference is in October. And, of course, the expenditures that you have to incur, which is that you have to hire the Hyatt, you have to deal with transportation when they are here, you have to—

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: But you obviously did not appropriate properly. You must have known.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: No, it is not that. You do not appropriate all in one year. You appropriate—

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: All right. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: All right. The last question is coming from the hon. Leader of the Opposition—*[Interruption]* Yes, please, please, let the Leader of the Opposition have the last say, and we go forward.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, I would like to go to 032, the Rehabilitation of Guave Road for which a provision of \$20 million is being made, and this comes on the heels of in 2014—Now Guave Road exists, it is overgrown by bush and it needs a few drains cleaned. There is a Guave Road in Chaguaramas.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: But we are going to build a real road. *[Laughter]*

Mr. Chairman: Please, please, let us allow the Member to—

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, I am not one of those who laughs at tens of millions of dollars in this country. There seems to be an attitude in allocation that tens of millions and how much—Guave Road exists. It is overgrown and it needs clearing of the drains and to be paved. I see here Rehabilitation of Guave Road; that item was in the budget in 2014 with an estimate for \$3.5 million; they spent \$500,000. I would like to ask the Minister what was that \$500,000 spent on because the road has not been touched. But now for the same assignment, rehabilitation of the existing Guave Road, I see a request for \$20 million. So I want to ask the Minister, how does the scope of work change from 2014 to 2015 to cause the estimate of the Rehabilitation of Guave Road to move from \$3.5 million to \$20 million?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: You cannot build anything all at once, okay? This \$3.5 million was for collaboration between the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure and the CDA basically designing what was to be the road, the scope of the works, et cetera; it is \$3.5 million. The actual cost—because I think the contract has been awarded—is \$34 million, is what the road is going to cost.

Dr. Rowley: To rehabilitate the existing Guave Road?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: It is going to be rehabilitation and addition. The road is a narrow road, I have gone through the road myself. You are right, it is overrun by bushes but it is an extremely narrow road. The road itself will have to be

resurfaced, you would have to build a wider road, you would have to make provision as you build the road in relation to the other things that you want to do on the sides of the road—

Dr. Rowley: Has a contract been awarded for this?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Yeah. As far as I am aware, I think CDA indicated—

Dr. Rowley: How was that contractor selected?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: The normal process. I think that there was an advertisement. There were a number of bids. Ultimately, the board would have had a committee, that is to say a tenders committee look at it, evaluation, and every single thing that is done by any of the institutions under my charge, every Board Minute and every tender document comes back to the Permanent Secretary.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, could I ask the Minister to provide this committee with all the details surrounding the request for that contract, and the documentation surrounding the award of that contract for the rehabilitation in Guave Road?

Mr. Chairman: Okay. Yeah. All right, we are moving on finally.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, before we go to the vote, I know you want to run on, but we have some valid questions still, two more, and I crave your indulgence to ask them.

Mr. Chairman: Which one is that you want to go to now?

Dr. Rowley: I am on page 182, Item 021. No question was asked about that and I want to put a question to the Minister on that, Establishment of a High Level Panel of Experts, which we have spent \$9 million on. I would like to ask the Minister—

Mr. Chairman: And which is the second one?

Dr. Rowley: The second one has to do with the Innovation Financing Facility for which a request is made for \$90 million, and I would like to find out what is that \$90 million for with respect to 2014.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: I will deal with the second one first. Since this Government established under the Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development—and executed by the Council for Competitiveness and Innovation—an Innovation Fund of \$10 million, in 2011 not one penny of that fund was spent because we did not get our innovation idea off the ground. In

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2012, 400 applicants applied to what is known as the idea2innovation programme, 400-plus, and 50 awards were made out of the Innovation Fund.

In 2013, close to 500 people applied, 53 awards were made out of the Innovation Fund, and in 2014 we just awarded 44, I think—out of 500 people who submitted—on merit; and these are going to be basically 150 entrepreneurs in the country. Not all of them will succeed but it is a way of seeding capital and giving them the opportunity to create a business.

Now, all of these innovations are innovations that are commercially oriented, and what we hope to do now is to introduce what we call “social innovation opportunities”. So we are going to expand the fund; it was \$10 million before, it is close to \$20 million now. We are going to expand the fund to offer opportunities for social innovators in the country as a way of stimulating entrepreneurship in Trinidad and Tobago.

Dr. Rowley: These awardees, what is the level of award they receive?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: They receive between \$75,000 to \$200,000.

Dr. Rowley: As grants?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: They receive them as grants, and these grants are administered through NEDCO. It is based on performance and that performance is monitored by CARIRI, which operates an incubation centre to support these businesses.

Mr. Chairman: All right, could you go to the next question, please, the High Level Panel of Experts.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: The High Level Panel of Experts: this was a collaborative capability that we created from artistes and related people, not necessarily all artistes, in which they focused on the whole business of organizing the arts in the country, and out of that has come the rationalization of functions having to do with the creative industries, the integration of the Film Company with fashion—I forgot what. In any case, the idea was that these people would look at the arts and what would be the best way to stimulate and generate artistic expression, and out of that has come a rationalization of the institution and a rationalization of the responsibilities of Ministries for things related to creative industries, which is one of our sectors for diversification.

Dr. Rowley: So having paid \$9 million to that idea, what did we get? A report? A plan? What did we get?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Well you got the recommendations, and out of the recommendations of course you had action.

Dr. Rowley: The recommendations came by way of a report?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Yes, there was a report that was done.

Dr. Rowley: Could we have access to that report, please?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Yes, we can give you the report.

Dr. Rowley: And could we also get a breakdown as to how that money was disbursed, who got it, and how much?

Mr. Chairman: All right, let us go. Hon. Members, the question is—

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, one more question, please, one more.

Mr. Chairman: But you cannot be interrupting me all the time when I am coming to a conclusion.

Dr. Rowley: But you are moving kind of fast.

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, but look we—two hours now, you know. Put your final question, go ahead.

Dr. Rowley: Sub-Item 064, Global Services Offshoring Promotion Programme, \$5 million; who gets that money and what is it for? It seems to be a recurring \$5 million.

12.00 noon

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: The money was allocated last year but was not spent, because the project was not ready. This is a project that is funded by the Inter-American Development Bank, IDB. Just as you have seven sectors for development, of which ICT is one, and you have the five growth poles, the services sector contributes about 64 per cent of the employment in the country and it is a sector, if built on ICT, has the capacity for exports in the country.

Therefore, what we have done is that we have worked with the IDB to establish a programme that would allow us to focus on ICT-based services as an export capability of Trinidad and Tobago, as part of the diversification thrust.

Dr. Rowley: So for what exactly is the money that we spent? What did you spend money on in that idea?

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: There are a number of things. I do not know how far this \$5 million will carry. The entire loan is US \$18 million, and I think it is a five-year project. But this \$5 million is to establish the location where this can take place, a kind of innovation hub for the ICT services sector, to create the conditions

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for what you might call “finishing schools”, in which people who are engineers, et cetera, can be more focused on things like, let us say apps building or software development, et cetera. Basically, it is to transition university graduates into entrepreneurial and job opportunities in the services sector.

Mr. Chairman: I think we have it, thank you.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 67 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development, on behalf of the Standing Finance Committee, we will like to thank you and your team for being here with us. Thank you very much.

Hon. Dr. Tewarie: Thank you very much, Sir. I want to acknowledge the tremendous support of my team here this morning and always in the Ministry.

Mr. Chairman: We now go to the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure, Head 69. [*Interruption*]

Head 69.

Mr. Chairman: I now invite the hon. Minister of Works and Infrastructure, if he so desires, to make a brief opening statement for no more than five minutes.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. First I would like to say how happy we are to be part of this experience and this event, because we consider it an opportunity, not just for my Ministry, but I may say for the Government to demonstrate the qualities and values of openness and transparency in terms of how it does its business as a Government. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Chairman, I want to just introduce the members of my team, the key members: Permanent Secretary, Mr. Isaac James; Deputy Permanent Secretary Sonia Francis-Yearwood; the head of PURE, Mr. Hayden Phillip; the Director of Highways, Mr. Roger Ganesh, and the rest of the team who are here with me.

This has been a very exciting year and a very successful year. One may even describe it—people of the country are describing it as a record year in terms of projects and the performance of the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure. For this, the people who work in the Ministry ought to be warmly congratulated.

In fact, we have counted 2,541 locations in Trinidad where work has been done over the last fiscal year, coming up to this month of September.

Miss Mc Donald: That does not include Port of Spain South?

Mr. Chairman: Member for Port of Spain South, please. Continue, please.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, as we look towards this fiscal year, we look towards opening several important projects. We have completed as you know the Diego Martin Highway, but we also look now to open the Valencia Bypass Road which will eliminate a lot of the traffic on the Valencia junction. The new Motor Vehicle Authority building is almost complete near La Paille Village, and we have now constructed a new roadway from the Caroni Bridge right on to Washington Junction, which will alleviate traffic pile up there on mornings, now that you will have a two-way flow of traffic.

That is one of several projects which will be completed in this fiscal year, inclusive of 13 more bridges and approximately 27 landslips across the country. Our work for 2015 will include: the continuation of the Port of Spain East-West Corridor Transportation Project; the redefinition of highway reserves; of course, the continuation of the extension of the Solomon Hochoy Highway from San Fernando to Point Fortin; the Traffic Management Programme and the Bridges and Landslips Programme. We are going to continue with the installation of cable barriers to medians of highways and roadside edges, as well as the supply and installation of New Jersey-type barriers.

In order to improve what happens at traffic intersections, we are going to be providing backup power supplies to several traffic signal lights intersections, as well as continue the programme we have of zebra crossings.

The traffic warden system would be further enhanced. We are now up to about 330 traffic wardens, and we hope to continue the recruitment until we get to the Cabinet-approved 700.

We are also paying very close attention to what is happening in the coastal regions of Trinidad and Tobago, and several coastal projects are on the cards. In fact, some tenders have already been awarded, and we are going to be doing extensive work on that.

The Unemployment Relief Programme, which is one of the most highly criticized programmes, has been turned around into a very efficient programme, and this year, in the last fiscal year, almost 1,000 projects have been done in 1,000 locations in Trinidad. Of course, there is a segment of the programme also in Tobago, which is under the Tobago House of Assembly.

With those few words, I thank you for this opportunity, and we are prepared to engage in the discussion with our colleagues.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much.

Question proposed: That Head 69 stand part of the Schedule.

The sum of \$1,314,830 for Head 69, the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure, 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*—01, Personnel Expenditure; 001, General Administration; 002, Highways; 003, Traffic Management—I recognize the Member for Diego Martin West.

Dr. Rowley: Under 001, General Administration, is the Minister aware that the Personnel Expenditure—I know that this Ministry has been—I should not say I know—is it that there has been some recombination between 2011 and now with respect to the scale of your operation which would have caused your Personnel Expenditure to move from \$102 million to \$420 million? The estimates for personnel under 01 is \$420 million. As a matter of fact, the Revised Estimates for 2014 is \$514 million.

The first question I want to ask is: What has caused the Personnel Expenditure to balloon from \$102 million to \$514 million under the Head of Ministry of Works and Infrastructure?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: It used to be the Ministry of Works and Transport and Drainage also. As you realize now transport has been hived off, drainage has been hived off.

Dr. Rowley: But the Personnel Expenditure under these documents still remain Personnel Expenditure—two big hive offs took place, transport—

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: The figure that you are referring to, \$100 and some million is for what year?

Dr. Rowley: Those are the actual figures for 2011. I know we are not dealing with 2011, but I am making a reference point.

Dr. Moonilal: Chairman, just on a point, if the Member is quoting figures from 2011 or 2010 or even 2008, could we have the figures so that we could—

Dr. Rowley: These figures are available to all of us. I am simply saying it is my understanding—

Dr. Moonilal: But because it is not before us now, I do not have it so I cannot follow you that way.

Dr. Rowley: I am putting it to the Minister that the expenditure under “Personnel” in 2011 was \$102 million—unless the Minister is prepared to say that was not so. But the question I am putting to the Minister is that my reading of the documents over the period is that Personnel Expenditure has grown considerably, and I am asking the Minister whether, in fact, it had to do with any change in the structure of the Ministry.

He has said that—well, of course if they are querying that my figure is wrong, that is another story. In fact, another question I want to put to you, and that is: In 2014, in these documents in front of us, the figure was \$514 million. For the 2015 figure, the request is for \$420 million. What is causing that decrease? What are we anticipating here?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Let me say that I will certainly go and look back at the figures, but I do not have the year 2011 that the Member is referring to. The overall decrease in 2015 of \$93,714,000 that is quoted here in the document on page 376 under Personnel, will have to do with the retroactive payments of salaries, allowances and wages that had to be paid.

Dr. Rowley: In 2014?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: In 2014. So that is what would have brought down the figure.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, on that same point, I can understand a reduction in wages, because that deals with daily-paid workers, but what is the reason for the reduction in salaries which is monthly-paid workers? There was a collective agreement for daily paid, but I am not aware of a similar thing for monthly paid.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Remember the \$39 million that you are seeing there is a revised estimate. By January you will have what is the actual figure expended.

Mr. Imbert: If you look at each Sub-Head under 01, General Administration, Highways, 002, Traffic Management, et cetera, there is a reduction in each department for salaries. Why is that?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: It might have been that there were certain things to be paid in that year that had been accumulated.

Mr. Imbert: For monthly paid?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: It might have been. We will have to find out.

Mr. Imbert: Could you tell us what that is, please?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: We will have to go back to the figures and examine the details.

Mr. Imbert: I cannot see any explanation for that. So you will give us the details of that?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: We will look at it yes, surely.

12.15 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: So, we go on to 002 Highways, we go to 003 Traffic Management.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman—

Mr. Chairman: Yes. I recognize the Member for Diego Martin West and after the Member for Chaguanas West.

Dr. Rowley: We spend a considerable amount of money on traffic management but, Mr. Chairman, if a stranger comes to Port of Spain and rents a car and tries to get to Point Fortin, you basically have to do it by ear because the sign posting and the traffic management in this country is so chaotic. And if you come from south of Point Fortin to go to Arima, is another story. Now, I am asking the Minister, how are there \$18 million in 2013, \$26 million in 2014 and \$20 million in 2015, and we are not seeing any improvement in the traffic management of the country.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: What I would like to know—

Dr. Rowley: I am on page 377, Item 003/030, Traffic Management. Sorry, 003.

Dr. Moonilal: Salaries and cost of living allowance.

Mr. Chairman: We are on—

Dr. Rowley: 003 Traffic Management.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Yes. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: We are on Personnel Expenditure under that item.

Dr. Moonilal: Under vacant posts?

Dr. Rowley: So, I thought you called 003 under Personnel Expenditure.

Mr. Chairman: Personnel Expenditure, 003.

Dr. Rowley: Well that is where I am.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Yeah. But which line item are you on?

Dr. Rowley: The very last line of that page, 337.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: You are looking at the totals?

Dr. Rowley: Yes. I am saying, the point that I am making, these are allocations which we are approving for traffic management, and I am making an observation to you that notwithstanding these annual expenditure, we are not seeing any improvement in the traffic management with respect to guidance around the country. It is chaotic in Chaguanas, it is chaotic in Arima, it is chaotic in Point Fortin, and the sign posting is poor.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Well, I do not agree with you that the sign posting is poor because we have a continuous programme where we are improving the signage in this country. In fact, we have done more than that. If you go to the areas near schools you will see that at several of those areas we have zebra crossings that have been established. In fact, in 2014, 47 zebra, pedestrian crossings with flashing amber lights were installed at various locations. And if you want a list of them, I have the full list here for you.

Dr. Rowley: No, I am not talking about that, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister. I am talking about finding your way around the country.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: What are you—

Dr. Rowley: And I reference it against a stranger entering Arima from the west and trying to drive through Arima. How do you guide yourself through Arima? In the eyes of a stranger, you try to cross Arima and you are literally stuck in the middle of a town with very poor sign postage because you have to turn left, turn right, turn left, turn right, turn to go straight before you know.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: I might say similarly—[*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: Please. Please. Let the Minister respond, please.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: You would recognize in the boroughs and so on, it is also the responsibility of the corporations to also engage in signage, and that is something that we work collaboratively with them. But we have been improving signage across the country, and in fact, we are about to put up the first set of gantry signs on the—

Dr. Rowley: So, we can improve this?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Yes. We are doing that. We are doing that.

Dr. Rowley: And the point that I am making is, my final question, is this allocation sufficient to take us where we really should be?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: This is not the allocation. This matter that you are referring to is Personnel Expenditure.

Mr. Chairman: Yes. It is Personnel Expenditure.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: This is the amount to pay people who are working in the traffic management department: People who go and they do the analysis, put up the signs, they paint the roads in white and so on. This is money to pay them and to manage the system.

Dr. Rowley: And this is sufficient to do what has to be done.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: As at this point, we would love to have more money. This is not what we asked for. We asked for more money, but everything else—

Dr. Rowley: That is the point I am trying to get to. Did you ask for more money?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Oh yes. If you want—the request that we had made, we can supply you with the request that was made, but like every Ministry we are subject to what is available in the pot. And when we got down to discussions with the Ministry officials at the Ministry of Finance and the Economy and Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development, we decided that if this is what is available, we are going to prioritize and use our money in the best way that we can.

Mr. Chairman: All right. I recognize the Member for Chaguanas West.

Mr. Warner: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, under 08—

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: 08.

Mr. Warner:—under 003/08, I see in 2014 an allocation for \$500,000, and 2015 the same allocation. How many vacant posts have you in this department and what are they?

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, the hon. Minister.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: I will have to find that out for you, Member. I cannot give you that figure, but I can find out and let you know.

Mr. Warner: Okay.

Mr. Chairman: All right. I recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Imbert: The Minister made a comment earlier about it being just estimates, but if you look at 2014, the Revised Estimates is, more or less, what

was actually spent, not the original estimate, the Revised Estimates in 2014. And in each one of these Heads, this one, Traffic Management, the previous one, Highways, et cetera, the actual expenditure on salaries in 2014, is significantly more than what was provided for in the Estimates.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: What line are you referring to?

Mr. Imbert: Let us look at this particular one, 003/01, page 377, Revised Estimates \$1.7 million. Your 2015 allocation was \$1.2 million. Highways, the previous page, Revised Estimates which was the actual expenditure—\$10 million, your 2015 is \$8 million. So in each one of your divisions, departments, your allocation for 2015 is less than your actual expenditure in 2014. What is the reason?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: The allocations—

Mr. Imbert: Your allocations in this fiscal going forward for salaries—

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Is less than 2014.

Mr. Imbert:—significantly less, in some cases 20 per cent less.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: And that might be due to the fact, and we can probably look at the—that we might be sub-contracting and outsourcing a lot of work in the traffic management division.

Mr. Imbert: It is not just Traffic Management, it is Highways it is 20 per cent less and so on. It is right through your salary allocation is 20 per cent less, in some cases more than 20 per cent less than your actual expenditure on salaries.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: And as I say again, it might be a number of positions are not being filled, and work is being contracted out.

Mr. Imbert: No. No. No. You are missing my point.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: I am not missing your point.

Mr. Imbert: If your actual last year is more than your allocation for this year, that has nothing to do with positions being filled. It is actual of last year being more than provision for this year. That is the point I am making. But how is this possible?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: But this is still not actual. This is why Revised Estimates. If you look at 2013, you would have seen in 2013 that figure there would have been revised.

Mr. Imbert: So what is the basis for the Revised Estimates?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: So we are going to see what the actual—

Mr. Imbert: You are telling me this Revised Estimates I should not use that as a guide?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: No. I am not saying that. I am saying though that we have got to wait until the actual figures have been computed to know exactly what is going on here. Because you will see in 2014, the estimate was \$1.2 million, the revised \$1.7 million, so we are going to try to find out where is the difference.

Mr. Chairman: All right. We are going on to 004 Central Planning Unit, 04. Item 006 Mechanical Services. These seven items: 007, Maintenance; 008 Construction; 012 Unemployment Relief Programme. I recognize the Member for Laventille West.

Mr. Hypolite: Chair, we get to understand earlier on that the Unemployment Relief Programme would have been removed from the Prime Minister's Office to the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure. Can the Minister indicate if the entire—because at one point in time the programme was split into three—if the entire programme is now under the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure, and can a breakdown of the various positions be circulated?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: When you say—I would like to be clear, what you mean by breakdown in the different positions.

Mr. Hypolite: You should have an organizational structure.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Yes.

Mr. Hypolite: If that can be circulated.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Yes. You can get the organizational structure, and the programme is divided into three segments, as you correctly said. URP Infrastructure, which is under the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure, URP Agriculture which is under the Ministry of Food Production and URP Social which is under the Ministry of the People and Social Development, that continues to be. So the portion that has been moved from the Prime Minister's office, is the entire URP Programme, and we administer it through the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure.

Mr. Hypolite: The administrative part of it.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Yes. So, I can give you the structure as you want.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, I am going to ask the same question, hopefully I would not get the same answer. Mechanical Services, Maintenance Construction, Unemployment Relieve Programme, the allocation for this year for salaries is significantly less than what you spent last year. Why is that?—in each one.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, the hon. Minister. What page are you on, Member for Diego Martin North/East?

Mr. Imbert: 378, 379, 006, 007, 008, 012, and I am dealing with salaries and not wages; because salaries are monthly paid officers.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Just a second.

Mr. Imbert: No it is not. Salaries. No, we are not talking 2013. We are dealing with 2015. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: Members, please, please.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: If you remember earlier on I talked about the allocations that were to be made for back pay and so on, in each of these categories.

Mr. Imbert: No. Minister, let us not waste time. I know that there was back pay—

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Therefore, you will find last year's estimates are going to be higher than this year's estimates because—

Mr. Imbert: No.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan:—the provisions are made in those figures therefore, it is very simple logic that those would be higher figures than this year.

Mr. Imbert: Minister, you are telling me that there was back pay to public servants last year; monthly-paid employees.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: There were several payments to be made I indicated already. The question that you asked about the salaries and so on, I am going to research it and get back to you. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: All right. Cool. All right. Let us move on. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Imbert: Do not be rude to me, eh.

Mr. Chairman: The Minister has said that he will research that matter and get back to your good self and the committee. So, we are now going to 02 Goods and Services. Item 001 General Administration. Item 002, Highways, Item 003— are you on Highways?

Miss Hospedales: Yes, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Arouca/Maloney and then [*Crosstalk*] the Member for Chaguanas West as well.

Miss Hospedales: That is page 381.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Yes, “uh-hmm”.

Mr. Chairman: Page 381.

Miss Hospedales: Yes. Mr. Chair—

Mr. Chairman: And what Sub-Item?

Miss Hospedales: Sub-Item 28.

Mr. Chairman: Sub-Item 28.

Miss Hospedales: Could the Minister provide a breakdown of the contracted services for us, please?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Sure.

Miss Hospedales: And the cost for each.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. That will be provided before—I recognize the Member for Chaguanas West, then the Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Warner: Mr. Chairman, I was asking on 02, Goods and Services, Promotions, Publicity and Printing.

Mr. Chairman: Which page?

Mr. Warner: 381.

Mr. Chairman: 381. What Sub-Item?

Mr. Warner: 001/62. [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Yes. There is a provision of \$1 million.

Mr. Warner: I am asking what that involves?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: That involves the printing of advertisements in the newspapers, and the regular advertising we also do on radio and so on, to deal with informing the public about developments in the Ministry or alerting them to traffic congestions or work that we might have going on on the highways and other parts of the country. You would recognize though over the last three months we have developed a system, an app called WIZE, and approximately 600-plus

persons have now logged on to that app, and they are getting that information as it happens on the app. So, we have moved into that technology, in addition to the facebook that we have on our site and so on.

Mr. Chairman: Yes. All right. We go on to—are we all right, Member for Diego Martin North/East? [*Crosstalk*] Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Imbert: I am still trying to get over the fact—

Mr. Chairman: Yes. I know. Let us not get there. Let us move on.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: It is called WIZE.

Mr. Imbert: 28, is this for the districts?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: What is that?

Mr. Imbert: Page 381, Sub-Item 28, Other Contracted Services \$150 million allocation—

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: That is throughout the country.

Mr. Imbert:—is this for the districts?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Throughout the country wherever work has to be done, we have contracted services.

Mr. Imbert: I am asking a specific question.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: I will provide the total list, and you will see it by district. You will see the breakdown by districts.

Mr. Imbert: Thank you very much.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: You will see the breakdown by districts.

Mr. Chairman: Let us go. Item 003, Traffic Management. Item 004, Central Planning Unit. Item 006. Yes. I recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Imbert: Yes, Mr. Chairman, 03/28, what is that for?

Mr. Chairman: Which page again. Just advise us again? Member for Diego Martin North/East, which page?

Mr. Imbert: 382, 03/28, Other Contracted Services, \$4 million for 2015.

Mr. Chairman: Traffic Management, hon. Minister, 03.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: You are referring to the \$4 million under Other Contracted Services? Yeah. Well, again Other Contracted Services, things have to be done under traffic management.

Mr. Imbert: What is that?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Well, I will give you the list. It is a whole long list.

Mr. Imbert: Do you know?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Yes, I know. It consists of marking of roadways, it might consist of fixing of roads where landslips have developed. It might consist of patching roads—

12.30 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: And you said you will provide a list. I recognize the Member for Laventille West.

Mr. Hypolite: Does the traffic—*[Interruption]*

Hon. Dr. Rambachan:—traffic light maintenance also.

Mr. Chairman:—the Member for Laventille West, the Member for Arouca/Maloney later and then the Member for Diego Martin West.

Mr. Hypolite: Do the traffic wardens fall under this item?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: No.

Mr. Hypolite: Under which item may I ask? I am not seeing it anywhere.

Mr. Chairman: The Member for Arouca/Maloney in the meantime.

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair, to the Minister, does the painting of speed humps come under Sub-Item 28, Other Contracted Services.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: It falls under 010.

Miss Hospedales: Because I am asking, because since 2010 I have been asking, writing, pleading to get speed humps painted in the constituency of Arouca/Maloney.

Mr. Chairman: Speed humps for the constituency of Arouca/Maloney area. Is that your question?

Miss Hospedales: Yes. We have been pleading, begging, we sent them a list of all the speed humps in the constituency. We did our own survey and up to now none of them have been painted.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister, you will want to respond to that?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, it is a legitimate request, the Member is making, and I will pass on the information to our traffic department.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Diego Martin West.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, with respect to page 381 under Highways, 28, I would like the Minister to provide us with a list of the contractors who were hired—

Hon. Member: Which—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Chairman: Page 381—

Dr. Rowley: With respect to the 2014 Expenditure, Sub 28 of Other Contracted Services.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, he said he will provide us with a list.

Dr. Rowley: Under Other Contracted Services. The contractors who have been hired for these and their sum of each contract, and the time of the job spec.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, we will provide it by the district, we will provide it by the amount the contract was for. We will also, I think there is a description in the document that I have of the kind of work that has to be done—*[Interruption]*

Dr. Rowley: Good.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: And I believe also the amount is there and the name of the contractor is there.

Dr. Rowley: One question I would like to ask, how are these contractors selected before they are hired? What is the process?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: They have to be prequalified and the contractors are normally prequalified in relation to the amount of work they can do.

I am advised by the officers at the Ministry, they will visit these contractors also to ensure that, if they claim that they have equipment, that the equipment can be demonstrated. For example, if Namalco, way down in Point Fortin, tells you I can do work that involves excavators, and he said he has 20 excavators, you may want to make a site visit to ensure that he has 20 excavators. Because in that way also you will then be able to qualify them for different levels of jobs. So some might be able to do work below \$1 million, small contractors or \$500,000. Some might be able to do \$10 million and above and those are large contractors. So that kind of prequalification exercise takes place and then in terms of the job itself we have a tendering process that is strictly followed.

Dr. Rowley: Is the Minister aware of allegations of favouritism with respect to the award of contracts?

Dr. Moonilal: Is this a question based on the estimates?

Dr. Rowley: With respect to the procedure.

Dr. Moonilal: Mr. Chairman, again I want to make the point—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Chairman: Let us deal with Goods and Services, we are going under Mechanical Services.

Dr. Moonilal: What about the allegation in Las Alturas?

Mr. Chairman: Please, please, let us not get there, please. Goods and Services, Mechanical Services. I recognize the Member for Chaguanas West.

Mr. Warner: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the Minister supply, subsequently, under 43—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Chairman: What page again?

Mr. Warner:—383, 006/43.

Mr. Chairman: Right, Security.

Mr. Warner: A list of the firms, please.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Member is asking whether, which firms or organizations are involved in the provision of security, and whether you could provide a listing or if you could provide it now.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: I will provide a listing, but the main firm that is around the Ministry is in fact MTS.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Miss Hospedales: No.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, we go on to Item 007, Maintenance; 008, Construction, 009; Environmental Health and Safety Unit. I recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East and the Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Mr. Imbert: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Page 385, 009, Environmental Health and Safety Unit; 16, Contract Employment. Two questions. I see you have an increase in that allocation, from \$4.2 million to \$5 million for contract employment. What is the reason for the increase? That is question one.

Mr. Chairman: Are you following, hon. Minister.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Yes, I am following.

Mr. Chairman: Right.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: The Environmental Health and Safety Unit, I was trying to find a document here, their staffing is paid under contract employment in the main. And we are strengthening, in fact, our Environmental Health and Safety Unit, especially in the view of the increased amount of projects that we are doing as I showed you, this has been a record year in terms of the number of projects and I am told that the number of projects done this year exceeded any year by between 33 per cent and 40 per cent.

Mr. Imbert: Could you give us a breakdown of the employees that are hired under this Head?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: That is possible.

Mr. Imbert: Okay, fine.

Mr. Chairman: All right, we go on to Item 10—the Member for Fyzabad.

Mr. Sharma: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Recently, it will come, perhaps, under different headings, the Ministry indicated an intake of young professionals. Can you advise us how is that going to proceed, and the numbers and the areas?

Mr. Chairman: Young professionals, under what Item?

Mr. Sharma: It is under a number of different headings, where the increase in funds are—Contract—

Mr. Imbert: “Doh try dat.” [*Laughter*]

Mr. Sharma: Unqualified.

Mr. Chairman: Under Contract Employment. Okay, I will ask the hon. Minister—

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, we recognized very early in the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure that we needed to ensure that we had a sustainable Ministry when it came to human resource development and personnel into the future. And what we have done is that we have developed something called a mentorship programme in the Ministry.

In this mentorship programme we are currently involved in interviewing, I believe over 300 applicants for 50 positions, where these people would be mentored by the existing persons in different divisions, including Heads of Divisions, so they can then grow in the organization and be able to take over positions in the future.

During the summer vacation, we also took on persons, but these people will be taken on a three-year contract—50. During the summer vacation in the URP Programme 30 second-year graduates of UTT were taken on in a summer internship programme. And, Mr. Chairman, it was very encouraging to see them

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design pavilions, design walls where landslips had occurred and so on, and that was part of the learning opportunity. Because in the URP Programme which we are transforming, we also have to bring in a higher calibre of persons, and we are also doing that in order to attract them. So, we have been working very hard in order to bring new people into the Ministry and people of a higher calibre in order to ensure sustainability and better quality.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, Item 010, Traffic Warden Unit. Yes, the Member for Chaguanas West.

Mr. Warner: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, 010/6, there is an increase of \$30 million for traffic wardens. Is that increase for additional traffic wardens, and if yes, where are the new ones?

Mr. Chairman: You want to give us the page again.

Mr. Warner: 386.

Mr. Chairman: Page 386, and what is the Sub-Item?

Mr. Warner: 16.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, as you know we recently recruited another 85 traffic wardens and just before that we recruited 100. And as I said, we are up to about 337 traffic wardens now in the country, and we are about to engage in another recruitment exercise this year, and it will be in two batches hoping to get another 200 traffic wardens in this coming year.

Mr. Warner: Are the new ones deployed to new areas or are they in the same areas?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: We are deploying them to new areas and we are trying to recruit them from several areas so that they do not have to travel far out of their areas to work. And the reason for this is that, we also believe that if you recruit traffic wardens from their own areas, they are more au courant with the traffic conditions in their area, they are more au courant with the people in their area, and they are more likely to get a better response and to give you better information in developing and managing the traffic flows.

Mr. Chairman: The Member for Talparo/La Horquetta.

Mr. Seemungal: Minister, can you share with me on that same Sub-Head 010 with respect to 16, what is the impact that this programme is having on the alleviation of traffic?

Mr. Chairman: You heard? Yes, and then we will go to the Member for Laventille West and then the Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Let me just tell you that, as of August 2014, and from the inception of the Traffic Warden Programme, 9,495 tickets for various offences have been issued at a cost of \$8.9 million from the traffic wardens. What is interesting—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Chairman: Please, Member for Port of Spain South let us conduct ourselves properly, “nah”.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan:—to increase the fines by 50 per cent.

Mr. Chairman: The Member for Laventille East/Movant, let us conduct ourselves properly, “nah man”. Every Member has a right to ask questions here. And this is a democracy. Let us have patience, please. Continue, continue, hon. Member.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, I want to say that and also add that the proposal of the Minister of Finance and the Economy to increase the fines by 50 per cent will be something very important to the Traffic Warden Unit, because as you know if there are no strong consequences, people do not follow the law.

To answer specifically, whether it has improved the flow of traffic. I would say, yes, it has done quite a lot to improve the flow of traffic. If I may judge by my own constituency where there used to be tremendous pile-up on mornings, getting in and out of Petrotrin, and on evenings that has helped, and the traffic wardens not only assist with the regular traffic but there are events in the country when the traffic wardens are requested and we make provisions for that so that you may have a built-up area where you will need traffic wardens and a provision is made to accommodate such function.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much. The Member for Laventille West and then the Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Just a point of clarification, Chairman, please. A point of clarification. Yesterday, when I asked for an opinion I was told that this finance committee cannot ask for opinions from Ministers. Is it now that we can ask for opinions? *[Interruption]*

Mr. Chairman: No, he was asking for the impact. No, no, that was not an opinion. Out of order. Continue, Member for Laventille West, please.

Mr. Hypolite: With respect to Item 16, can the Minister circulate an organizational structure with respect to that particular unit?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: The traffic wardens unit.

Mr. Hypolite: Yes, please.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Sure.

Mr. Hypolite: With respect to Item 17, Training, the Minister made mention that he intends to move the traffic wardens from 337 to some 700, but yet still we are seeing—*[Interruption]*

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: That is the approved number by Cabinet.

Mr. Hypolite: But we are seeing a decrease in terms of training. Will those traffic wardens be trained, those new ones?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Yes, and they go through—it is very interesting that you ask that question. They go through a very rigorous training and the training is—it is done by members of the police service. This will reflect our intake, what we need for the intake.

Mr. Chairman: All right, I recognize the Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Miss Hospedales: Yes, Mr. Chair, what I would like to find out is whether a comprehensive assessment has been done with reference to the deployment of the traffic wardens, particularly since some areas they are more challenged than others with reference to traffic management, and I heard the Minister saying that traffic wardens are actually being placed in the communities that they reside in, but is that justifiable.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Yes, the Director of Highways, Mr. Roger Ganesh, is constantly in a process of reviewing the traffic wardens, where traffic wardens are required. And at the moment, for example, we are looking, again, at Tunapuna; we are looking at Arima; we are looking at Sangre Grande also which has come into the picture and we are looking at Chaguanas where we need more traffic wardens. We are also now looking at Point Fortin because we have had some requests from the police in the Point Fortin area to add traffic wardens to assist in the traffic on mornings, especially in the centre of the Borough of Point Fortin. So it is a continuous assessment exercise where both the head of the traffic warden division and that team together with the Director of Highways are involved.

Mr. Chairman: All right, we go to Item 011, Programme Monitoring. Yes, the Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Imbert: For the benefit of those opposite who are not listening, I am on page 387, Sub-Head 011, Item 16, I do not understand how this unit can function without any staff, because you have zero expenditure in 2014 for Contract Employment. Could you please explain?

12.45 p.m.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: This is a new unit and it is in the process of being set up, and the process of recruitment and so on is on the way.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. Let us go on to Item 011, Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Unit; Item 012, Unemployment Relief Programme. We go on to Sub-Head 03: Minor Equipment Purchases. Item 001, General Administration.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman—

Mr. Chairman: Yes, I recognize the Member for Diego Martin West.

Dr. Rowley: Under URP, Mr. Chairman—and this is with respect to the small budgetary items, 2014—

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Small?

Dr. Rowley: URP has a very large budget, but this particular Head, 012 deals with staff, does it?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: This deals with the public servants. Remember you have the public servants—

Dr. Rowley: Yeah, public servant staff, that is what I am saying.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Public servant staff, yes.

Dr. Rowley: Yes, and the point I am getting to is this. I am aware that a series of small contracts are issued via the URP—very small contracts—all of them under half a million dollars, approximating \$300,000, \$400,000, but a series of those contracts.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: \$225,000 to \$275,000.

Dr. Rowley: And you did mention a while ago that there are 1,000 projects or something like that. So 1,000 by 300 is a lot of money. In fact, recently I have had sight of a series of those contracts, all of which are below half a million dollars.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Yes.

Dr. Rowley: And when I tallied the total, it was \$130 million in contracts—

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Yes.

Dr. Rowley:—awarded in that way. The question I would like to ask the Minister is: what is the system that is in place in the Ministry to provide proper accountability and transparency for the expenditure of \$130 million in contracts,

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all of which are under half a million dollars? Which means, it appears to me, that they would have fallen under the limit of the Permanent Secretary. So is it the Permanent Secretary who is selecting these contractors? If not, who is? And, secondly, are these contractors subject to the payment of VAT and health surcharge and so on? I would like an explanation from the Minister.

Mr. Chairman: Yes. The hon. Minister?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: These contractors have to be registered with the—limited liability, or some of them might be sole traders, but they have got to be registered legally. The tenders are done by inviting a minimum of three contractors to bid on each one of these jobs, and those tenders are evaluated by a tenders evaluation committee at the URP programme, involving the public servants, and they then award the tenders. It comes to the Permanent Secretary who then issues a letter of award for the contract.

In the case of URP, as you recognize, they do not get advanced payments. They have to finish their jobs and then the jobs are audited, and when the jobs are audited and the satisfaction that the job has been completed, only then are they paid for the work. In addition to that level of auditing, spot auditing is also done on jobs, so that the audit committee goes out there and audits jobs in order to ensure that they are done properly before payments are made. This year we have had a total of 603 community contractors who have worked on the projects of the URP.

Dr. Rowley: What is the total figure that the Ministry utilizes with respect to the 2014 URP budget for construction, by contractors?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, if I may, as at September 09, the value of work done—I will read it out for you: cheques issued 545, amounting to \$123,944,000. The invoices in the accounts department and engineering department, which means work completed but being audited for payment, \$34,763,000. And then jobs completed and invoices to submit, \$29,624,000; jobs in progress, \$52,354,000.

That means to say that you have to add \$123,944,000 to \$34,763,000 and \$81,979, and therefore, that will give you the figure that will be utilized for this particular year. There are other jobs where the contracts have been delivered but work has not started, and I am not counting those there. So we are looking at \$115,200 and about \$38 million.

Dr. Rowley: What is this magical figure that always falls below half a million dollars where there are instances where one drain, or one trace, would have phase

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one, phase two, phase three, and all of it going to the same contractor? Is it that we are breaking up contracts so as to let it fall below the level of a particular authority?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Well, it might be that you have, in one area, let us say, a box drain, and it is a very long box drain, so that you want to give it to different people. Sometimes one person might get phase one and phase two, and another person might get phase three and phase four. But it is not very regular that you have so many phases in a particular project, but you accommodate as many of the community contractors as is possible.

Mr. Chairman: All right. I recognize the Member for Laventille East/Morvant.

Miss Cox: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister, coming out of the conversation concerning small contracts, I would like to get a list of the small contracts that were issued in the constituency of Laventille East/Morvant and Laventille West, please.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, it is going to take me more than five minutes to read out—[*Crosstalk*] I just want to tell you, Mr. Chairman, in the region which is called Port of Spain, region two, for the fiscal year 2013/2014, thus far 39 projects have been done in that area, which will include your area. But you have to add into that, San Juan/Laventille, region three, where you have some overlap in your constituency. In San Juan/Laventille another 65 projects have been done. So when you add 65 and—how much did I say?

Hon. Member: Thirty-nine?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Sixty-five and 39, over 100 projects have been done in region two and region three in that particular area, and I can give you the list and give you the names of the contractors.

Mr. Chairman: All right. You will provide the listing. I recognize the Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Miss Hospedales: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I would like to get the same information for the constituency of Arouca/Maloney—

Mr. Chairman: Okay, you will get that information.

Miss Hospedales:—because of the fact that—

Mr. Jeffrey: Also La Brea.

Miss Hospedales:—I “doh” know where URP is operating.

Mr. Chairman: You would like to get it for La Brea too? Okay. All right. Let us go on to Item Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases: Item 001, General Administration; Item 002, Highways; Item 003, Traffic Management; Item 004, Central Planning Unit; Item 006, Mechanical Services; Item 007, Maintenance; Item 008, Construction; Item 009, Environmental Health and Safety Unit; Item 010, Traffic Warden Unit; Item 011, Programme Monitoring and Evaluations Unit; Item 012, Unemployment Relief Programme.

We go on to 04 Sub-Head, Current Transfers and Subsidies; Item 005, Non-Profit Institutions. I recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Imbert: Page 391, 005.

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: Where you have \$449,640,000, what is that for? Page 391, 04, Transfers and Subsidies, Non-Profit Institutions, \$449 million. What is that for?

Mr. Chairman: No, you are dealing with the total here. “Is not the total he dealing with here? That is the total figure yuh dealing with, yuh know”, Member for Diego Martin North/East. I thought you were dealing with individual items.

Mr. Imbert: Okay. All right. No problem.

Mr. Chairman: Okay?

Mr. Imbert: Let us deal with individual items then.

Mr. Chairman: Okay.

Mr. Imbert: Page 392, 011, Transfers to State Enterprises—15, Repayment of \$1.5 billion—

Mr. Chairman: No, we have not gone to State Enterprises yet. “Yuh goin ahead of us.” So let us move on to Item 007. Or would you want, Member for Chaguanas West, anything on Non-Profit Institutions?

Mr. Warner: Item 007, 02.

Mr. Chairman: Right. Item 007, Households. Would you want to raise a question under Households?

Mr. Warner: No. I want to go under 09. I am waiting.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. The other one is Item 009, Other Transfers. I recognize the Member for Chaguanas West.

Mr. Warner: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I see in 2013, Agua Santa had \$1.26 million allocation. Hear me well. I am aware that in 2013 that Agua Santa was due for closure. I see now it is \$6 million allocated for it in 2015. Has the policy changed? And if so, why?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Well, you do not take a very worthwhile asset and simply mothball it, as it were. When I came into the Ministry I asked about Agua Santa and I recognized that it could be a highly effective unit in terms of the work that the Ministry has to do, especially with regard to the patching programme of the Ministry, and to make active. Because I think it was also one of your ideas that we should have an effective pothole-patching programme across the country, and I am very happy to advise that the plant is up and running and that we are using material right now from it to patch various parts of the country because I am re-introducing a pothole-patching unit across the country.

Mr. Warner: I like the word, “re-introducing”.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Sorry?

Mr. Warner: I like the word, “re-introducing”.

Mr. Chairman: We go on now under—

Dr. Gopeesingh: Chair, Item 011 on page 392.

Mr. Chairman: No, no. We have not reached 011 yet. We are under Transfers, Item 009. Any matter under Item 009? If not, I go to Item 011, Transfers—

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, that is the one I asked about.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes, Chairman—

Mr. Imbert: I asked before you.

Mr. Chairman: All right. Well, I recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East and then the Member for Caroni East.

Mr. Imbert: Two items I am noticing—well, several—down at the bottom: NIPDEC repayment of 1.5; fixed rate bonds for PURE, there are three Items, 11, 13, 14, and then NIDCO, repayment of \$1.5 billion loan for Solomon Hochoy Highway. Let me start with the 15. Is that the only loan for that Solomon Hochoy Highway project, \$1.5 billion?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: This is a loan that is about to be taken, and what we have made here is a provision for repayment this year. But the loan has not been drawn down yet.

Mr. Imbert: Would that be the only loan for that project?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: If it were the only loan?

Mr. Imbert: Yes.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: We have to find ways and means of financing the project, and we will look at all our options. Maybe we can finance it out of certain assets we have or we probably go for loans and financing.

Mr. Imbert: Minister, you are not answering me, “yuh know”. You have a \$7.5 billion project; I see a financing item of \$1.5 billion, that leaves \$6 billion. Is this \$1.5 billion the only loan—

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Well, it does not leave \$6 billion because we have already paid certain amounts of money on the project.

Mr. Imbert: As you go forward—

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: As we go forward, if there is a necessity to get another loan we will go and get another loan to finance the project.

Mr. Imbert: How has this project been financed, using loan funds or Consolidated Fund money directly from the Treasury?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Part of it was Consolidated, and as you know, this is the first loan that is coming.

Mr. Imbert: How much money has been taken from the Consolidated Fund as opposed to loan financing for this project?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, to date, total payment made on the project is \$3.16 billion of the \$7.2 billion.

Mr. Imbert: And of that, how much—

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: So this includes fees to the OAS, to AECOM, also land acquisition fees—and let me say that over 315 properties have been properly acquired by private treaty negotiations;—community outreach, management fees, contingencies. In fact, 342 persons have been settled for their properties. Most of this money, as far as I am advised, is not loan money.

Mr. Imbert: So that came straight from the Treasury?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Yeah.

Mr. Imbert: Could you, since you have brought it up—I was not going to ask you but you brought it up. Could we get the names, locations, descriptions and amounts paid for those properties that you just spoke about that were acquired? [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, I want to answer that question. Mr. Chairman, I think that one has to be very careful how one deals with matters involving people's personal property and personal assets—

Mr. Imbert: What about expenditure of personal public funds?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: While this is a matter—

Mr. Imbert: This is public money!

Hon. Dr. Rambachan:—involving public funds, at the same time we have to be careful that we protect the security interest of people.

Mr. Imbert: No, no, no, I cannot accept that.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: But I am not averse to making it available for viewing by the Member, if he wishes.

1.00 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Caroni East.

Mr. Imbert: No, but, Mr. Chairman, I had other questions.

Mr. Chairman: Or, you have other questions.

Mr. Imbert: Yes, I had other questions.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, I want to make it clear that I am not denying a request, I am saying I am talking about the process by which this is done, on legal advice.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, before—

Mr. Imbert: Yes, let me finish—

Mr. Chairman: No, I want to ask, Member for Diego Martin West, is it related?

Dr. Rowley: Directly on the matter before the Minister at this moment. Mr. Chairman, I am quite scandalized to hear the Minister saying that land acquisition is a matter for care and to be kept away from public view.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: No, no, Mr. Chairman—

Dr. Rowley: Land acquisition, as far as I am aware, he just—

Mr. Chairman: All right, he wants to clarify it now.

Dr. Rowley: I am talking to you, Mr. Chairman, and after I am finished, I will ask him, if you can.

Mr. Chairman: Okay.

Dr. Rowley: My understanding, we are dealing with land acquisition for this highway, it does not matter who the owner is. My understanding was that land acquisition, as a matter of fact, usually comes before the Parliament by way of Motion. So you know who you are buying it from, what you are buying and for what purpose. Now, the Minister is telling us with respect to this highway, he has legal advice that the land acquisition associated with that highway should not be—we have to be careful—

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: No, no, no.

Mr. Chairman: No, he did not say he had legal advice.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: I did not say that at all, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Rowley: What did he say then? Clarify for me then.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, all I said is that I want to be cautious of how people's business is brought into the public.

Dr. Rowley: What people's business?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: But I am not—Mr. Chairman, I made it clear and I will make it clear again, and I will repeat it again, I have no problems with providing the information to the Members. I have no problem providing the information to the Members.

Dr. Rowley: So what is the—where is the caution required?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, let me just say that—

Mr. Chairman: Member, look, I think the Minister has answered the question to the best of his ability and I recognize the Member for Caroni East. Right? We cannot badger.

Dr. Gopeesingh: 011 Sub-Item 07, NIDCO - Repayment of Trinidad Rapid Rail Transit System, I see you have here that you have to pay \$58 million estimate

for 2015 and you paid \$97 million for 2014 and you paid \$101 million for 2013. Could you tell us then how much is left balance to be paid and how much was paid already for the rapid rail system?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: As you know, this is a project that costs near \$500 million plus and as you see, we are paying this year \$58,716,000. In fact, the reality is that we still have moneys to pay even in the following year on this rapid rail project.

Dr. Gopeesingh: I have one more question and you could finish with me. 011, 04, NIDCO - Term Loan Facility (4 New Fast Ferries), does this include the *MV Su*?

Mr. Chairman: Please, let us not get—but I will leave it up to the Minister to respond to that.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: I have to check that, I do not know—

Mr. Chairman: Okay, you have to check that. I recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East and then the Member for Oropouche East.

Mr. Imbert: I had raised questions which are—they are trying to run away from it. 011, Sub-Items 11, 13, 14, do any of these loans provide the funding or provided the fund for PURE in 2014 and will any of them provide the funding for PURE in 2015?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: As you know, these loans were taken in different years and they provide money for PURE to execute projects and we still have part of this money available to do work in this year. And there is another loan which we intend to draw down amounting to about \$900 million which will help us to continue work in 2015 and beyond.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for—

Mr. Imbert: No, Mr. Chairman, I asked him whether any of these loan funds were used to finance PURE in 2014 and whether they will be used for 2015. I am assuming that he said some of it was used for it. He also said there is a new loan for 2015. Could the Minister—

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: But it has not been drawn down as yet.

Mr. Imbert: Fine. Since these loan funds or some of them were used for PURE in 2014, could we get a list of all the projects PURE did in 2014, please?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: That is no problem. In fact, I will just let you know, and as a summary, that 778 projects were done by PURE in the last fiscal year.

Mr. Imbert: Give us the list.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Oropouche East.

Dr. Moonilal: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to go back to a very bothering matter, 011, 07. Mr. Chairman, through you to the very distinguished Minister, am I to understand that the taxpayers of this country are still paying millions of dollars in 2015 on this rapid rail business? I am seeing \$58 million as an estimate for 2015; I am seeing a revised estimate for 2014 of \$97 million, 2014; \$58 million in 2015, for a project that dates back to 2007 or 2008 somewhere there and—

Dr. Rowley: No, you idiot.

Mr. Chairman: You will withdraw that. Oh God, man, you cannot do that, man.

Dr. Rowley: I withdraw it.

Dr. Moonilal: Mr. Chairman, protect me from this Rottweiler, please.

Mr. Chairman: No, no, we are not going there. He has withdrawn.

Miss McDonald: Apologize.

Miss Cox: You have to withdraw that.

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, and do not use these kinds—

Miss Cox: You have to withdraw.

Mr. Chairman: Listen, Member for Laventille East, I can take care of myself. Member, you used a term, just withdraw it for me.

Dr. Moonilal: Mr. Chairman, I withdraw it hesitantly.

Mr. Chairman: Yes and let us not get into personalization, please. Continue, hon. Member for Oropouche East.

Dr. Moonilal: I really do not want to upset people by asking about the rapid rail.

Mr. Chairman: I know. Let us deal with the issue.

Dr. Moonilal: I want to get back to this rapid rail matter. I am asking the Minister a simple question and he has his technical people here. In 2015, \$58 million is set aside to pay for rapid rail. Is this the same rapid rail project that had a consultancy fee of \$485 million of taxpayers' money? One.

Part two of that question. I want to ask the Minister if he can tell us now or probably submit to the committee in writing, how much more money the taxpayers have to pay and until what year—whether it is 2018, 2025—how much more millions of dollars of taxpayers' money would be required to complete payment for this rapid rail transit system that was initiated prior to 2010? I asked two simple questions.

Mr. Chairman: Minister of Works and Infrastructure.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: It is the same rapid rail project. [*Crosstalk*] Yes, I confirm that \$58,716,000 has been set aside—

Mr. Chairman: Calm, calm, let us cool it. [*Continuous crosstalk*]

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, \$716,000 has been set aside and I will provide the information as to what is the balance that has to be paid after this year.

Mr. Chairman: All right, I think we have exhausted—yes.

Dr. Rowley: As the Minister provides that information which I am sure will be very useful, could the Minister indicate in detail exactly what was requested and what was paid for by those sums? And whether, in fact, that assignment was funded by loan funds and whether in fact any of these numbers mentioned are in relation to the loan being paid off?

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Chaguanas West.

Mr. Warner: I just want to remind the Minister, Mr. Chairman, I heard La Brea called and also Point Fortin, but Chaguanas West also wants to know under URP infrastructure, the number of contracts that were issued in Chaguanas West, the name of the contractors and the amount for each one.

Mr. Chairman: Diego Martin West would require that too.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Mr. Chairman, may I ask a question under URP infrastructure?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, I recognize the Member for St. Joseph and then Point Fortin and then the Member for Barataria/San Juan.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Thank you. Minister, under URP Infrastructure, is it possible to tell the finance committee the policy for starting projects in the constituency of St. Joseph—

Mr. Chairman: Where are you?

Mr. Deyalsingh: I am just asking a general question.

Mr. Chairman: No, you cannot do that, out of order right now.

Mr. Deyalsingh: All right. No problem.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman—

Mr. Chairman: Wait, wait, no, I am not taking any response.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Chair, I would like to go back to 15, the \$1.5 billion loan, I would like to know from whom and the conditionalities attached to that loan. Further, if you said that you have expended \$3.6 billion already and this adds another 1.5, brings us up to, I think, 5.1 and if this project is to end next year, where exactly would you find—there is no provision made for it here and you are saying that this highway would end in 2015 but I am not seeing the provision for it.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: The \$1.5 billion loan is now being negotiated. All right? The provision is—

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: But you have terms of arrangements.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: A payment will be due sometime in this fiscal year and—

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: But based on what?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan:—we are making a provision for it, that once we take the loan, certain costs have to be met so the provision is made. It does not mean to say that we are going to just take \$1.5 billion and hand it to somebody but you have to have the money available to make sure that you can continue your project.

I did not get an opportunity to answer a question from the Member for Chaguanas West when he asked about the number of projects.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: No, no, you have not finished me. But I cannot understand—

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Chaguanas West and Chaguanas East fall under region 12 of the URP, and I will provide the information for the hon. Member, but just to tell you, for fiscal 2013/2014, 208 projects have been done Chaguanas West and East.

Mr. Warner: No, I asked for a list.

Mr. Chairman: The final question under transfers in your name and then we are moving on.

Dr. Khan: Mr. Chairman, on 011, 07, I am just calculating between 2013—

Mr. Chairman: What is the question?

Dr. Khan: The question is that: where is this rapid rail transit system located in Trinidad and Tobago?

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, but I think he responded to that. Let us go on. Sub-Head 09, Development Programme; Item 001, Pre-Investment; Item 003, Economic Infrastructure; Item 005, Multi-Sectoral and Other Services; Infrastructure Development Fund. I recognize the Member for St. Joseph, then I recognize the Member for Diego Martin Central and the Member for La Brea in that order and then the Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Under the Development Programme, Item 09, 2014—

Mr. Chairman: I am under Infrastructure Development Programme, I have not gone ahead.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Yes, Sir, that is where I am, on page 188 of Infrastructure Development Programme. I am asking if any of these funds are allocated to restart all of the URP projects in the constituency of St. Joseph which were stopped on November 05, 2013 and why should a Member of Parliament have to resubmit all those URP projects under this Development Fund which were started for a by-election and which mysteriously stopped on November 05, and when I go to URP I am told there are no funds. How then were there funds to start it and there are no funds now to continue it? Could the Minister tell me if all those pre-by-election projects will continue?

Mr. Chairman: Is that related to this or this is another matter?

Mr. Deyalsingh: Definitely, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Let me recognize the Member for Diego Martin Central, please.

Dr. Browne: Two things, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I am requesting the same list for URP with respect to Diego Martin—I would suggest for all the constituencies on this Bench. That is number one. Secondly, what Sub-Head have you arrived? You have just called several, I just want to be clear.

Mr. Chairman: We are on the Development Programme under the infrastructure, it begins on page 189.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Chairman, am I going to get an answer to my question?

Mr. Chairman: No, he has taken note and he will respond to you in a short while.

Dr. Browne: Well, my question is on the IDF so when you get there, I will ask.

Mr. Chairman: No, we are here at the IDF so could you tell us what your question is.

Dr. Browne: Okay, well, I am on page 299.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, I am on IDF.

Dr. Browne: You are on Consolidated Fund, that is why I asked, you know.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, I apologize, we are on the Development Programme. Continue, hon. Member.

Dr. Browne: So can I ask my question on the IDF now?

Mr. Chairman: No, we are not on that as yet.

Dr. Browne: Well, I am telling you that is where my question lies.

Mr. Chairman: Anybody else on Development Programme? Yes, I recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Imbert: Yes, page 193, 005, Multi-Sectoral and Other Services, Public Buildings, 238. What is the expected time frame for the completion of the restoration of the President's residence?

Mr. Chairman: Any further questions, hon. Member?

Dr. Browne: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: No, not you, the hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East. Member for Diego Martin North/East, any further questions?

Mr. Imbert: Not on this, on the IDF.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, we will come back to that. Could you answer, hon. Minister?

1.15 p.m.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, as you know, that building collapsed on the eve of the election, due to very poor maintenance and management by the former administration. Since then we have been engaged in a process of protecting whatever assets are there to protect, in terms of the building because we have been working with the stakeholders, including those who are involved in the matter of historical sites and the preservation of historical sites. One of their

concerns was whether we are going to restore the building as close as possible to its original state and that is something we have adhered to because we believe that the building is of historical value and should be so restored.

Several things have been done. One, a temporary roof has been—
[*Interruption*]

Mr. Imbert: I did not ask that.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, but the Minister is responding.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, I have five minutes and I am responding.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, exactly. He has five minutes.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, a temporary roof has been built over the building.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, yes, he has five minutes.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: A dilapidation survey is being completed and as I speak that report is at hand. It is being done by Bernard Mackay Architects.

Mr. Chairman: Member for Diego Martin West, help me “nah”, please.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: You all were there for 40 years and you caused the building to go into disarray and fall down. It was a shame that you had a President in a house—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Chairman: Minister, Minister, please. Member for Diego Martin West, I am going to retire Members if they continue this way. [*Interruption and crosstalk*] I know, I know, I know. I am trying to complete. Yes, I know but I am trying to complete.

Miss Mc Donald: “Or gor man that high-shrilled voice.”

Mr. Chairman: Members, Members, Members. Member for Port of Spain South, I need your co-operation please and Member for Diego Martin West, I need your support.

Dr. Rowley: You have it, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you. Hon. Minister.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: I might have a high-shrilled voice but there are a lot of people who love my singing in this country. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Chairman: Continue, hon. Minister.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, we expect that the contract for the actual work will be awarded by March 2015.

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: And that process is well on the way.

Mr. Chairman: All right, good.

Mr. Imbert: No, no, no. I asked him when does he expect the restoration—
[*Interruption*]

Mr. Chairman: He has answered to the best of his ability.

Mr. Imbert: No, Mr. Chairman, he did not answer me.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Chaguanas West.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, I will answer him.

Mr. Imbert: You did not.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: I will answer him. The construction work is expected to take between 18 to 24 months.

Mr. Imbert: Now you have answered me.

Mr. Chairman: All right, Member for Chaguanas West.

Mr. Warner: Page 191, No. 163. Can the Minister advise on what is the cost to continually maintain the highway beautification programme for Chaguanas to Charlieville?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister?

Mr. Warner: And why are there no cable barriers installed in that area?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, we are installing new cable barriers. A contract has been awarded by the Central Tenders Board. Mr. Chairman, I would like to say something here. The cost of maintaining the cable barriers, I do not have it with me, but I can tell you it is very expensive. It is a good idea because so far we have had nearly 400 hits on those cable barriers, and of those 400 hits, approximately half of those were prevented from going over the median. So you cannot quantify even the savings, in terms of lives, that would have been saved. And it is a very long time that you would have heard anyone die by a car crossing the median on that Solomon Hochoy Highway going south, because of the cable

barriers. And it was a very good idea and it ought to be complimented and we are going to continue it.

Mr. Chairman, the problem is this—*[Interruption]*

Miss Mc Donald: And what about the one in—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Chairman: Please, Member, please, Member.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan:—that contractors bid very low on the project and the Central Tenders Board, of course, continues to give out the contracts to the lowest tenderer without taking into consideration the opinions offered by the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure officials that the contractor who is winning this job all the time is a contractor who does not have the capacity, it seems, to continue to do the maintenance by keeping the inventories that are required. And, therefore, I am saying this publicly because the public might think that the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure cannot get the job done, in terms of maintenance but these are proprietary systems, as I understand it, and the contractor has to provide the maintenance for the particular cable barrier when it breaks down and that contractor, I must say, has been negligent. But yet the CTB has not been taking our opinion into consideration, in terms of awarding the very contractor jobs at these low prices.

Mr. Warner: Mr. Chairman, my question has not been answered.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, well two more questions and then Development Programme, Members for St. Joseph and La Brea and then we go to Infrastructure.

Mr. Deyalsingh: I am on page 191, Sub-Head 15, line Item 221, Roads and Bridges, \$15 million estimate for 2015. My direct question to the hon. Minister: is any of this money allocated to the constituency of St. Joseph to restart URP projects on roads, et cetera, which were stopped right after the by-election of November 04?

Mr. Chairman: All right. He will answer you. Member for La Brea.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, this Minister operates with a certain philosophy, that the interest of a citizen of this country must in no way at all be compromised at any time and, therefore, if there is need to do work, to satisfy the needs of citizens in any part of this country, the Ministry will respond accordingly consistent with the budget that the Ministry has. *[Desk thumping]*

Mr. Jeffrey: Mr. Chairman, coming back still at 221, I would like to find out whether or not that La Brea to Point Fortin Main Road and the Quarry to Erin Road is featured in that \$9 million for 2014/2015.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: What is the second one you named?

Mr. Jeffrey: La Brea to Point Fortin, particularly La Brea at this point in time and Quarry to Erin Main Road. Those two roads are in a deplorable condition and need urgent attention.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, the Member of Parliament for La Brea will know that I keep responding to his requirements. Recently, for example he asked that Boyack Terrace be rehabilitated and paved and that project is now being done through the URP. We also did work in Vance River and we re-paved a very big section of road there and recently we commenced rehabilitation works in the area of La Brea, where the road continuously folds up.

Mr. Chairman, having said that, and the Member making his request here, the Member made a statement on radio this week when he said that we are paving places in Valsayn and not dealing with La Brea. I want to say that we pave all over this country and we do not discriminate, and the evidence of the work done under my Ministry will show that across this country work is being done, including making up for the rural neglect and rural underdevelopment of infrastructure that took place under the PNM.

Mr. Chairman: Two final questions, the Member for Port of Spain South and La Horquetta/Talparo and we go to Infrastructure.

Miss Mc Donald: Mr. Chairman, I take serious umbrage to that; this Minister is paving roads all across this country. The Minister is well aware because I have been begging this Minister about fixing Plaisance Road.

Miss Roopnarine: Which Heading are you on?

Miss Mc Donald: Which Heading "ah" on? Roads and Bridges, Ma'am.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, Roads and Bridges.

Miss Mc Donald: Roads and Bridges. Plaisance Road, in John John, St. Paul Street, Clifton Street, Basilon Street, Siparia Hill.

Miss Cox: East Port of Spain.

Miss Mc Donald: The whole of East Port of Spain and he has done nothing. Do you know what this Minister said?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Chairman.

Miss Mc Donald: This Minister said to me—allow me, please. I allowed you to speak. Mr. Chairman, this Minister told me until he could get a contractor to go in Plaisance Road he cannot do it because of whatever it is, coward tax or whatever it is. The point about it is we live here in Trinidad and Tobago. It is a road here in Trinidad and Tobago. Make every effort to get it done and he has not—I have not one road dug in the last four years.

Mr. Chairman: Allow the Minister to answer.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, the Member for Port of Spain South is not being totally truthful. I answered a question in the Parliament, which was filed about roads and I pointed out that we did Bason Street and we did St. Paul. It is a fact that we have difficulty getting contractors who want to go and work in those areas.

Mr. Chairman, last year a contractor refused to work in the Belmont/Gonzales area because they went and taxed the contractor and the contractor had to pay \$30,000 just to get his equipment back out of there and could not start a number of roads in that area and contractors are refusing to go in and work in those areas because they are afraid of the loss of their equipment.

Mr. Chairman, just in fiscal 2013/2014, in Laventille East/Morvant, under the PURE Programme we have spent \$9,350,000 to pave. Between when we came into office and to date, we have spent \$28.477 million in that area.

Laventille West—*[Interruption]*

Miss Cox: Roads, roads.

Mr. Chairman: Please, please.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: This fiscal year we have spent \$10,972,000 for a total so far of \$36.874 million in Laventille West and Laventille East.

In Port of Spain South, for fiscal 2013/2014, we have spent \$23,636,000 for a total since we came into office, of \$42,514,950.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for La Horquetta/Talparo and last question.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: You all do not know your constituencies.

Mr. Chairman: Order, order! I recognize the Member. That is the last question and we go to Infrastructure after that.

Miss Mc Donald: Look how long I am begging. You have no shame!

Mr. Chairman: Please, Member, please. You cannot say that. Withdraw that.

Miss Mc Donald: He knows my heart.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, I recognize the Member for La Horquetta/Talparo. Yes, continue.

Mr. Seemungal: Mr. Chairman, page 191, 221, with respect to Roads and Bridges. This is to the Minister. Minister, the Talparo Bridge, Minister, a bridge which is an over 100-year-old wooden bridge, is being replaced right now with a new concrete bridge. Do you have sufficient funds under this allocation to complete that particular bridge, because I know it would not be completed in this fiscal year?

The second question is: why did it take so long, after 50 years of Independence to replace the bridge? The last question: how many bridges have you completed in this year and how many bridges do you expect in the allocation of 2015?

Mr. Chairman: Which Head are you on?

Mr. Seemungal: The same Head, 221: Roads and Bridges.

Mr. Chairman: All right, Minister could you answer that quickly so we can go on to Infrastructure?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Yes, Mr. Chairman, the Talparo Main Road Bridge is 95 per cent complete. The only reason the bridge was not completed, Mr. Chairman, was the shortage of bitumen. Now that we have TLA out of Lake Asphalt, that bridge will shortly be paved and they will enjoy the facility of that bridge.

Mr. Chairman: All right, we go on to Infrastructure. No, we cannot continue. No, no, no Infrastructure Development. [*Continuous interruption and crosstalk*] No, no, no, no. We are going to Infrastructure. Anyone for Infrastructure? I recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East, otherwise I am going to put the question now. I have recognized the Member for Diego Martin North/East. Infrastructure. I have to take charge, otherwise we are going to go on and go on. Continue, Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Imbert: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Page 299, Item 260 under Sub-Head 15: P.O.S - East/West Corridor Transportation Project. Minister, you may have trouble with the numbers. Page 299, Sub-Head 15, Item 260: P.O.S. - East/West Corridor Transportation Project. Are you with me Minister?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: I am with you.

Mr. Imbert: Could you tell me what is the status of the award of the contract for the flyover at the Kay Donna intersection?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, the Member of Parliament had raised that question in a Motion on the Adjournment in this Parliament earlier this year. I would not like to say anything that will prejudice the outcome of the award of that tender. NIDCO Tendering Committee and NIDCO is proceeding with that. When they are finished with their evaluations and the process, they are going to make a recommendation, as they do, to the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure and we would be in a better position to advise the Member. But in the meantime, the process is continuing and the evaluations continue apace.

Mr. Chairman: The Members for Diego Martin Central and Laventille West. Member for Diego Martin Central, I recognize you.

Dr. Browne: Member for Diego Martin Central, thank you. My question is under Sub-Item 254, Diego Martin Highway - Wendy Fitzwilliam Boulevard to Diego Martin Main Road. [*Crosstalk*] Allow me, please.

Mr. Chairman: Please, yes, allow the Member to speak.

Dr. Browne: The Revised Estimate for 2014 indicates \$6.5 million. I am interested to know what value the citizens got for that \$6.5 million and then \$4.5 million is estimated for 2015. I am interested in knowing exactly what is that going to be funding, particularly as this is known to be a very controversial prospective project, which is unlikely to be initiated in the near future. I am saying that as the Member of Parliament.

I have other questions, but I would like him to address that and I would ask my other questions.

1.30 p.m.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Yes, firstly, the consultancy was not awarded in 2014 and, therefore, that money was not utilized, it was vired for other things, but the consultancy will be awarded this year. The consultancy for the \$4.5 million will be utilized to do the designs. You cannot do a major piece of highway work like that without proper designs. The designs will be completed and that work will be started.

Dr. Browne: All right. Well, I have a follow-up before my other questions. Are you going to be doing the design—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Sorry, feasibility, feasibility, yes, sorry.

Dr. Browne: Oh, all right. I have other questions, Mr. Chairman, and I will proceed before we have the—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Chairman: The Member for Laventille West.

Dr. Browne: No, may I continue with my questions, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Chairman: Okay, continue. [*Crosstalk*]

Dr. Browne: 258, Dualling of Diego Martin Highway from Victoria Gardens to Acton Court. This certainly appears to be the highway expansion project—

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: It is.

Dr. Browne:—which we are pleased that has been opened. My question is with respect to—

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Very good, very good, glad you are pleased. [*Desk thumping*]

Dr. Browne: I said it in the budget debate. Why are you carrying on? My question is with respect to the 2015 allocation of \$15 million, and I would like to know what that would entail? Does that include—there is a major issue, the Highways Division is aware of it with respect to the traffic lights that have been put on this new highway. We are removing traffic lights, Minister, from other highways, and we have put a major traffic light on Diego Martin Highway. Is there anything in this \$15 million that will help us to solve that ongoing challenge? Secondly, does that include the issue of—the \$15 million—a walkover at Franklyn Road which the residents have been requesting? Then I have one further question on another item after the Minister answers this.

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, we are not coming back. So it is better you raise all your questions now. Yeah, yeah, you raise your questions, because we are going.

Dr. Browne: The next question is with respect to Sub-Item 276, this Landslip Repairs Programme. I would like a listing of landslips that have been repaired in all areas of Trinidad and Tobago under this programme, including Diego Martin Central. I want to take this opportunity to express my dissatisfaction—the Diego Martin valley has many landslips—the dissatisfaction with the pace of any repairs, and I am seeing funds being allocated. I will like a listing. So I would like some answers—

Mr. Chairman: All right, the hon. Minister.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, a very good question was asked about the traffic lights and so on. The completion of the Diego Martin extension has to now be supplemented with another project, which is the construction of a vehicular and pedestrian bridge, that will take care of that traffic light problem. You will notice under 258, we have put—sorry, under 256, we are putting funding there in order to begin the feasibility and if possible, initial design works of that, and that will take you in the area of where West Mall is.

Dr. Browne: Right, well, Mr. Chairman, I just want to clarify, because I am aware of that aspect—

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, but we cannot take clarification at this time.

Dr. Browne: No, Mr. Chairman, he is responding to the wrong question. So I have to clarify on behalf of my constituents. That response does not take into account the issue of the traffic lights which is at the Four Roads area. So it is two different challenges we are addressing. I am talking about the major traffic lights at the Four Roads area. He is talking about at West Mall. So I have to clarify.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: I am advised by the Director of Highways that they are studying that problem, and what they are doing is trying to do a traffic study there that will allow them to rephase the light, but they are aware of the situation and the problem.

Dr. Browne: That is not included in this \$15 million.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Laventille West.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: No. Well, it does not take \$15 million to do that, but since he asked about the \$15 million, that is to complete payments on the highway.

Dr. Browne: I am awaiting an answer on my question on the landslip programme, Chairman of this Committee.

Mr. Chairman: The Member for Laventille West. I recognize the Member for Laventille West.

Mr. Hypolite: Thank you, Chair.

Dr. Browne: Chairman, I am awaiting an answer on my question on the landslip. [*Continuous interruption*]

Mr. Chairman: Yes, he will provide you with a list, okay? Continue Member for Laventille West.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: The landslip, he wants the answer. Can I give him?

Mr. Chairman: Do you want to give him it now?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: I am giving him it now. I tend to forget these things too easily. Mr. Chairman, under the Landslip Reconstruction Programme, 486 landslips were identified to be done over a period of five years, at a cost of \$418 million. Mr. Chairman, this is a new programme by the way, and [*Interruption*] we have started. So in 2014, six landslips were awarded and right now, we have just tendered and awarded 22 landslips.

Dr. Browne: How many in Diego Martin?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: And we are about to tender another set again, Mr. Chairman. I will have to tell you that—

Mr. Chairman: All right, you will have to supply him with a list of those landslips. I recognize the Member for Laventille West.

Mr. Hypolite: Three short questions, Mr. Chairman, 260. Laventille West falls in or makes up part of Port of Spain East. Can the Minister indicate exactly what this Port of Spain South East-West Corridor Transportation Project is all about? And while that is so, can he also give a list of the projects that would have formed the \$10 million road repairs that he made mention of?

The second one be it the Port of Spain—Sub-Item 277, Port of Spain Northern Valleys Link Road. Can the Minister also explain what is that Project? And under 270, can the Minister also give a list of all the roads and the amount of money spent on fixing roads in Siparia? [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Siparia or Siparia Hill?

Mr. Hypolite: Siparia constituency. [*Interruption*]

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, the Port of Spain East-West Corridor Transportation Project included things like the Uriah Butler Interchange, the Aranguez Overpass. We have also had other widening of roads, the St. Joseph River, which was widened, a number of projects as you will see there. Mr. Chairman, by the way because of that project, we can now effectively put on the electronic boards at Beetham, just outside the market, the exact number of minutes it will take you to get from the Beetham to the interchange. We can do that now, that is being done. So commuters see that on a daily basis as they travel there.

The corridor project will include now, the Churchill Roosevelt Highway to the St. Joseph River being widened. Mr. Chairman, right outside of PTSC, you will see

we are widening the bridge there, so that it will allow three lanes coming out of Port of Spain, and that will quicken the traffic out of Port of Spain. The installation of traffic control and surveillance system, within the corridor from the Uriah Butler Highway to Colville Street, Port of Spain.

We recently announced that we are going to be putting more cameras along the East-West Corridor and particularly the highway up to Piarco, and down to Couva, and that will be monitored by the National Transport Traffic Management System we have at the Ministry itself.

Also we have done a pilot survey study using the red light enforcement at Wrightson Road. You would be amazed to know how many people break the red lights there, including Members of Parliament, [*Laughter*] including the police, including the regiment and so on and so forth. Then we are also about to start a project, spot speed enforcement, also on the highways. All of these form part and parcel of the East-West Corridor Transportation Project.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, I recognize the Member for La Brea.

Mr. Jeffrey: La Brea, right. Mr. Chairman—

Mr. Chairman: Then the Member for Arouca/Maloney, then the Member for Chaguanas West, then you. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Jeffrey: 276, Landslip Repair Programme. I want to find out from the hon. Minister whether or not the landslips in Upper Salazar Trace, 14 Mc Carthy Street in Vance River, Upper Sobo Extension, La Union in Erin and Lot 10 Village, whether they are in that allocation for 2015?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, let me say this, eh. I will provide the list, but at the same time, some landslips have a higher priority than others. If you go on Realize Road right now, Mr. Chairman, a house valued over \$1.5 million has collapsed because of the landslip. Two other houses are threatened in the same way. [*Interruption*]

If you go on to Christian Avenue, in Plaisance Park, you will see that 10 houses there that if we do not put a \$9 million wall behind those houses, those 10 houses are going to collapse in Pointe-a-Pierre, as we are doing now. So some landslips you have to enter urgently. So if it is in the Member of Parliament's area in La Brea, there is an urgent requirement to go and do work there, Mr. Chairman, I want to give him the assurance that we are going to go in there and do the work as is necessary.

Mr. Chairman: All right. The Member for Arouca/Maloney, please.

Miss Hospedales: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Page 298, Sub-Head 003, Sub-Item 003, Shore of Peace Coastal Cliff Stabilization Works. Mr. Chair, there was a \$2 million allocation for 2014. I want to know what has accounted for \$22 million allocation in 2015. And if the Minister could provide for us a breakdown of the work to be done and the cost of each item, whether the contract was awarded? If it was awarded, who is the contractor? And if he can indicate to us if this is the final or total cost of the project.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Chair, I have a question relating to this—[*Continuous interruption*]

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, in the area where the Shore of Peace is, just to be very specific on that one, the original road also that led to the Shore of Peace has been washed away by the sea, and the rate of erosion there has been very, very high. I toured with the Member for Point Fortin, and the Member for Point Fortin will tell you that several projects are being started in that area also, in terms of coastal erosion.

In Cedros and Icacos we are losing—I am told by the coastal people—about two metres of shore per year, annually. It is very, very bad. The Shore of Peace involves the building of 576 metres of wall, in addition to the other works that are necessary there, which is bringing a lot of rocks and so on to break the waves coming in there. So it is a very extensive piece of work there, and the price—it might not be—it might be higher than this, because we have now completed the tendering process and the tenders are being evaluated by NIDCO for that particular project, plus the one in Manzanilla.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Chaguanas West and [*Interruption*] also the Member for Diego Martin North/East. Listen, I had a list of all the hands [*Crosstalk*] that were up. I am coming. [*Continuous interruption*] You are coming. Your name is here, it is coming. Just exercise some patience. Your turn is coming. Yes, I have it here. Your name is here. I recognize the Member for Chaguanas West.

Mr. Warner: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: The Member for Diego Martin North/East and then the Member for Caroni East. [*Continuous interruption*]

Mr. Warner: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, are you ready?

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Yes.

Mr. Warner: 258, on page 299, Diego Martin Highway, have you paid all the persons whose lands you acquired for this highway? 258.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: No, not all have been completed, I am advised by the Director of Highways.

Mr. Warner: But I will like to ask you, Mr. Minister, some of them have been owed for more than three years. The highway has been opened, can you please—

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: My own personal position is, it is very unfair to owe anybody whose land you have taken for that length of time, and I will make every effort in the Ministry to ensure that these matters are resolved.

Mr. Imbert: Page 299, Item 247, could we get a list, a breakdown of the projects in 2014 and 2015 on Item 247? Similarly, Item 275, could we get a breakdown of the expenditure in 2014 and projections for 2015? And on page 300, could you tell us why Item 273, the Ministry has abandoned the restoration of Mille Fleurs?

Mr. Chairman: Do you want to deal with the last one, because you would provide—

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Because that is under the Ministry of National Diversity—

Mr. Imbert: There is nothing going on there.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: And UDeCOTT.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Page 298, 003, and Sub-Head P from 001 to 008. I see a lot of shoreline stabilization works are being going—estimated. I see a revised estimate for 2014, which showed some work, but I see nothing for 2013. Could the Minister tell us what has been happening to shoreline stabilization works in so many areas of Trinidad prior to 2014.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: I think that is a most important question. It is a situation that the Ministry recognized that needed attention, and a coastal unit in the Ministry has now been set up, and we recently got PMCD from the Ministry of Public Administration, the structure and we are now employing people also in that unit. This is why the work has intensified and been expanded to this extent. So thank you very much, because it is something that was prior to 2013 and 2010, very little was done in order to deal with these matters.

Appropriation Bill, 2014

Tuesday, September 23, 2014

Mr. Chairman: Yes, hon. Members, the question is that the sum of \$1,314,830,000 for Head 69, the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure, stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 69 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

1.45 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I want to thank the hon. Minister and his team for being here. Before we break for lunch, let me advise: we have the hon. Minister of National Security and the police waiting in line. They have been here for some time now. We have to reduce your lunch break. We are going for 30 minutes, half an hour, because I understand that the Security Chiefs have some very urgent matters to deal with and they want to be here with us and I do not want them to leave here. That would be very bad. So to accommodate them, I would ask Members, not to rush your lunch but just to take half an hour and we resume at 2.20 p.m. sharp.

Before you leave, let us hear the hon. Minister.

Hon. Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I simply want to thank my technical team, the PS and so on, for being here and for all the hard work they put together to make sure that this presentation was effective. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Chairman: The meeting of the Standing Finance Committee is suspended until 2.20 p.m.

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

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

Mr. Chairman: The meeting of the Standing Finance Committee will now be resumed. We go to:

Head 22.

I now invite the hon. Minister of National Security, if he so desires, to make a brief opening statement for no more than five minutes, giving us an overview of your priority areas for fiscal 2014/2015.

Hon. Griffith: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The percentage allocation in the Ministry of National Security for this upcoming year, as what we have seen for the past decade in this country, is on par with what we have seen worldwide in comparison to other countries' national security budgets in tandem with their annual allocation. Usually, in countries it is between 6 per cent and 15 per cent; the United Kingdom, US, China, Jamaica, it is 11 per cent/12 per cent. In Trinidad and Tobago, we have kept within that percentage for national security in your annual budget, of about 10 per cent.

What we are doing is not so much pumping in millions of dollars into national security assets, but what we are looking at is to ensure that there are proper principles of proper management, leadership, training and measured performance. What we have seen at home, in dealing with situations of gang warfare, the attempted coup in 1990, improvised explosive devices and now with global terrorism, is the importance for national security. It is unfortunate that some may see security as being a necessary evil rather than ensuring the most fundamental rights of citizens.

What we have done with this budget, it is a continuation of where we have been. Last year, there was a reduction of all serious crimes by over 30 per cent and we intend to continue along that pattern, bearing in mind that the barometer to measure crime really involves murders and because of that we do know the importance of dealing with that.

The budget was geared in mind to prepare for any eventuality. It is better that we prepare now than later. If we wait until later, it will cost us not just in dollars and cents that we are seeing—I am talking about today—but lives that could be lost.

So we have looked at the important aspects to ensure three things. First, we are looking at the asset acquisition and the asset acquisition was based on research. It was based on data and it was based on us actually working with the main stakeholders, not the politicians that just came up with any crime plans. We were never involved in the crime plan aspect, but to look at the asset acquisition in tandem with what our stakeholders required, that being the members of the law enforcement agencies.

The asset acquisition also involves a second—then we moved into the second part which had to do with manpower strength. You must have the manpower strength allocation to move in tandem with the asset acquisition. And the third had

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to do with the training. The training is very critical to ensure that the manpower acquisition—they will be properly trained to utilize the assets that were provided for them.

So we would see a variety of assets to deal with all systems we have for law enforcement and it will vary from a very simple, yet mandatory requirement to protect our law enforcement officers in times of any crisis such as armoured personnel carriers and it will then move, at a high end, to things that could deal with border protection and that will involve aspects such as, again, interceptors, hovercraft, unmanned aerial vehicles, new helicopters, and more effective radars. The National Operations Centre, which is something that will be the communicational platform for all of the different systems that you will see in the Ministry of National Security.

With that, as I said, there is a lot of work we put in to ensure that the manpower strength will equate with the asset acquisition and also marketing. Marketing is very important because the public must be aware of what is happening. It is not so much crime reduction. We can reduce crime, but there is also a different aspect towards the perception and fear of crime. So we are also putting a heavy emphasis to ensure that that perception and fear of crime is also removed.

There would be concerns that some may say that we are going into overkill or doing too much, but I prefer that we do too much than to be recognized for doing too little or nothing at all and then when it happens, it will then be too late.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I do not think any more needs to be said, so I think I can wrap up here in five minutes.

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

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the sum \$2,692,486,170 for Head 22, the Ministry of National Security, 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

Item 001, General Administration

Item 002, Fire Service

I recognize the Member for Laventille East/Morvant.

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Miss Cox: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, Sub-Item 01, Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance: I understand that this includes vacant posts. I would like to know how many vacant posts exist in the Fire Service Division.

Hon. Griffith: You mean the regular members of the fire service?

Miss Cox: Yeah.

Hon. Griffith: I do not have the exact number. Now, I can also give you, apart from the Fire Service, the auxiliary fire officers. There is also a vacancy for that as well, so I can also provide that.

Miss Cox: You can provide that later on, but I just want to say, concerning the promotion in the Fire Service, I ask that question because, Minister, do you know that the last promotion in the rank of Fire Station Officer was in 2005 and the last promotion in the lower ranks was in 2010? I think you need to look at the vacant posts situation.

Hon. Griffith: We are looking at that because we also have the same situation with the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and, through the Second Division, there are concerns and it goes with this system of concern pertaining to seniority and performance, which comes first and it has affected—we do know the importance of morale. We speak a lot about the Commissioner of Police appointment, but we also have to look at all the other aspects with the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and the Fire Service. We are aware of that concern. We are not seeing that with the defence force.

Miss Cox: Concerning 03, Overtime, I see there is a large increase in overtime. What accounts for this?

Hon. Griffith: For Fire?

Miss Cox: For Fire. I am still under Fire Service.

Hon. Griffith: Overtime?

Miss Cox: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: That is on page 101: 02, 03. 111.

Miss Cox: 111, 03. What accounts for that?

Hon. Griffith: For the increase?

Miss Cox: Yes, this is a big increase in overtime, Fire Service.

2.30 p.m.

Hon. Griffith: It involves the operational officers. They have a 42-hour work week, and now they are being paid for the extra hours. Again, it is similar to the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service where there would be situations that once they work over the work hours, they would be paid the extra time.

Miss Cox: But that has always existed, so I want to know why is this increased now.

Hon. Griffith: Well, I do know that we have had situations where the officers, they were never actually paid, and we have had back pay that was just backing up for a long while back, and it has caused some concerns, and it even caused reluctance with certain members of the protective services wanting to come forward and work those extra hours because of the delay in the actual payment.

Miss Cox: Concerning allowances here 04, I wanted to know if the fire service is entitled to the \$1 million for their family if they are killed in the line of duty. Are they entitled to that?

Hon. Griffith: Yes. It is not just members of the Ministry of National Security, it would involve, in the Ministry of National Security, all persons in the operational aspects of law enforcement. That would involve the police, members of the defence force, members of the fire services, but also members of the Trinidad and Tobago Prisons Service which is under the Ministry of Justice.

We still have to deal with—you see, there is a difference with killed in the line of duty and—it is not just a situation where the person was killed whilst in operation. He might very well be in a car accident whilst on patrol. So we are just trying to sift this to ensure that this will be dealt with in a proper manner and that those persons, the spouse will actually be provided with that support based on those persons giving their lives for their country.

Mr. Chairman: All right. We go on to Item 005, Regiment; Item 006, Coast Guard. I recognize the Member for Laventille East/Morvant.

Miss Cox: I just want clarification on Sub-Item 24 concerning Allowances—Direct Charges. There is an increase of \$15 million, what accounts for that increase?

Mr. Chairman: Which one are you on my dear? You are on Item 006?

Miss Cox: Yes, 24, under allowances.

Hon. Griffith: Okay, I will get that information for you.

Mr. Chairman: All right. Are there any other matters? Can we move on?

Miss Cox: Yes, we can move on.

Mr. Chairman: All right. We go on to Item 007, Immigration; 015, Cadet Force. I recognize the Member for Laventille West.

Mr. Hypolite: Yes, Mr. Chairman. We continue to preach that one of the ways of reducing crime—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Chairman: Where are you on? We need to be guided.

Mr. Hypolite: 01.

Mr. Chairman: 01 under Item 015, Cadet Force.

Mr. Hypolite: Yes. We continue to preach that one of the ways of reducing crime in the country is by putting a unit in every secondary school. Is this \$950,000 sufficient to hire or have sufficient staff to man that organization?

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister of National Security.

Hon. Griffith: Yes, Chairman, what you are speaking about, we are actually having meetings now with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of National Security with that aspect to ensure that we can have a proper establishment of the presence of the cadets in every school. It does not mean that there is going to be an escalation to any great extent pertaining to budget allocation, because the whole concept of the cadets, it is not a massive expense where you require major fixed assets of any substance. But I think the important question is about the increased presence of cadets in different schools. I think the Ministry of National Security, we have stunted it to some extent that not as much presence we have in the secondary school which is why we are now working hand in hand with the Ministry of Education to deal with that.

Mr. Chairman: All right, we go on to Item 016, the Air Guard. We go to Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services, Item 001, General Administration. I recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East—no, I recognize the Member for Laventille East/Morvant; then the Member for Diego Martin North/East, then the Member for Chaguanas West and then the Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Miss Cox: Mr. Chairman, I give way to the Member.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Member for Diego Martin West.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, I take it that we are under 02 on page 115.

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Dr. Rowley: Okay. Mr. Chairman, I just want to make a general observation to the Minister, and I notice that he has brought to the House our esteemed heads of divisions, so I just want to make an observation to him first before I put a few questions. When I look at the column increase and the column decrease, I notice that there is a consistent pattern of increases in this Ministry. Notwithstanding the requirement to make sure that we are properly secured, both at the personal level and at the level of the State, we have to be cognizant of the fact that we do not have unlimited resources and, therefore, in every area, including the Ministry of National Security, notwithstanding the requirement and the pressing needs to improve our performance in this area, that we just cannot be increasing everything, because against that background of increases, we still have a general feeling in the communities, and it is commonly reported that you talk to the police and you hear they do not have enough cars. You go to the station, not enough manpower in the station and things like that.

So, I come to the point of 09 under Vehicles and Equipment—and this is the Ministry of National Security, this is not in the departments like the army, the coast guard, this is the Ministry of National Security. What is the explanation for this increase in rental and lease of vehicles, which in 2013 was at \$85 million? We budgeted \$122 million in 2014. I am seeing a revised estimate of \$119 million, and we are making a provision of \$125 million for 2015, and this is the Ministry, the administrative arm of national security. Is there any effort being made to curb expenses in this kind of area and what exactly are we paying for here?

Hon. Griffith: Yes, Chairman, if we are just looking at the vehicles alone, in many instances such as in the intelligence agencies, there will be a host of vehicles that would be used for covert operatives, and that would be involving members of the defence force, the special branch, the SSA, where vehicles are rented. It is a very high cost. We are looking at doing a proper audit to ensure basically—the difficulty with these things, for example, you cannot purchase these vehicles, because you have to have a rotation. Now, I do not want to say too much more on this to cause any security breaches, but there would be expenses along these lines such as rental of vehicles for intelligence agencies and other

aspects. Sometimes, as much as we would try to cut the fat, sometimes there would be mandatory requirements to deal with aspects such as those.

Looking at the other elements, I know we actually have also vehicles for other aspects of secondary crime prevention measures such as the systems we have through the Hoop of Life and other systems, so that these vehicles would be rented. So even right now, sometimes it is over \$2 million to \$3 million a month just for rental of vehicles for covert agencies alone. So the cost can be high at times.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Minister, what I am saying is, if you look at the increase between 2013 and 2015 as a percentage, it is a significant increase and to what extent are we using competitive arrangements to get the best value for money? Or is it that the people that you are renting from are fixed in the system in some way and they just keep pushing the price up. Are you sure that you are getting the benefit of competition for the vehicles you want in the service? If you are renting a hundred vehicles and you open it up to proper competition in fairness and transparency—I am not asking you to divulge any national security situation, because there is no national security consideration about renting vehicles. How do you get the benefit of competition to ensure that this significant increase in cost is controlled?

Hon. Griffith: Yes.

Dr. Rowley: What is the procedure for acquiring these vehicles?

Hon. Griffith: Well, we do have in fact—starting next week, we are having a special tender to ensure that we are actually getting the proper vehicles at the best cost.

Dr. Rowley: What is that?

Hon. Griffith: To ensure that we have the vehicles that would be appropriate for the law enforcement agencies at the most appropriate cost. So there is actually a special tender that is actually going out to verify that we have those vehicles that we are speaking about; the renting of the vehicles.

Dr. Rowley: I am not talking here specifically about any type of vehicle, I am talking about competition. It is competition that will give you the best price. I must tell you, there was one time in this country when you were told that only a particular model of vehicle could have carried a particular radio.

Hon. Griffith: Yes.

Dr. Rowley: I am not going there.

Hon. Griffith: Sure.

Dr. Rowley: I am talking about if you have a desire to obtain a certain number—tens or hundreds of vehicles—the only way you are going to control the price is if you operate by having competition. I am asking: what are the procedures that you are using which allow this price to be creeping up in this way?

Hon. Griffith: I think it is not so much the cost per vehicle, but the quantity that keeps going up by the demands of the intelligence agencies but, that again is a small percentage. If you look at the vehicle and equipment, we also had to see about the outstanding arrears owed to TSTT for the fibre-optic connectivity.

Dr. Rowley: We will get there. A hundred and twenty-five million dollars is not a small item. So, I would move on, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Just put on your mike, your mike is not on.

Mr. Imbert: This item is for the rental or lease of vehicles. This item is for the rental and/or lease of vehicles?

Mr. Chairman: The same item.

Hon. Griffith: That is part of it. It also involves paying out the outstanding arrears for the fibre-optic cables.

Mr. Imbert: So there is commingling of things.

Hon. Griffith: Vehicles and equipment, yes.

Mr. Imbert: What amount of this would be rental of vehicles?

Hon. Griffith: You mean for covert agencies?

Mr. Imbert: No, no. You have a total of \$125 million under 09 for the rental or lease of vehicles and equipment. How much of that is for vehicles?

Hon. Griffith: Well, I could tell you that for the covert vehicles alone that alone would be just about \$15 million.

Mr. Imbert: What I am driving at, let us say 50 per cent of it is for vehicles. I am just guessing, right, \$60 million?

Hon. Griffith: No, no, I would not say that. I know definitely about the covert vehicles that would be about \$15 million.

Mr. Imbert: May I ask the question a different way and, perhaps, you could provide the information later on. How many vehicles are you leasing? Total.

Hon. Griffith: About approximately 80 vehicles.

Mr. Imbert: Less than 100? But that would be about \$10 million.

Hon. Griffith: It is about \$10 million to \$15 million.

Mr. Imbert: So could you tell us what the other hundred odd million is for?

Hon. Griffith: One of the things I mentioned was about the outstanding arrears owed to TSTT for the fibre-optic connectivity for the 59 cameras on the surveillance bay on the Uriah Butler Highway. That is one. The cameras itself; acquisition of CCTVs.

Mr. Imbert: Perhaps you could give us a breakdown, a list.

Hon. Griffith: I could bring the breakdown.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Chaguanas West.

Mr. Warner: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I want to go to Item 36, under 02, Goods and Services; 36, Extraordinary Expenditure. Could you tell us what that is please? And also, 62 Promotions, Publicity and Printing; I see that has moved from \$1.6 million in 2013 to now \$12.6 million in 2015. The expenditure from 111 to—\$20 million, sorry, my apologies. So from \$1 million in 2013 to \$20 million in 2015 that is for Promotions, Publicity and Printing, and the extraordinary expenditure from \$111 million in 2013 to \$127.8 million in 2015. That is kind of steep, I must admit. I had planned not to ask any questions, you know, but I have to.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, the hon. Minister.

Hon. Griffith: Yes, Mr. Chairman, the first one, Extraordinary Expenditure. That is the increased allocation for the covert units; information assets required for the covert units. No, we are speaking about the Extraordinary Expenditure.

Mr. Warner: \$127 million?

Hon. Griffith: Yes. The Transnational Organized Crime Unit which was a unit that was virtually made mandatory based on the concerns by our international partners to deal with the concerns of the illegal entry of drugs and, more so, the United Kingdom.

2.45 p.m.

So there was the establishment of the Transnational Organized Crime Unit and that alone was coming up to over \$35 million, and there is also the National Coastal Surveillance Radar Centre for the improvement. Then they have the

Counter-Trafficking Unit as well, and then there was general administration. So, again, I can give you a breakdown of all of these different things, from the Transnational Organized Crime Unit, the radar implementation and the Counter-Trafficking Unit. The Counter-Trafficking Unit, in fact, has been very instrumental to deal with situations we have now where we have actually been upgraded from Tier 2 Watch List to Tier 2 by the United States based on the achievements that we have accomplished within the last year. So that the Counter-Trafficking Unit, obviously, there would have been a need again because of the concerns that we have seen internationally for us to revamp that, and also the Transnational Organized Crime Unit.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, I recognize the Member for Diego Martin West.

Mr. Warner: Sub-Item 62.

Mr. Chairman: Before we go on to 62, I think Diego Martin West—

Mr. Warner: Okay.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, under 36, Extraordinary Expenditure, I draw your attention to xiv, Sub-Item 36, where in the budgetary process it specifically points out that Extraordinary Expenditure is, and I quote:

“Unforeseen expenditure that is unlikely to”—occur

—and “unlikely to occur” is printed in bold, meaning that it is very unlikely to occur. So Extraordinary Expenditure—

Dr. Moonilal: But in 2013, the unlikely was \$111 million.

Dr. Rowley: Well, let me—Mr. Chairman, please.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, continue.

Dr. Rowley: I value the assistance of my colleague, but I would not be able to help you if I cannot complete my sentence.

Mr. Chairman: Continue, please.

Dr. Rowley: So I am saying, if in the budgetary process we have a Sub-Item of Extraordinary Expenditure and the categorization of such an expenditure is “Unforeseen expenditure that is unlikely to occur”, when we come to Sub-Item 36 here, I do not know what happened before 2013—

Mr. Chairman: “unlikely to recur”, not—

Dr. Rowley: “to recur”, yes. But in 2013 we budgeted \$111 million, 2014 we budgeted \$158 million, 2014 we revised it down to \$104 million, we have budgeted \$127 million—now, this clearly, Mr. Chairman, is not an item that we—and based on what the Minister has just said—is not something that we anticipate is unlikely to occur. It is in fact part of the regular arrangement now. They put some new unit in place in some new arrangements which have to be funded by prior knowledge. So, therefore, it ought not to be budgeted under Extraordinary Expenditure.

Hon. Griffith: I would give you an example: for example the Radar Centre, the cost and the parts, the maintenance of the radar system, it can increase at a very big cost from time to time based on just a change in technology, technology changes would cause the whole system to have to be revamped, similar to the veering system for example, where last year it was a \$35 million change we had to make because of bmobile changes, the 4G; automatically over \$30 million we had to move to upgrade that system to go with veerings.

So this will be seen as extraordinary based on just something that was not anticipated. So sometimes it becomes a catalyst—if something happens then, whether it is the radar, whether it is the intelligence systems, they will also need to be upgraded, and with that, that will cause that cost to escalate without it actually being planned prior to.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, with your approval I would like to go back to 16, which is Contract Employment for which we are now budgeting \$40 million when that Sub-Item was \$28 million in 2013. Who are the people in the Ministry of National Security that are categorized as contract workers and why such a steep increase from \$28 million to \$40 million for contract workers? What category of persons are we talking about here?

Hon. Griffith: Yes, Chairman, well this is very in-depth, it involves scanner/data entry operators, business operations assistants, executive support officers, the legal officers, and, again, I can provide the list.

Dr. Rowley: Are these establishment posts which are being filled by contract officers?

Hon. Griffith: Yes. There are vacancies.

Dr. Rowley: These are vacancies on the establishment of the public service in the Ministry of National Security?

Hon. Griffith: It is contract-based which is outside of—

Dr. Rowley: Okay. So over and above the establishment of the Ministry of National Security in the public service, this provision is for additional persons. How are these persons sourced? \$40 million worth. How are they sourced?

Hon. Griffith: I know there is a team and specific interviews and it is conducted by the—who chairs those interviews? Based on the criteria of—if it is matters, pertaining to legal, pertaining to IT, there is a specific process that is made to ensure that those persons are selected.

Dr. Rowley: Who makes that decision?

Hon. Griffith: Pertaining to what?

Dr. Rowley: Who determines how you spend this money? The Permanent Secretary? The Minister? Who?

Hon. Griffith: No, it is all based on the needs of the Ministry of National Security at the time; for example, if during the period there is a need to immediately establish the Transnational Organized Crime Unit, there would be contracted positions based on the establishment of that unit.

Dr. Rowley: That is not what I am asking. I have a budgetary item, a decision has to be made to spend the money, who makes that decision?

Hon. Griffith: Well, again—I understand now—the Permanent Secretary, he would make a recommendation based on the needs to fulfil any task that may be required and then it is brought to the Minister of National Security, and then the relevant interviews would be conducted.

Dr. Rowley: Is there any attempt to advertise these positions there? Are these positions advertised?

Hon. Griffith: They are advertised, yes.

Dr. Rowley: All?

Hon. Griffith: No, not all have been advertised.

Dr. Rowley: Which are the ones that you do not advertise?

Hon. Griffith: I could get that for you. I could provide that list for you, those that have not been advertised.

Dr. Rowley: That would be helpful, and with the reason—

Hon. Griffith: And the reason—yeah. Sure.

Miss Cox: Mr. Chairman, I am not finished.

Mr. Chairman: No, I thought you had given way to the—[*Crosstalk*] All right, Member for Laventille East/Morvant.

Miss Cox: Thank you, I just want to get back to the point on number 62, Promotions, Publicity and Printing; there is indeed a steep increase of \$12.6 million and I would like to know what has caused this steep increase in promotions. I would like to ask a question too: where is the funding coming from the programme Beyond the Line? Is it from the police service or the Ministry of National Security?

Hon. Griffith: Yes, Chairman, what I mentioned is that we may have a major reduction in crime that may be there for statistics, but there is a difference between the actual reduction in crime and taking away the perception and fear of crime. It is very important that the public are aware of what strategies are taking place and, again, we have seen one of the concerns is that the public have been reluctant to come forward and be part of the process because of that breakdown in communication and trust between themselves and law enforcement agencies.

So, this is a very powerful tool to ensure that we have that element of trust that is brought back and getting people to understand the role and function of the different arms of the law enforcement agencies. So it is more of an objective to get the public to be aware, to respect, to trust, and to start believing in the law enforcement agencies. So that is where you are going to have that increase. For too long we have had this situation where many people are not aware of the importance of the different arms of the law enforcement agencies and what they do. So that is what that is. Pertaining to the other matter with Beyond the Line; definitely not from the Ministry of National Security. I am not aware if the police service—that would come after this and they will be able to confirm that from that end, but from the Ministry of National Security the answer is no.

Mr. Chairman: All right, the Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Miss Hospedales: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I am looking at Sub-Item 43; there is a significant increase in security services, from \$1,844,711 in 2013 increasing to \$2,982,400 in 2014, and taking another leap in 2015. Mr. Chairman, I would like to find out if the Minister can provide us with a list of the security firms that actually provide services to them, and if he can provide a detailed breakdown of the service that is provided.

Hon. Griffith: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I could provide the detailed breakdown if required. It involves the cost of security services at Temple Court, one; as well as the cost for Amalgamated Courier Service, and also at the EMBA building. There was also an increase in rates by MTS from last year.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, I am moving on to Item 5.

Dr. Rowley: Before you move on, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, before I move on, I recognize the Member for Chaguanas West and then.

Mr. Warner: Minister, 08, Rent/Lease, I know for a fact that there is an office that is—sorry, Sir, I would not ask him. I would ask him by himself. [Laughter]

Mr. Chairman: The Member for Diego Martin West.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, I think that some of our colleagues are hiding information from us. [Laughter] I wonder if they want to share it with us in his private meeting. Mr. Chairman, I know that the Ministry of National Security, from time to time, would be required to provide training for persons in various arms of the services and, therefore, when I look at 17, the budget for training is \$2 million, but the budget for PR Promotion is \$20 million; is it that the Ministry has its priorities upside down?

Hon. Griffith: This \$2 million is just the general administration training. As I mentioned, there are three major aspects towards this budget. It has to do with the importance of asset acquisition, manpower strength and training, and the Ministry of National Security is really several mini Ministries, and every aspect—the Trinidad and Tobago Fire Service, the Defence Force, the police—they are all involved in difference aspects—

Dr. Rowley: This is General Administration—we are on General Administration—

Hon. Griffith: Yes, but this is General Administration, but if we only look at—

Dr. Rowley: So who accessed this?

Hon. Griffith: Well, again, that will involve persons within the administration of the Ministry of National Security and not the operational elements. So that \$2 million does not involve the arms of the law enforcement agencies with the type of training that they require.

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Dr. Rowley: So nobody from the coast guard—

Hon. Griffith: Not in this line.

Dr. Rowley: So this is just public servants in the Ministry?

Hon. Griffith: Yes.

Dr. Rowley: But I still think that a \$20 million promotion budget is high.

Mr. Chairman: All right, let us go on. We go on to Item 005, Regiment.

Hon. Member: Not 005.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, we have just left—

Hon. Member: No, 002, Fire Service.

Mr. Chairman: Oh, I thought you dealt with that a short while ago.

Hon. Member: No, there is a next fire. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: Okay, sorry about that. Yes, the hon. Member for Laventille East/Morvant.

Miss Cox: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I move to 13, Maintenance of Vehicles. There is an increase here—and why I ask about this is because I know that there is an engineering department in the Fire Service, and I understand that a lot of the maintenance of the vehicles is being contracted out when some of the work could be done by the engineering corps. As a matter of fact, some of the work, after it has been contracted out and the vehicle gets back into the fire service department, the persons there now still have to fix it, so I think that that is something that needs to be looked at—okay?—in the Fire Service. Too much work is being contracted out now compared to before. It also brings me to the point of training—

Hon. Griffith: Excuse me, just reconfirming, so you are saying that you recommend that the Fire Service, that they do internally, the maintenance?

Miss Cox: No, but you need to look at the fact that a lot of work is being contracted out that does not necessarily have to be contracted out.

Hon. Griffith: Okay, sure.

3.00 p.m.

Miss Cox: I move to Training. Just wanted to ask about—no, I will not bother with that question. I will talk personally about that.

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Mr. Chairman, Repairs and Maintenance to Buildings, there is an increase of \$9 million. Really that is the one I wanted to speak about, because I understand that is the same problem. There is a project unit and a lot of the maintenance that could be done by the members of the Fire Service, because there is a project department, but almost everything is being contracted out, and that there is a preferred contractor. So Minister you need to look into that. There is a preferred contractor getting a lot of work in the Fire Service, and there is some grumbling about that. I just wanted to talk to you about that.

Hon. Griffith: I do know as well that one of the things is that because of the OSHA Act, because of the level now of the health and safety issues, there are certain aspects that we have to do to refurbish new facilities such as in Macoya and Chaguanas and other places for relocating personnel. But I will look at that as well.

Miss Cox: Other Contracted Services, 28. There is an increase of four-point something million, I want to know what has resulted in that increase—\$4.6 million.

Hon. Griffith: Mr. Chairman, that involves installation of fire hydrants, repairs, replacement of defective hydrants, refurbishment and maintenance of salt water pumps and systems.

Miss Cox: But, Minister, that is routine work in the Fire Service, so what would account for a \$4.6 million increase?

Hon. Griffith: I can get that breakdown for you.

Miss Cox: One more—Janitorial Services, there is an increase of \$1.4 million. Actually from 2013 it was \$4 million, it has now reached \$7 million. What has accounted for that increase?

Hon. Griffith: Because we have the new fire stations that would be there—obviously the janitorial services would increase because of the new fire stations that are opening.

Mr. Imbert: On that same first item there, Maintenance of Vehicles, do you have a list of the vehicles and could you tell me how many of them are maintained in-house?

Hon. Griffith: I can get that for you, but I know what we are doing now in the Ministry of National Security is the importance of that preventative maintenance aspect, which is why we are trying to keep as many vehicles on the

road as much as possible. Previously they would have this system—the vehicle would be down and then after you bring it in. Then we started having the problem of cannibalizing the vehicles. So now with the importance of us having the preventative maintenance, there will be that budget now, much more, in dealing with maintenance rather than the repairs.

Mr. Imbert: I did not have any questions on the quantum.

Hon. Griffith: Ok sure. Yes, I will get that for you.

Mr. Imbert: I am not concerned about the amount of money you are spending yet. I just wanted to know whether you are doing it in-house or not, and could I get a list of the vehicles that are being maintained under this Head.

Hon. Griffith: Yes, I will get that for you.

Mr. Chairman: All right, we go to Item 005, Regiment.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, 05, Page 117. I just want to make an observation as to the good luck of the National Security Ministry. How did you manage to convince the Ministry of Finance and the Economy to approve a request for \$7 million for telephones, when last year's telephone bills were \$2.6 million? What are we anticipating here to cause a provision of \$7 million to be set aside for telephones in the regiment?

Hon. Griffith: Mr. Chairman, that has to do with the increasing of the usage charges due to the joint operations that we have.

Dr. Rowley: What?

Hon. Griffith: IATF, Inter-Agency Task Force. There has been an increase in the usage charges.

Dr. Rowley: From \$2.6 million to \$7 million?

Hon. Griffith: Yes. Chairman, I can provide the breakdown to justify that.

Dr. Rowley: I would like to ask the Minister to look into this, because I do not know, with all due respect, what they are doing, to have almost increased their telephone bill by 200 per cent. I take it down again, to raise the question of competition for services in the Ministry of National Security.

The Food at Institutions bill has jumped considerably in the last two years. I am not here accusing our officers of having an increased appetite; I am talking about the cost of food to the agencies. It has moved from \$27 million to \$40 million, and I do not know that we have drastically improved the numbers in these agencies. I suspect it has to do with competition for the supply. I am simply drawing this to the attention of the Minister, so that you can ensure that there is

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proper competition so that we can get the benefit of competition for the supply to the agencies.

That also includes the quality of what you are supplying, because it may very well be that as we are paying more and more, you are getting less and less in terms of quality. But I suspect that this increase has some element of lack of competition, and there are people in the system who stay there and just offer their prices, and that we are price-takers. Inflation in the country on food has not gone along this line. So just look at that.

Hon. Griffith: Sure, I will do that, Mr. Chairman. There has actually been a decrease, but still I understand the point of it being \$40 million even though there is a decrease. But I do recall there was this situation for years gone by where a lot of suppliers were not able to be paid—because I do not know whether it was that the estimates were inaccurate to deal with trying to see about meals for over 10,000 persons at three meals a day. Whether it is because of that—they actually have an allocation that is more conducive to the requirements of the agencies. But I do understand your point.

In fact, the Permanent Secretary and I were actually discussing that to ensure that all of these aspects would be dealt with. There is a relevant audit that is taking place in all these different law enforcement agencies to look at these systems.

Mr. Chairman: The Member for Laventille East/Morvant.

Miss Cox: Those were my questions.

Mr. Imbert: The same question on 13. Is this being done in-house—Maintenance of Vehicles—and could you give me a breakdown of the vehicles, please? How many vehicles, what types of vehicles and is the maintenance being done in-house—regiment.

Hon. Griffith: Go ahead or—

Mr. Imbert: No, I am under that same Item. You will find out why I am asking these questions shortly, because there is a vast disparity in the maintenance figures among divisions. But going now to 58, Medical Expenses; is this a medical plan or is this the actual expenses incurred for medical treatment?

Hon. Griffith: The medical is the actual expenses.

Mr. Imbert: How is it done? Do they go to a private doctor, what happens?

Hon. Griffith: The Defence Force, what they do have are persons who are assigned to the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force on a permanent basis. Those individuals will go to the different military installations on a specific day every week to deal with matters for the soldiers. Whereas the Defence Force would have an infirmary, they would have a medical room that would deal with on a daily basis any person who has an injury, ailment, and that is what gives the authorization for them to have sick leave. If there will be situations where a doctor would be required, there are doctors that are contracted in the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force to deal specifically with matters that will be beyond those of someone who is just a trained medical—involved in basic medical aspects.

Then we also have the dental and external bills that would come about. Those individuals would have to go outside of those persons who are doctors that are contracted by the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force.

Mr. Imbert: So it is a combination of in-house treatment and external?

Hon. Griffith: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: But to what extent is a member of the regiment covered? Do you cover them for anything—bypass surgery?

Hon. Griffith: No.

Mr. Imbert: What is the coverage? That is what I want to know. You treat them for what, a headache, the flu, a broken hand, what?

Hon. Griffith: Injury related to their duties—whilst in the performance of their duties, but then there is also medical coverage. There is also a medical plan by the Trinidad and Tobago—

Mr. Imbert: That is what I am asking you. Does this include payment for a medical plan, this \$10 million here?

Hon. Griffith: I will verify that for you.

Mr. Imbert: I just want to know the extent of medical coverage that is afforded to members of the regiment. To what extent, what level of treatment, what kind of procedures, and how far you will go in terms of assisting members of the regiment with medical expenses?

Hon. Griffith: It is all based on if that person had an injury that is related whilst in the performance of their duty, obviously, and that will be automatic. But then as members of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force, as with all persons in the military worldwide, there is that medical coverage that can facilitate those

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individuals.

Mr. Imbert: I know you do not have the information, but could you provide it, please.

Hon. Griffith: Sure, I could.

Mr. Imbert: The level of medical coverage.

Mr. Chairman: We go to Item 006, Coast Guard.

Mr. Imbert: Same question, 13. Is the maintenance of vehicles done in-house or not? Could you give a breakdown of the vehicles, please?

Hon. Griffith: Yes, that can be provided for you.

Mr. Imbert: Am I also to assume that your answer would be similar to a question on 58, Medical Expenses? You will have to get back to me on the extent of coverage they provide to the coast guard?

Hon. Griffith: I can. Pertaining to the maintenance of vehicles, that is to meet the increasing cost of repairs and to maintain the new assets, which will be inclusive of the armoured personnel carriers.

Mr. Imbert: Minister, I just asked you whether it is done in-house or not, and could I get a breakdown.

Hon. Griffith: It is; it is. There is a Mechanical Transport Division that deals specifically—

Mr. Imbert: The coast guard.

Hon. Griffith: Or you are on the coast guard now?

Mr. Imbert: Well we are on coast guard. “We pass regiment already, you know.”

Hon. Griffith: I thought you were still on the regiment.

Mr. Imbert: No, you are not listening, man; we are on 006, not so, Mr. Chairman?

Hon. Griffith: You are moving too fast.

Mr. Imbert: We are on 006. But he did not answer me, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. Griffith: What is the question?

Mr. Imbert: Is the maintenance of vehicles for the coast guard done in-house?

Mr. Chairman: Is the maintenance of coast guard vehicles done in-house?

Hon. Griffith: Yes; again, there is a Maintenance Division that deals specifically with those—

Mr. Imbert: And you will give me a list of the vehicles?

Hon. Griffith: Yes.

Dr. Browne: Sub-Item 17, Training for the Coast Guard—very important, but I just want to enquire whether this includes any training for the proposed larger vessels that the Minister has been speaking about, recognizing that that type of training has to occur even before vessels are received. So this \$20 million, does this include that type of training?

Hon. Griffith: The type of vessels that we have presently, that will be acquired, the training from the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard is not to any great extent, because the type of vessels will be coastal patrol vessels, interceptors, hovercraft. So it will not require any type of training external to Trinidad and Tobago, where you require individuals to have to go abroad to be involved—for the whole crew, for example, like if we are acquiring 50-metre vessels. The Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard, the persons have the capability to manoeuvre and to utilize these type of vessels. In fact, we are actually now refurbishing two vessels of similar size.

Dr. Browne: Very nice, well you have just triggered an additional question. I had assumed that \$20 million involved extensive overseas training, similar to what may have been taking place prior, because when you look at the training in the other arms of the Defence Force, the entire regiment is \$9 million. Coast guard you are saying all the training is occurring in Trinidad and Tobago for \$20 million.

Hon. Griffith: No, that is for the vessels. There is a difference with the training for the vessels, to training in the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard, because there is a different variety. So the training for the coast guard is not specifically just to train them how to manoeuvre vessel. It involves Officer Cadet training for persons who are about to be commissioned. It involves development training. It involves other aspects of leadership training. Also we have the Special Naval Unit, and they are involved in counterterrorist activities.

So there are a number of different types of training elements that would be required by the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard, and not specifically to that training that is required for an offshore patrol/long range patrol vessel.

Dr. Browne: I have a further question on training; I will ask it later.

Miss Cox: That was my question.

Mr. Chairman: Let us go on to Item 007, Immigration.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, 08. Could you tell us when you are going to properly accommodate Immigration Division and where you are going to accommodate them?

3.15 p.m.

Hon. Griffith: Mr. Chairman, by December we, the Immigration Department they would be moving to the building in the Government Campus Plaza, the PK9.

Mr. Imbert: Oh, on Richmond Street?

Hon. Griffith: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: All right.

Mr. Imbert: Wait. Wait.

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: And I noticed a very small sum for Medical Expenses. Is the medical coverage for the Immigration Division different to the Regiment and Coast Guard?

Hon. Griffith: It is. It is. There is a different type of system for the medical coverage for the members of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force to that of Immigration.

Mr. Imbert: What is this \$30,000 for under 58? Thirty thousand cannot do much.

Hon. Griffith: Where you see that?

Mr. Imbert: 58.

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, under Medical Expenses, \$30,000, what is that for?

Mr. Imbert: What is that for?

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister.

Hon. Griffith: I will have to provide that for you.

Mr. Imbert: This is woefully inadequate.

Hon. Griffith: Thirty thousand.

Mr. Chairman: Member for Laventille East/Morvant.

Miss Cox: 62—I see a big increase in Promotions, Publicity and Printing, what is the reason for that?

Mr. Chairman: That is Immigration?

Miss Cox: Immigration. From \$128,000 to 500—[*Crosstalk*] [*Minister confers with advisor*]

Hon. Griffith: I will have to provide that for you, Chairman. I believe I know what it is, but I do not want to give you the wrong information.

Mr. Chairman: The Member for Chaguanas West.

Mr. Warner: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. 51, Relocation of Overseas Staff, I read where many members of staff in the New York office, for example, were sent back home amid much tears and crying and so on. But I see you have increased the allocation for relocation. With less people working overseas, how do you have more staff, more money?

Hon. Griffith: No, there was a rotation. It was not a matter, Mr. Chairman, that we just sent persons home. There was the rotation, then after we had the increase—China now being established—so that is where you will see the increase.

Mr. Warner: Okay.

Mr. Chairman: All right. We go on to Item 010, Fire Service, (Tobago). Item 013, Immigration, (Tobago); Item 014, Defence Force Headquarters. Item 015, the Cadet Force and Item 016, Air Guard. I recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East and the Member for Diego Martin West.

Mr. Imbert: Now, what I find this cost of the Maintenance of Vehicles for the Air Guard, shocking. Now, the Air Guard flies in the air. The cost of maintenance of vehicles, unless this is a misprint, \$44 million for the air guard, a small unit of the protective services that flies aircraft. Whereas the regiment which drives on the road, the allocation is only \$12 million. Can you explain this enormous difference for Maintenance of Vehicles? It does not make sense. What cars they have that they are maintaining so?—\$44 million for Maintenance of Vehicles for the Air Guard, and only \$12 million for the regiment?

Mr. Chairman: If I may. I normally do not get involved in these things—

Mr. Imbert: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Chairman:—but I say, if you go to page xii of the document, under the Maintenance of Vehicles you will see a number 13 where they say, for the:

“purchase of all items necessary for the upkeep and maintenance of Government Vehicles,”

—would include the cars, the vans, the trucks, the buses, the vessels and the aircraft. So, I do not know if that would explain.

Hon. Griffith: So with the vehicles, it would also involve maintenance, fuel for the helicopters, the Agusta helicopters and the fixed-wing aircraft, and that alone the fuel cost for those things—every time those Agusta helicopters just take off, once they get five feet off the ground that is \$5,000 it will cost us.

Mr. Imbert: Okay. Fine.

Mr. Chairman: Could we move on?

Mr. Imbert: No. No. No. Hold on. Now that you have told me that maintenance of vehicles includes vessels and aircrafts, can you explain to me, why the cost of Maintenance of Vehicles for the Coast Guard is half the Air Guard?

Hon. Griffith: That has to do, Mr. Chairman, with the problem that we have encountered with the Agusta helicopter. The Agusta helicopter, the average cost for one such helicopter is arguably about US \$12 million, we paid about \$23 million. But the maintenance for these helicopters, each one, the cost is approximately \$500 million. So whereas the cost for the helicopter is about a hundred, we are actually paying over \$500 million for each of the four helicopters. So, we have actually been locked into a contract—

Mr. Imbert: Minister.

Hon. Griffith:—for the helicopters at \$1.6 billion.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, those figures bear no relation to what I am saying.

Hon. Griffith: It does. It does, Mr. Chairman, because—

Mr. Imbert: The Coast Guard is \$20 million, the Air Guard is \$44 million. You are talking about \$500 million.

Hon. Griffith: No. You are right. It is an annual cost, Mr. Chairman, where the annual cost—

Mr. Imbert: This is an annual cost.

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Hon. Griffith: Yes. And the annual cost also involves constant travel for when we have to send personnel to Pennsylvania.

Mr. Imbert: You said \$500 million, I am seeing \$20 million.

Hon. Griffith: That is just part of the pie. [*Crosstalk*] No. No. That is maintenance and training. That is what I said. It is \$500 million for each helicopter for maintenance and training.

Mr. Imbert: Where is that reflected in the estimates?

Hon. Griffith: And there is also the fuel cost as well.

Mr. Imbert: Minister, where is that reflected in the estimates? If you say this item covers everything—as the Chairman so kindly told us—this is everything, vessels, aircraft, fuel, everything in here. I am seeing \$20 million. You are saying it is \$500 million.

Hon. Griffith: No. No. That is over a five-year period, and it is for each—

Mr. Imbert: That is a hundred.

Hon. Griffith: No. But this is maintenance, and when I said \$500 million, it is maintenance and training. It is a whole variety of different aspects that have been locked into that contract.

Mr. Imbert: You cannot answer the question—

Hon. Griffith: I did.

Mr. Chairman: All right. I recognize the Member for Laventille East/Morvant.

Miss Cox: Mr. Chairman, I wanted to—my question had to do with cost of the helicopters and so on, and I know that helicopters and the small planes are very expensive—maintenance and also operation. But who authorizes the use of these vehicles to bring the Member for Tobago East to and from Tobago.

Hon. Griffith: Sorry. The helicopters you are speaking about? Who brings—sorry.

Miss Cox: Who authorizes the use of these vehicles? You spoke about expense, maintenance and so on, to bring the Member for Tobago East to and from Tobago on a regular basis.

Hon. Griffith: I cannot recall the Member for Tobago East ever utilizing any of those helicopters—[*Crosstalk*]

Dr. Moonilal: Which heading?

Hon. Griffith:—from the Trinidad and Tobago Air Guard.

Dr. Moonilal: What is that a medical expense? [*Crosstalk*]

Miss Cox: If it is not from the Air Guard, then where is it from?

Mr. Chairman: All right. Let us move on. Let us not argue, if he makes a response.

Miss Cox: Who authorizes the one from NOC? [*Crosstalk*]

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman—

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Dr. Rowley:—with your concurrence.

Hon. Griffith: You should ask that question when they are talking NOC.

Dr. Rowley:—could the Minister tell me, Mr. Chairman—[*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: Yes, continue, hon. Member.

Dr. Rowley:—could the Minister tell me, please, what is the size of the complement, in numbers, of the Air Guard? And what is the size of the regiment in terms of complement—numbers?

Hon. Griffith: The Trinidad and Tobago Air Guard is a newly established arm of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force. It is much smaller than that of the Trinidad and Tobago Regiment.

Dr. Rowley: How many do they have there?

Hon. Griffith: About 400? Yeah. Just about 400-odd. Four hundred members.

Dr. Rowley: And the regiment?

Hon. Griffith: Three thousand.

Dr. Rowley: So the regiment has 3,000 bodies and the Air Guard has 400, but the food bill for the Air Guard is a quarter of that of the regiment. So, we budget \$40 million for food at institutions for the regiment, and we budget \$10 million for the Air Guard. Something is not right here.

Hon. Griffith: Yes. I understand, but Mr. Chairman, what happens is that the members of the Trinidad and Tobago Regiment they are involved with much

more—where you have platoons and companies, they remain in camp for 24-hour periods. The facility for the Air Guard involves much more in operations for the use of the helicopters. So it is not—where as you may just be looking at the maths and multiply it by four, but the duties of the Trinidad and Tobago Regiment will facilitate many more persons being confined and remaining in the camp.

Dr. Rowley: And that is the point I am making. You are making my case. I am saying, you told me you have 3,000-odd people, and I am saying that is [*Crosstalk*] eight times as many people that you have in the Air Guard, but your budget for food at that institution is \$40 million.

Hon. Griffith: Oh, in the Air Guard.

Dr. Rowley: But for the Air Guard which is a much smaller percentage of people, you are budgeting \$10 million which is 25 per cent of the budget. How do you explain that?

Hon. Griffith: Oh. I understand. They eat. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Chairman: All right. We want to move on now.

Dr. Rowley: No. No. No. Mr. Chairman, I have not gotten an answer. I am asking for an answer.

Hon. Griffith: I will find that out, and I will also look at the menu.

Mr. Chairman: We go on to Item 17, Immigration Detention Centre. We are going to Immigration Detention Centre. I recognize the Member for Laventille East/Morvant and the Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Miss Cox: Mr. Chairman, Minister, there are many issues facing the Immigration Detention Centre, and I am just concerned whether sufficient funds are being expended for the proper management and running of the centre. I see here, under 17, there is no allocation for 2014 for training. Is there a particular reason?

Hon. Griffith: Sorry.

Miss Cox: But there is an estimated [*Crosstalk*] no allocation, but an estimated \$6 million for 2015. Is there a reason why there is no money allocated for training?

Hon. Griffith: I will have that information provided for you. I will get that for you.

Miss Cox: Because there was none before.

Mr. Chairman: All right.

Miss Cox: Also, Other Contracted Services, what accounts for this? I see there is a decrease. What accounts for this?

Mr. Chairman: There is a decrease. What accounts for the decrease from \$8 million to \$6 million? [*Crosstalk*]

Dr. Moonilal: The Leader of the Opposition said to start cutting. That accounts for the decrease. They have advised us to cut. [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Griffith: Just one minute, Chair. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: It is page 124. Okay. And we are going to Item 28—Sub-Item rather—28. What is the reason for the decrease?

Hon. Griffith: What is the reason for the decrease?

Mr. Chairman: I think you should provide that answer.

Hon. Griffith: Yeah. I will provide that answer for you.

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: Could I just get confirmation from the Minister, since you are now defining vehicles as vessels and aircraft and everything, you are going to get a list of the vehicles, including vessels and aircraft, for each one of these?

Hon. Griffith: But I did not define it, the book defined it as that. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: I am just quoting from the book.

Mr. Imbert: Now, we have discovered this is what it is, you will get a list of vehicles which will include vessels and aircraft—

Hon. Griffith: And helicopters.

Mr. Imbert:—for each one of these.

Hon. Griffith: Understood.

Mr. Imbert: Right. Okay.

Mr. Chairman: The Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Miss Hospedales: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Under Sub-Item 16, Contract Employment, in 2013 and 2014 there was no allocation, but there is a \$6 million allocation in 2015. Could the Minister provide us with the list of vacant positions, if any? And if there are no vacant positions, the number of contract positions that exist in that particular establishment.

Hon. Griffith: The structure was just approved, Chairman, hence the reason for that increase that you are seeing.

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Mr. Chairman: All right. We go to Item 18, Volunteer Defence Force. I recognize the Member for St. Joseph and the Member for Laventille West.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Thank you, Chair. Hon. Minister, under Uniforms, line Item 03, could you tell me how many personnel make up the Volunteer Defence Force? And how many uniforms we are purchasing here?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister.

Hon. Griffith: My volunteer is not volunteering to give me any information in the back there, Chairman. [*Crosstalk*] It is 220.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Two hundred and twenty. Has this number been constant from 2013 to 2015? [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Griffith: I know it to be 400, but I am being told it is 220.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Four hundred.

Hon. Griffith: Four hundred.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Has that number been constant for 2013 to 2015?

Mr. Chairman: What is the number?

Hon. Griffith: Has there been an increase?

Mr. Chairman: Give us the proper number, please?

Hon. Griffith: Okay. There are permanent members of the reserve defence force.

Mr. Chairman: That is how many?

Hon. Griffith: Two hundred.

Mr. Chairman: And how many are reserves?

Hon. Griffith: Well they are also reserves, but then there are those who are on reserve strength that will only come out if required based on the authority, and that will be another 220—400—sorry.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Hon. Minister, has that number been constant from 2013 to 2015 with minor variations? Not significant—

Hon. Griffith: Yes.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Thank you. Therefore, my question under line Item 09, Rent/Lease Vehicles and Equipment; in 2013, the actual was roughly \$30,000 but in 2015 it has gone up by approximately seven times to \$230,000.

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And this issue of rental of vehicles pervades all these documents, somebody is making a lot of money. What accounts for this sevenfold increase in the rent/lease of vehicles if the numbers have remained more or less constant from 2013 to 2015?

Hon. Griffith: Just a minute, please, Chairman. We actually have the documents here, I would have that provided for you.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Thank you. And lastly, line item 13: Maintenance of Vehicles. Again 2013, \$295,000 actually spent; but the 2015 estimate for Maintenance of Vehicles is a fourfold increase to \$1.3 million. So, these increases sevenfold for rent/lease, fourfold for maintenance of vehicles do not seem to fit if it is the manpower complement, as stated, has remained more or less the same from 2013 to 2015. So, we have a little conundrum there.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, Minister.

Hon. Griffith: Chairman, I do know that the reserve defence must have been involved a lot more in training and other elements that they were never involved before, so that may very well be the reason for that increase. But what I would do, I will verify and get to you the rationale why it is there has been that request for that increase.

Mr. Deyalsingh: And the maintenance to vehicles, is this done in-house or is it contracted to a third party?

Hon. Griffith: No. Again, there is a Mechanical Transport Division in the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force, but also depending on the problem with the vehicle it may be contracted outside.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: All right, we are moving on to Sub-Head 03: Minor Equipment Purchases. Item 001, General Administration, I recognize the Member for Diego Martin West.

Dr. Rowley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My understanding of minor equipment is like photocopying machines, air condition units, and for the army, dogs and horses and things like that, but I noticed that we are making a provision of \$45 million for minor equipment. A provision was made of \$50 million in 2014, and of that I see a revision downwards to \$29 million. So, if the \$50 million provision of 2014 is to be revised downwards to \$29 million at the closure of the

accounts of 2014, what is the reason for making a request and being provisioned to the tune of \$45 million for minor equipment? What actually are we going to buy with that \$45 million?

Mr. Chairman: You follow it?

Hon. Griffith: No, I am not seeing it.

Dr. Rowley: Page 126, last line.

Hon. Griffith: Oh, the last line, sorry.

Mr. Chairman: We are under 04.

Hon. Griffith: Oh, 04. It is regiment.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, under regiment.

Dr. Rowley: The second to last line. If you look at the pattern of expenditure—

Hon. Griffith: It is increased by \$15 million.

Dr. Rowley: But, what is the reason for that provision under minor equipment?

Mr. Chairman: Could you provide the answer now or you want to—

Hon. Griffith: No, I would like to provide the answer later on, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Rowley: Could we get a detailed—and by the way, if you could also tell us what did you—to understand this more clearly, could you provide this with details as to what you bought with the \$29 million?

Hon. Griffith: With the \$29 million?

Dr. Rowley: What did you spend \$29 million on in 2014? You have to give us a good picture as to why you are looking for \$45 million in 2015?

Hon. Griffith: Sure, understood. Yes, Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, Member for Laventille East/Morvant.

Miss Cox: Under Minor Equipment Purchases, under fire service vehicles there is an increase of \$19.7 million for the purchase of vehicles. Found it? Same page 126, 002, Fire Service, and there is an increase of 19.7, what accounts for that huge increase? Also, I would like to know if provision is made for the purchase of a fire tender for the Crown Point Fire Service? I understand that they have one operating crash tender, and are you all also going to replace—are you listening?

Hon. Griffith: Yes, sorry.

Miss Cox:—the crashed fire tender that was crashed up on the north coast?

Hon. Griffith: Chairman, the drastic increase you are seeing there is because of the purchase of new vehicles for the new fire stations in Mayaro, Lady Hailes, Arouca, Penal, and the replacement of vehicles recommended by the board of survey—there are 236 fire vehicles; 48 are out of service and 48 for board of survey, and also we will be acquiring—

Dr. Rowley: Two hundred and—

Hon. Griffith: Two hundred and thirty six fire vehicles.

Dr. Rowley: You have the whole fleet up there.

Hon. Griffith: No, no, no. The fleet is 236; 46 would be out of service and 48 with the board of survey, and then ambulance as well, 18 would be acquired and 15 utility vehicles bought in fiscal—so because of the new stations being acquired.

Miss Cox: This is a follow-up question concerning Tobago one time. Okay? Is provision made for a vehicle for Crown Point, do you know?

Hon. Griffith: Yes, there is and there is something else. Not just a vehicle, a vehicle and another tender for Tobago as well.

Mr. Chairman: All right, we are going to Item 006, Coast Guard. Yes Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Miss Cox: Minister.

Hon. Griffith: Yes, sorry.

Miss Cox: I am waiting on my—“meh answer coming?”

Hon. Griffith: Sorry.

Miss Cox: The answer coming concerning the fire?

Hon. Griffith: Chairman, I would get that information for you later today.

Mr. Chairman: All right, we go on to the Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, when I look at the definition of minor equipment I see cell phones, vacuum cleaners, refrigerators, stoves, lawn mowers, and things like that. How is it possible that the allocation for the Coast Guard for these things—cell phones and refrigerators and so on—is \$9 million, the Regiment is

\$45 million, and the Air Guard over the page is \$15 million? What policy is used to come up with these numbers? They do not make any sense.

Hon. Griffith: Why?

Mr. Imbert: Why would the Air Guard minor equipment be more than the Coast Guard minor equipment? Coast guard is a much larger force.

Hon. Griffith: No, it is not really the manpower strength, you know. It is based on the requirements for—it is the equipment, not the manpower.

Mr. Imbert: Okay, the Coast Guard engages in at least as many operations as the Air Guard, I would think. They have far more equipment, far more men and far more operational manoeuvres than the Air Guard on a daily basis.

Hon. Griffith: With the type of equipment that would be required for communication would be different.

Mr. Imbert: It is refrigerators, photocopying machines—

Hon. Griffith: We also spoke about communication equipment.

Mr. Imbert: It says, cell phones, vacuum cleaners, refrigerators, stoves, lawn mowers, microwave ovens and so on. I cannot understand how the allocation for the Coast Guard is \$9 million, the Air Guard is \$15 million. We need to get a breakdown of these things. It does not make any sense.

Hon. Griffith: Okay. I could provide that right now, Chairman.

Mr. Imbert: Yes, we need to get it. We need to get it.

Hon. Griffith: Sure.

Mr. Imbert: What is it going on? No wonder the Coast Guard is underserved. That is what I am seeing here.

Mr. Chairman: All right, you would provide that information to us?

Hon. Griffith: Yes. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: We go to Item 007, Immigration. Item 010, we have passed Tobago; Item 014, Defence Force Headquarters; Item 015, Cadet Force; Item 016, Air Guard; Item 017, Immigration Detention Centre; Item 018, Volunteer Defence Force. We go to Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies; Item 001, Regional Bodies. I recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East and the Member for Diego Martin Central.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, we are apparently forced to contribute to this agency that is on 05, IMPACS, is it of any use to us? [*Hon. G. Griffith laughs*] \$13 million—see, the Minister is laughing—you spent \$13 million on this agency, does it provide any purpose at all?

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister.

Hon. Griffith: Chairman, the answer is yes. The first thing is that, IMPACS, there is supposed to be a contribution made between all arms of Caricom. The countries, they all agreed to the budget but they do not all contribute to the budget.

Hon. Member: So, we pay for it.

Hon. Griffith: It is unfortunate that Trinidad and Tobago, we actually see about, apart from the allocation we have annually to deal with IMPACS, our contribution, we also see about the rental and the salaries for those persons who are stationed here in Trinidad and Tobago. But the importance of IMPACS cannot be overemphasized at this time, especially because of global terrorism. IMPACS has been the avenue to assist in monitoring persons of interest on the watch list. So, IMPACS—it is important. My concern has always been the fact that we are the ones that have been contributing and keeping it afloat, but without Impacs, if that shuts down, it can definitely affect our security, especially based on the terrorists watch list and monitoring persons. So, what we do need to do is emphasize with our Caricom neighbours the importance of IMPACS and not just to support the budget but also to contribute to the budget.

Mr. Imbert: Okay.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, we go to Item 004, International Bodies; Item 007, Households. I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, 04 under 007, Civilian Conservation Corps, could I just ask the Minister, what are we getting for \$55 million? Is the Corps at full strength and meeting its expectations in terms of support, its original targets and so on?

Hon. Griffith: Mr. Chairman, the Civilian Conservation Corps is not along the aspect of just giving people fish but teaching them how to fish. The Civilian Conservation Corps has been very instrumental in getting young persons to utilize their energies in the right manner, and because of the character traits that one may acquire from the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force, those character traits have played a very big part towards the development of the youths in different aspects.

It involves punctuality, discipline, leadership, organizational structure, teamwork, and also to assist them in trying to find avenues so that they can utilize their energies away from a life of crime.

So, the Civilian Conservation Corps has proven to be very effective. I do agree that we can improve it to ensure that we get maximum benefit from it, but it is one of the main aspects in the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force to show the importance of the defence force outside of times of war.

Dr. Rowley: About how many youngsters we have in the corps now?

Hon. Griffith: Just over 1,000 at this time.

Hon. Moheni: It is wanted every six months, we have a new batch brought in and they go between 1,000 to 1,200.

Dr. Rowley: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, the Mentoring Programme for youth at risk—

Hon. Griffith: The Mentorship?

Dr. Rowley: Yes, that is Item 011, what is happening there with respect to that expenditure of \$3 million? How many persons we have in that programme now?

Hon. Moheni: Presently we have approximately 350 persons.

Dr. Rowley: And are they rotated as well?

Hon. Moheni: No. They bring them as a group, they run them through a camp, then they train the mentors and then they match the mentors with the mentees.

Dr. Rowley: How long do the mentees stay in the programme?

Hon. Moheni: One year. At least one year, some go beyond that.

Dr. Rowley: I have a few more questions on 09 but I would give way to others at the moment.

Mr. Chairman: The Member for Laventille East/Morvant and then Member for Diego Martin North/East and the Member for Chaguanas West and then we will go to the Member for Diego Martin Central.

3.45 p.m.

Miss Cox: Mr. Chair, I just wanted to know about this. I am seeing here, School Discipline Initiative. What is that about?

Hon. Member: Which number?

Miss Cox: Households, 09.

Hon. Griffith: I can have the details provided for you.

Miss Cox: All right, because I am seeing some money allocated here so I was curious about it.

Hon. Griffith: One hundred thousand.

Mr. Chairman: The Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Miss Cox: Yes. I am not finished.

Mr. Chairman: Oh, you are not finished.

Miss Cox: HIV Coordinating Unit, I see—[*Crosstalk*] all right, good, hold on let me just get one more. National Security Officers Foundation, because are we still under 007, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, yes.

Miss Cox: Right, what is—I see there is an increase of \$136,000, eh, but the increase is not the issue. What is being put in place for veterans?

Hon. Griffith: Such as—

Miss Cox: Veterans.

Hon. Griffith: I know, but anything—

Miss Cox: Is there a plan for veterans in the service, because I know that they have been clamouring to be recognized and to be afforded a particular type of service by the Ministry. Is there anything in place for veterans?

Hon. Griffith: What I have been looking at, this is not in the budget, it has to do with the concerns that we have seen, where persons may have left the defence force—you retire at 45 years old, you are retired, and whether it is an insurance scheme or other aspects, they try to have those individuals—[*Interruption*]

Miss Cox: Taken care of.

Hon. Griffith: Yes, taken care of.

Miss Cox: That is being looked at?

Hon. Griffith: Yes.

Miss Cox: Okay.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Imbert: Yes, Mr. Chairman, going back to those items that the Leader of the Opposition brought up, 04 in particular and 05 under 007. What I have worked out is that it is costing us \$50,000 a year to train one person in the Civilian Conservation Corps. Have you ever done a value for money audit on this?

Hon. Griffith: I think definitely, Mr. Chairman, the cost benefit analysis towards taking young persons and utilizing their energies away from a life of crime, I think that just by that—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Imbert: That is not what I meant. You are training these young people, it is costing you \$50,000 per year, per trainee. Is there not another way to do this, where it could cost far less than \$50,000 a year per person? What is your number? What will make you comfortable, \$100,000 a year per person, \$15,000? Have you ever done a value for money audit on this?

Hon. Griffith: Yes, that is why we are actually doing an audit that involves the aspect towards the Hoop of Life, the Mentorship Programme to do exactly that, to ensure that there is cost benefit analysis so that they are not putting excess funds on middle management, and it is actually not being utilized, yes.

Mr. Imbert: That is the point. But you have not done that yet?

Hon. Griffith: No, we actually spoke about the audit that was mentioned—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Imbert: You are in the process of doing it, you have not finished it yet?

Hon. Griffith: No.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, the Member for Diego Martin Central.

Dr. Browne: Well, first of all a follow-up on that issue. When you say an audit, are you referring to an evaluation? My question is on the strength or weakness of the monitoring and evaluation capacity within the Ministry, because from time to time—and there are several line items of relevance—these different programmes, different Ministers would have their brainwaves and you would have these social programmes with the national security.

Have you been strengthening—I am not seeing evidence of it here—the monitoring and evaluation capacity, so that these can be regularly evaluated on a structured basis and it could be reflected to the Parliament and the country? That is one question. My second question has to do with this same, as asked by my colleague, National Security Officers Foundation, and the concerns about retired defence force service members. There are reflecting issues of late payment of their—*[Interruption]*

Hon. Griffith: Gratuity.

Dr. Browne: Yes, and increases were granted since, I think, 2008, and there has been—*[Interruption]*

Hon. Griffith: And back pay.

Dr. Browne: Yeah, concerns about that. So I do not know if that has your attention. So those were two issues.

Hon. Griffith: Yes, the department is actually working on that. That is the latter point. Pertaining to the concept of the audit, the audit is not, similar to an audit, just a financial audit to look at dollars and cents, but it is to ensure exactly that—that *[Crosstalk]* it ensures systems that we can put in to make sure that we can maximize the value for all of these different projects, because it might very well be that we have funds that are being put into it that may not be required or that we need to put focus on other aspects to improve the performance of these projects.

Dr. Browne: Who is conducting that exercise or to conduct that exercise?

Hon. Griffith: The Permanent Secretary, he is actually, he is involved right now with a team to ensure that we have that agency to deal with the audit, because there might be different agencies depending on the requirement. For example, for the Mentorship Programme it could be something probably totally different to the requirement for the Hoop of Life.

Dr. Browne: Would it be in-house or contracted, that service?

Hon. Griffith: Contracted.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, we go to Item 009, Other Transfers. I recognize the Member for Chaguanas West and then the Member for Laventille East/Morvant and then my two colleagues down there.

Mr. Warner: Under 16, Transit Police Unit, can you tell me, how these people are recruited, how they are trained and if this \$1 million for the police applies to them?

Hon. Griffith: If the—

Mr. Warner: One million dollars, if you are damaged in the line of duty, if that applies to these policemen?

Hon. Griffith: The \$1 million, Mr. Chairman, again we are still looking at the system to ensure that no one will be left out, but in the same manner it is not abused. I can give you an example, if someone is playing a football game for the police and unfortunately something happens, if that is going to be considered

killing in the line of duty, if he is still performing his duty. [*Crosstalk*] Well, I know, but the thing is, it is very important that we be very clear to ensure that this is not abused in any way or it goes overboard, whilst at the same time ensuring that individuals who have performed in the line of duty and they are killed that they would be compensated. And that would involve not just transit police, we are also looking at the—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Warner: Mr. Minister, I am not of course too bothered, at another time I will go into that detail. Not that I do not understand you, because I have to talk about the SRP and all these people, so that is an aside already. My question really is, however, how these people are recruited, how they are trained? Because I see them almost every day, and I think that there needs to be some kind of overhaul of that unit. How they are trained, how they are being recruited, that is the critical point right now. The SRP I will come to at another time.

Mr. Chairman: You have information on that?

Hon. Griffith: Yes, Mr. Chairman, through OLEP there is a proper recruiting process that takes place, and the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service they do have a part to play in that process for the training of the transit police. Obviously, it will not be the same as the persons who actually go in as regular members of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, but there is that basic degree of training that is mandated. It is similar to the reserve Defence Force Reserves, similar to the SRPs. You must have some basic degree of training that is provided for those individuals.

Mr. Warner: Is recruitment exercise advertised?

Hon. Griffith: Yes, it is. In fact, it was advertised just recently.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, I recognize the Member for Laventille East/Morvant.

Miss Cox: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I have a few questions. I just want to take all. SSA, there is an increase of \$25 million, what accounts for that increase?

Hon. Griffith: I will have to liaise with the Director of SSA to ensure that I can provide that information and without actually revealing—there is a reason for it, this is not a “cloak-and-dagger” situation for the increase. There is something much more than that.

Miss Cox: Well, we know one already, but we want to know the other reasons.

Hon. Griffith: I do not know, you could tell me.

Miss Cox: All right, I move to the HIV Coordinating Unit. It is \$2 million—I mean this unit, is it just for the Ministry of National Security General Administration? But I think it also covers defence force and so on.

Hon. Griffith: What is it?

Miss Cox: The HIV Unit.

Hon. Griffith: That works on, we work hand in hand with the Ministry of Health on this matter.

Miss Cox: The Morvant/Laventille Initiative, I see an estimate of \$23 million for 2015 and for 2014, \$26 million. I want to know what this is about, what was spent, what was done? Laventille/Morvant Initiative, where was this money spent?

Hon. Griffith: That is through OLEP. I can give you a breakdown of how all the funds were spent and to explain to you how it can be acquired.

Miss Cox: But was it spent in Morvant and Laventille? That is what I would like to know.

Hon. Griffith: Yeah.

Miss Cox: Okay, there was an increase concerning, as you spoke about OLEP, an increase of \$2.8 million. What accounts for that increase to OLEP?

Hon. Griffith: OLEP is now being involved, Mr. Chairman, in a number of other activities. The Community Comfort Patrol being one and other avenues. So OLEP has become much more—heavily involved in other aspects, and again I can give you the comprehensive breakdown of all that has caused the increase.

Mr. Chairman: The Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Imbert: Why is there not a Diego Martin initiative? I see Morvant/Laventille, what is that?

Hon. Griffith: You have any concerns with this?

Mr. Imbert: I am serious, I am asking you. What is it? Twenty-three million dollars for what?

Mr. Chairman: That is the only one that you—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Imbert: They are not answering my question. What is this for?

Mr. Chairman: All right, let me recognize the Member for Diego Martin West, please.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, I have an abiding concern about the management of these accounts under these transfers, not just in this Ministry, transfers in

general, because it seems to have now become, not now, but it has turned out to be a major part of management of the Public Accounts of Trinidad and Tobago. And against the background of our recent development which our colleague here is very familiar with, there is an issue of public accounts management reporting, transparency and accountability. And against that background I want to ask the Minister, how are these moneys transferred to all these elements under 007 and 009? How is the operation run? Are there bank accounts that go with those transfers? Who is the money transferred to and how are the moneys accounted for by the accounting officer who would have transferred those moneys?

Hon. Griffith: Mr. Chairman, it is not that there is a specific bank account for these agencies, everything goes through the accounts department of the Ministry of National Security. So, with that, it will ensure that we have the checks and balances. I am not saying that it does not mean that we need to verify whether we need to cut the fat in anyway, but—*[Interruption]*

Dr. Rowley: I am not here raising the quantum at all. I am talking about the management of the accounts. If we agree that the sums are quite okay and there are no problems with the accounts, but what you just said only guarantees that the money leaves you—*[Interruption]*

Hon. Griffith: Yes.

Dr. Rowley:—and you send these transfers somewhere—for example, let us take the Morvant/Laventille Initiative, we are transferring, on an annual basis, over \$20 million per annum to something called the Movant/Laventille Initiative. As far as I am concerned that is Lennox Smith. The accounting officer in your Ministry sends or causes to be sent to MLIO, \$20-odd million of taxpayers' money. The question I am putting to you, how does your accounting officer, who as an accounting officer for the Ministry, in which that transfer has been made and for which he is responsible as the accounting officer, how does he account for what goes on in MLIO? And what are the reporting arrangements for accounting for those moneys.

Hon. Griffith: I have it here to show the breakdown of every single thing that was spent for it. The breakdown with the schools, the project category, the start date, how it was approved, the number of persons benefited—*[Interruption]*

Dr. Rowley: Who gave you that?

Hon. Griffith: The Ministry of National Security. This came from—*[Interruption]*

Dr. Rowley: Where did they get it from? What is the accounting arrangement? Not just a document. You see, anybody could write anything, Mr. Chairman, and send it to you. What I am looking for is a proper accounting procedure. Once the money leaves your Ministry by way of your accounting officer sending it, how does he verify that what you are reading there for me has any base in fact? You remember LifeSport, I am sure you can give me a whole document, a whole box of paper about LifeSport with all kinds of numbers and all kinds of Companies and all kind of—but we notice in the end that they bore no relation to reality in many instances. So what I am asking, how does the accounting officer in your Ministry account for these transfers?

Dr. Moonilal: And you mean the project as well eh, not just the money.

Dr. Rowley: Because he is the accounting officer.

4.00 p.m.

You see, my fear is that once that cheque goes to the entity, that is the end of that, until some unpleasant story breaks. Could you tell us what is in place so that the accounting officer at the level of the Ministry can be properly held accountable for these large sums of moneys transferred to entities, even nebulous entities like MLIO? [*Crosstalk*] That is not the Lennox Smith MLIO?

Technocrat: Morvant/Laventille Initiative. It is a broad-based—sorry.

Dr. Rowley: That is something else? Well, I am glad to hear that because, I mean—

Dr. Moonilal: Having slandered the man, you are happy to hear that.

Dr. Rowley: Slander? But I am asking you—[*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: Yes, I recognize the Member for Diego Martin West.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, there is more. It is not just MLIO, it is ODPM as well. You see, we have ODPM. How does ODPM get money from the Ministry? A cheque? Was a cheque sent to the ODPM?

Hon. Griffith: Chairman, for example, ODPM, if they were involved in disaster—when we had the disaster relief in St. Lucia, they would be the coordinating body and then they would send the list of the requirements. So for example, if we send water suppliers or whatever, cheques will be made payable directly to the supplier based on what was sent out.

Dr. Rowley: So the ODPM does not award contracts? Is that what you are telling me?

Hon. Griffith: No. Pertaining to disaster management?

Dr. Rowley: I am talking about the operations of the ODPM because they are here, the recipient of \$65 million, and last year they got \$60 million; the previous year they got \$56 million, and I presume that this is in preparation to discharge their responsibility when there is a disaster. So it cannot be that—it is not my understanding that they only come into being. Do they award contracts?

Hon. Griffith: They have a limit up to \$450,000. Anything other than that, they have to get the request and the approval from the Permanent Secretary for the acquisition.

Dr. Rowley: To award contracts for anything?

Hon. Griffith: Yeah. Um-hm. Yeah.

Dr. Moonilal: They have ongoing work too, eh, not just disaster—

Hon. Griffith: The ODPM we have is not just that they wait on a disaster, there are ongoing things of—

Dr. Moonilal: Awareness.

Hon. Griffith: Awareness programme, yes.

Mr. Chairman: You are over?

Dr. Rowley: I would just like to ask the Minister—

Hon. Member: Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Just now.

Dr. Rowley: You see, the Minister has just confused me there because I would like him to confirm that the ODPM does not award contracts.

Hon. Griffith: No.

Dr. Rowley: Because if it does not, well then my fear is not based on—If it does, then I would like to know how those contracts are awarded and we would like a list of these contracts awarded by the ODPM in the last year and the forecast for what is to be spent—

Hon. Griffith: Just the contracts, or expenses?

Dr. Rowley: Who are the contractors; what they have contracted for and how the money was spent in the last year. Because it is my view, contrary to what you have just said, that the ODPM does, in fact, obtain goods and services. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Miss Mc Donald: “And me after.” [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Imbert: Could the Minister finally tell me what is the Morvant/Laventille initiative and why is there not a Diego Martin initiative? Just tell me what it is, since it is dealing with crime or national security—

Mr. Chairman: And then I go to the Member for Diego Martin Central. Go ahead.

Dr. Khan: Mr. Chairman, in the vein of what the—Minister of National Security—

Mr. Imbert: But wait! “Why ah cyar geh meh answer?”

Dr. Khan:—in the vein of what the Member for Diego Martin West has been asking, about the management structure and how the contracts are awarded, et cetera, I would like to find out if the Minister of National Security could tell me what was the management structure for the Blimp and how was that contract awarded. [*Crosstalk*] No, I want to know! I want to know! [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: Member for Diego Martin Central and the Member for Arouca/Maloney and then the Member for Port of Spain South. The Member for Diego Martin Central, please.

Dr. Browne: Minister, do I have your attention?

Mr. Chairman: Yeah. Please, please, please, please. [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Member: We will discipline you!

Mr. Chairman: Please, please.

Dr. Khan: Did they have management structures before this?

Mr. Chairman: Please! Please!

Dr. Browne: Yes, Minister, I promised a follow-up question on Training and it is under Sub-Item 21, this National Security Training Academy. I would like some information about this. Are we not under Other Transfers?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, we are under Other Transfers, yes.

Dr. Browne: May I proceed with my question, Chairman?

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Dr. Browne: Right. Where is this academy located? Who heads the academy? And I am looking at the allocation of \$10 million, and when you add all

of the other arms of the defence force with respect to training, you end up with almost \$60 million scattered, including \$1.5 million at Defence Force Headquarters, \$2 million at General Administration, et cetera. What is this training academy? And what role does it play vis à vis training in the various arms which each have their training budgets? Are there distinct training units in the various arms? How is training being coordinated?

Hon. Griffith: Chairman?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, hon. Minister.

Hon. Griffith: The National Security Training Academy is established at—

Mr. Imbert: “Ah ask yuh a question, yuh know.” You would not answer mine.

Hon. Griffith: “Ah coming tuh you. Ah saving the best for last.”

Mr. Chairman: Yes, go ahead.

Hon. Griffith: It is established at Cumuto Barracks, Mr. Chairman. This is similar to when we had the Special Anti-Crime Unit, there was a training facility in Cumuto Barracks, but the difference with that academy is that it was limited for only those persons—primarily for the persons who were in SAUTT. What the National Security Training Academy is doing now is to ensure that it will provide—it is a department that will ensure that the proper type of security requirements would be provided for all arms of the law enforcement agencies. So, for example, this is not specific to any one agency. For example, if it is that we need to have an indoor range, they would facilitate how we can acquire an indoor range, not just for the police, but can be used by the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force.

They are also looking at other types of training to ensure that we have a simulation theatre to deal with the area at Cumuto Barracks to assist the law enforcement agencies in joint patrols, in joint operations between the defence force and the police service, which we never had before.

It also provides a facility there for the Special Branch in their specific type of training. So it is now given that environment to allow all different arms of the law enforcement agencies for training. So what you will see in the National Security Training Academy, which is headed by Brig. Gen. Carl Alfonso, as the Executive Director, is more of a coordinating agency to assist in looking at the requirements for different arms of the law enforcement agencies, but where you could have that training facility provided for everyone and not just for a specific unit.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, Member for Arouca/Maloney. [*Crosstalk*] Member for Arouca/Maloney, please, and then you will deal with the Member for Diego Martin North/East on that Diego Martin initiative.

Hon. Griffith: What is the question?

Mr. Imbert: What is the Morvant/Laventille Initiative?

Hon. Griffith: There are a number of things, Mr. Chairman. As I said, I have the breakdown of all the different aspects that I have assisted in this. It goes again with secondary crime prevention where we looked at the location and tried to set a course intended to bring about social change, based on its promise of greater People's Partnership in governance, what we spoke about.

So we are looking at different things in that area which may be deemed a high risk area, to provide youths with different opportunities to turn away from a life of crime and to give them just better opportunities. I have the whole breakdown of all the different things that can be done—

Mr. Imbert: Could you give one example?

Hon. Griffith: Of?

Mr. Imbert: Of an initiative. You say it is a whole list.

Miss Cox: He is supposed to provide us with a list.

Hon. Griffith: Yeah, look, I have the whole list here. I “doh” know if I could—I could run the whole thing. We have mediation training courses— [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: Please, please, please.

Mr. Imbert: Why is there not a Diego Martin initiative? “We doh have crime in Diego Martin?”

Hon. Griffith: I could look into that. Yes, I could provide the copy for you.

Mr. Chairman: He would look into that. Member for Arouca/Maloney. That is the last area and then we go on, please.

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair, I would like to look at Sub-Item 10, Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management. Mr. Chair, what I have noticed is that there is a consistent increase in the transfer to this particular organization, from \$56 million in 2013, \$60 million in 2014, \$65 million in 2015. I would like to find out from the Minister whether or not an assessment of the effectiveness of this

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organization has been done. Some members of the population really do not take the ODPM seriously. We have issues of the communication system, weaknesses in coordination, as well as a lot of people are not aware of the disaster shelters. I saw in an article—

Mr. Chairman: All right. Let us hear how the Minister will respond to you. Minister?

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair, I am not finished.

Dr. Browne: She has five minutes.

Mr. Chairman: You are not finished?

Miss Hospedales: I saw in an article by Dr. Ramroop that they were going to increase the number of disaster shelters to 400. We are still not aware of those shelters, where they are located. In the event that a disaster occurs, a lot of people are not even aware of the evacuation procedures. Look at Port of Spain, during a normal flash flood, Mr. Chairman—

Mr. Chairman: Yes, we are hearing you. What is your next question? You have another question?

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chairman, you are being extremely rude.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, we are dealing with the Development Programme now. Sub-Head 09, Development Programme. Item 04, Social Infrastructure. I recognize the Member for Laventille East/Morvant and the Member for Diego Martin East.

Miss Cox: Mr. Chair—

Mr. Chairman: Yes?

Miss Cox:—under 019, Purchase of Vessels for the Coast Guard, does this concern the long-range vessels?

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister?

Hon. Griffith: Just one minute. I am just getting—sorry, what were we looking at?

Miss Cox: All right. Under 019, Purchase of Vessels for the Coast Guard, does this involve the long-range vessels?

Hon. Griffith: No, no. There will be no acquisition for long-range patrol vessels in this fiscal year. That process will go within—we have a tender process that will take several months. What we are looking to acquire within this fiscal year, Mr. Chairman, will be the acquisition of hovercraft interceptors to secure the

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low-lying waters which will be within the Gulf of Paria and the southern coastline, and also the possible acquisition of 50-metre vessels to secure between two and 12 miles offshore.

Mr. Chairman: Yes. Next question.

Miss Cox: Under 048, there is Logistic Support for the Acquisition of Naval Assets.

Mr. Chairman: Page?

Miss Cox: Sixty-two.

Mr. Chairman: Right, 62. What number?

Miss Cox: 048. I see there is no provision in 2014, but for 2015—

Hon. Member: It is a new project.

Miss Cox: It is a new project?

Hon. Griffith: Which one, sorry?

Mr. Chairman: 048.

Hon. Griffith: 048?

Miss Cox: Yeah, what is it about? I want to know what it is about, this new project; this \$8 million.

Mr. Chairman: Is it the \$8 million?

Miss Cox: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Right.

Hon. Griffith: This involves—there is a specific implementation team, Mr. Chairman, comprising five persons and they have been going to different places to ascertain the types of vessels that are available and what we would require. So that team has gone to Korea, Colombia. They have been going to different places to ascertain the type of vessels that are available and will be conducive to what we require. We have had situations before where vessels have been acquired and then when we get them, they were not the vessels that were appropriate and they cost—such as the postal vessels where we have had that problem. So this is a team that has been going to ensure that we get the right vessels.

Miss Cox: Is there any plan to get vessels from China?

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Hon. Griffith: China? No. Well, remember, we have the—there will be a tender process for the acquisition of long-range patrol vessels. So there has been actually no decision made pertaining to the decision for any vessel of that nature for offshore patrol.

Mr. Chairman: All right. Any further questions?

Miss Cox: Yes, I have.

Mr. Chairman: Yes?

Miss Cox: Upgrade of Roadways and Drainage to Teteron, is that not the work of the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure? Why would the Regiment be undertaking that?

Hon. Griffith: That roadway really is a private roadway. That is really from—if you are looking from Staubles go all the way into Teteron, and just even beyond. So that is why the cost was put under the Regiment rather than the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure, because it is private. That area of Teteron Barracks is a private roadway.

Miss Cox: I have one other question concerning the base infrastructure for camps at La Romaine, Felicity and Forres Park. What happened, I see \$2 million was allocated but, Minister, I think the La Romaine camp is an important camp, strategically placed in the south of Trinidad and Tobago, and this work has been ongoing since 2008 at that camp, and I see here, three camps lumped together for \$2 million. I feel that something should be done to finish that La Romaine Regiment camp.

4.15 p.m.

Hon. Griffith: Yes, right now, if you look at the camp, it is really a temporary camp and the facilities need to be upgraded. Likewise, we are actually looking towards the commencement for the camp in Felicity and also the coast guard bases as well, but I do understand with the Felicity camp to commence—

Miss Cox: The La Romaine because if something happens in the south, you know, you must have a proper basing.

Hon. Griffith: Yes, and because of our involvement now with the Energy Sector Security Initiative, we do know the importance to secure the energy sector. That \$2 million is just for the design itself.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, could I ask the Minister to go back to 019, can you confirm that the Chinese vessel the Prime Minister spoke about is not going to be acquired? Number one.

Hon. Griffith: Which one?

Mr. Imbert: The Chinese vessel that the Prime Minister spoke about when she went to China that we will be buying. Can the Minister confirm that that is no longer on the cards, that is off the radar, we would not be buying the Chinese vessel?

Hon. Griffith: No, I would not be able to say that.

Mr. Chairman: No, he would not be able to say that.

Mr. Imbert: Wait, okay, you cannot say. So could you give us some idea of this \$50 million, what you are planning to buy with that? Do you have a breakdown?

Hon. Griffith: But I think I just mentioned that.

Mr. Imbert: No, you said interceptor, hovercraft, maybe a 50-metre, but one 50-metre will cost \$50 million. So do you have an idea of what you plan to buy?

Hon. Griffith: Well, the request involves hovercrafts and interceptors. That alone will cover that whole aspect.

Mr. Imbert: So then why did you say you are buying a 50-metre since you do not have enough money for it?

Hon. Griffith: Because there is a certain—

Mr. Imbert: Right, okay.

Hon. Griffith: Wait a minute. There is actually the approval for two 50-metre vessels and in fact—

Mr. Imbert: But you do not have an allocation.

Hon. Griffith: Let me finish, you asked me a question.

Mr. Imbert: But you do not have an allocation for it. Two 50-metre vessels would cost—what? Over \$100 million, \$200 million. You do not have that—

Hon. Griffith: But you are not going to pay all in one.

Mr. Imbert: So you do plan to buy a 50-metre in 2015?

Hon. Griffith: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: All right, any further questions?

Mr. Imbert: No, hold on, he has not answered me. 047, have you abandoned the purchase of fast patrol vessels? 047, I see you have gone to zero. You had \$25 million allocated in 2014, it disappeared. Have you abandoned the acquisition of fast patrol vessels?

Hon. Griffith: No, not at all.

Mr. Imbert: What has happened to that line item?

Hon. Griffith: For the fast patrol vessels?

Mr. Imbert: Yes.

Hon. Griffith: See again, it is all different. Whether you call it fast patrol, coastal patrol vessels, there is a difference with offshore patrol vessels and fast patrol vessels.

Mr. Imbert: I am talking about this line item, not offshore patrol, not coastal, this one, fast patrol vessels.

Dr. Browne: Why is there no allocation?

Mr. Imbert: Why have you abandoned the acquisition of fast patrol vessels? You have no allocation for it. I did not ask about offshore patrols, 047. I did not ask you about hovercraft, “I ent reach there yet”.

Hon. Griffith: It is under 019, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Imbert: So wait a minute, 50-metre vessels, fast patrol vessels, interceptors, hovercraft, côté ci côté là—all for \$50 million? Okay, thank you. Let us go now to—

Hon. Griffith: But what is the question?

Mr. Chairman: No, before the Member for Diego Martin Central, I still have to recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East. Go ahead.

Mr. Imbert: No, still on this. I would like to know what happened to the Refurbishment of Coast Guard Aircraft - C26. Have you scrapped that aircraft? Look at 030, zero allocation. Fixed Wing Twin Engine Trainer/Utility Aircraft, what happened to that in 2014?

Mr. Chairman: What page are you on?

Mr. Imbert: I am on page 63, it is the same Head. I am on Air Guard 030, page 63, Refurbishment of Coast Guard Aircraft - C26, no allocation. Have you scrapped that aircraft? I have not finished. Purchase of Fixed Wing Twin Engine Trainer/Utility Aircraft, what happened to that in 2014? And Upgrade of Air

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Guard Fixed-Wing Fleet, what happened in 2014? I am seeing zero here right through. And, could you tell me where is the allocation for the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle, better known as the drones, which you keep talking about? I cannot find an allocation for drones inside of here. Where is the allocation for your drones? [Crosstalk] No, no, he said UAVs. Where is your allocation for UAVs?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister.

Mr. Imbert: Could you deal with the fact that you have not refurbished the coast guard aircraft and why you have a zero allocation? Are you scrapping that aircraft?

Hon. Griffith: No, there is actually a tender process in place for us to acquire a proper fixed-wing aircraft. The C26, it has reached the point where—

Mr. Imbert: So you are scrapping it, why do you not answer yes or no?

Hon. Griffith: You are telling me how to answer my question?

Mr. Imbert: Are you scrapping the C26? Yes or no?

Hon. Griffith: You cannot tell me how to answer my question. You asked me a question, I am giving you an answer.

Mr. Imbert: Why is there no allocation for refurbishment of C26 aircraft?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, you want to take note of those—

Hon. Griffith: I will take note and I will give the answer—

Mr. Imbert: I need clarification for the Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, the drones that you have been talking about for the last year. Where are the drones?

Hon. Griffith: The cost for the UAVs will come under the National Operations Centre.

Mr. Imbert: This year?

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Diego Martin Central. I am coming back to you, Member for Laventille East/Morvant.

Dr. Browne: Minister of National Security, I refer you to Sub-Item 019 and 047, pages 61 and 62 under Coast Guard. [Interruption] Chairman, when they are ready, I will proceed.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, hon. Minister, are you ready for—

Hon. Griffith: I did not hear the question.

Mr. Chairman: All right, could you pose your question? Member for Diego Martin Central, I am ready.

Dr. Browne: Thank you, Chairman. 019, Purchase of Vessels for the Coast Guard and 047 Purchase of Fast Patrol Vessels. Because I listened to the budget and the Government has been speaking about support for local shipbuilding. There have been providers constructing marine vessels in this country for over 50 years now. Is the coast guard considering partnering with any local suppliers for the design and supply of some of the smaller vessels that may be required in the future for this service? Smaller fast vessels or—

Hon. Griffith: Interceptors.

Dr. Browne: Yes, exactly. Is that on the cards right now and if so, give an update as to any negotiations that are taking place?

Hon. Griffith: Yes, in fact, we are actually looking for the possible acquisition of six to eight local interceptors and these are the—

Dr. Browne: Sixty-eight?

Hon. Griffith: Six to eight interceptors and—that can be designed. We do have companies that actually have the capability to—

Dr. Browne: What size vessels are you talking about?

Hon. Griffith: The interceptors, that will be no more than 34 feet and anything other than that, once you start moving up to 50 metres, that is when you start looking towards countries such as Holland, United States, Korea, Colombia.

Mr. Chairman: All right, I recognize the Member for Laventille East/Morvant and then we move on.

Miss Cox: Air Guard, I know that you did not want the Member for Diego Martin North/East to tell you how to answer your question, could I answer a question to you?

Hon. Griffith: Please, please.

Miss Cox: Is it true or is it fair to say that the air guard is being underfunded in favour of NOC?

Hon. Griffith: Not at all. In fact, I think we have a massive expenditure actually dealing with the maintenance for the four Agusta helicopters. Likewise, we have seen the need to try to—the two C26 aircraft, we do need to have a new

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fixed-wing aircraft. So there is absolutely nothing pertaining to it being competitive in any way at all.

It is unfortunate, however, because of the contractual obligations we have with the Agusta helicopters, we do not have that capability to use it as much as we should. We have situations where even the defence force, they cannot use the helicopters because the contract, for some reason, it was done under civilian licence so it cannot be used. When we had the blackout, we could not use the helicopters.

So there is nothing against the helicopters, they are very good helicopters, but the contractual arrangements, they were made in such a way that—we have lost the value for those helicopters. So we are actually putting good money into a system that we cannot use and we do have certain—even with the pilots, they are not getting the flying time—

Dr. Rowley: “So yuh buy something yuh cyah use?”

Hon. Griffith: Pardon? What is that?

Dr. Rowley: You bought something that you cannot use?

Hon. Griffith: Correct. That was Mariano Browne, I think. He was the one that keeps boasting about it. So we have had a situation with those helicopters and it will continue.

Mr. Chairman: I would now like to go to Infrastructure Development Fund. I recognize the Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Miss Hospedales: Page 242 under Public Order and Safety, 001, the Construction of the Arouca Fire Station, I would like to find out exactly when would the construction of that fire station begin?

Hon. Griffith: The final designs have been approved, the tender process has been initiated for construction of the facility.

Miss Hospedales: Exactly when is it going to be—

Mr. Chairman: Okay, hon. Members, the question is—I am proceeding—that the sum of \$2,692,486,170 for Head 22, the Ministry of National Security stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 22 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, we would like to thank you but I want to let you know, you have given a lot of undertakings here and we have recorded all of them, and we shall be writing you to fulfil your commitment to the Parliament. Okay? We want to thank you on behalf of the Standing Finance Committee, and your technocrats. Thank you very much.

Hon. Griffith: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I understand that the police service will be with us on Thursday, they will not join us today. And as such, the next Ministry is Head 40, the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs. We will be here until about 12 because we want to complete about 15 tonight.

Mr. Imbert: Are we taking tea?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, we are asking people to stream out when they are ready to take some tea.

Mr. Imbert: So no break?

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, there is no break, we are going straight. We have a lot of work to do and tomorrow is Republic Day. [*Crosstalk*] We must celebrate it in style tonight by completing about 30.

So we invite the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs to join us with his technocrats.

4.30 p.m.

Head 40.

Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs, \$6,160,615,800. I will now invite the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs, if he so desires, to make a brief opening statement for no more than five minutes dealing with the priority areas of the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs. Would you like to volunteer, Sir?

Hon. Ramnarine: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: I now invite you, thank you.

Hon. Ramnarine: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. The expenditure of the Ministry, as you just stated, is in the region of TT \$6.1 billion. The majority of that expenditure is related to the subsidy for fuels. That is in the region of approximately 95 per cent. The administrative cost of the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs is met by the Petroleum impost under Regulation 73 of the Petroleum Act and that works in a manner where the oil companies reimburse the

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Ministry of Finance and the Economy for the administrative cost of running the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs. The subsidy for fiscal 2014 is approximately—we estimate to be—TT \$4.15 billion.

Mr. Chairman: That is the subsidy?

Hon. Ramnarine: The sum of TT \$4.1 billion for fiscal 2014, which still has a couple days remaining, so it is a bit of an estimate.

Mr. Chairman: Okay.

Hon. Ramnarine: Of that amount, \$3.5 billion is met by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and approximately \$0.6 billion is met by the petroleum production levy.

This figure of \$4.1 billion is a decline over the 2013 figure, which stood at TT \$4.4 billion. That represents a 6 per cent decline in the subsidy, and I wish to report to the Standing Finance Committee that we have seen a steady and significant decline in the sales of subsidized diesel where, in 2010, the figures stood at 649 million litres. In fiscal 2014, we are now down to 514 million litres of subsidized diesel being sold and that has contributed to a tremendous savings for the people of Trinidad and Tobago and is mainly as a consequence of the actions taken by the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs in the last four years to treat with illegal trade in subsidized diesel.

Mr. Chairman: Okay.

Hon. Ramnarine: That concludes my statement.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much.

Question proposed: That Head 40 stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the sum of \$6,160,615,800 for Head 40: the Ministry of Energy and Energy 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*.

We get into Sub-Head 01: Personnel Expenditure and we deal with Item 001, General Administration. We go to Sub-Head 02: Goods and Services, Item 001, General Administration. I recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East and then the Member for Point Fortin and then the Member for St. Joseph.

Mr. Imbert: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister explain what Sub-Item 28, Other Contracted Services, is used for and why is there an increase of \$15 million.

Mr. Chairman: Just speak a little loudly because I am not hearing you.

Mr. Imbert: Could the Minister explain what Head 28, Other Contracted Services, is used for on page 248, where there is an allocation of \$38 million for this year, an increase of \$15 million over last year, and could the Minister also explain why there is such a high figure of \$13 million for Contract Employment? And could you tell us whether anywhere in your allocation for Goods and Services, you have any expenditure for renewable energy for solar energy, wind, wave energy, projects, subsidy, plans/programmes dealing with renewable energy?

Hon. Ramnarine: Thank you very much. Just for everybody to be on the same page, we are on page 248, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Hon. Ramnarine: With regard to the question from the Member of Parliament for Diego Martin North/East, he first went to Sub-Item 28, Other Contracted Services?

Mr. Imbert: Yeah.

Hon. Ramnarine: And the question had to do with the increase of \$15 million.

Mr. Imbert: And what is it for.

Hon. Ramnarine: And what it is for. The main reason for that increase is provision being made for what we call a Minerals Ranger Squad, which is a provision that we are putting forward for policing those areas that Trinidad and Tobago—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Imbert: Is that a new item?

Hon. Ramnarine: That is part of that.

Mr. Imbert: I know, but it is a new squad?

Hon. Ramnarine: Yes, it is a new squad.

Mr. Imbert: Right, okay.

Hon. Ramnarine: So that is what is proposed there.

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, could you go on to the next part. He is clear on that.

Hon. Ramnarine: We also have in there renewal of licences for IT. The Ministry uses a lot of specialized software for reservoir engineering, and so on, and we have to renew some of those licences.

Mr. Imbert: Okay.

Hon. Ramnarine: The other issue you raised is Contract Employment, which is Sub-Item 16. The Ministry between the years 2013 and 2014, you would have noticed an increase in the amount of moneys for Contract Employment. That is mainly as a result of the Ministry taking our returning scholars—a lot of those returning scholars are assigned to the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs, in the fields of Geoscience, Law, and so on—and putting those people into contract positions. So that would have increased our Contract Employment expenditure.

Mr. Imbert: Okay, but going back to 28 and my other question, where in Goods and Services do you have expenditure for renewable energy?

Hon. Ramnarine: Yeah, sure. That expenditure is captured in our Development Programme.

Mr. Imbert: Okay.

Hon. Ramnarine: So we could treat with that when we reach that point.

Mr. Chairman: We will deal with that after. I recognize the Member for Point Fortin.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Mr. Chairman, I had my hand up first, so I beg to go back.

Mr. Chairman: I really want to apologize for not recognizing you first.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: That is alright. I just want to be able to go back to just minor thing, General Administration: 08, Vacant Posts. Even though it is just \$1 million, my concern is that we are able to fill the professional level positions, because I notice there was no expenditure in 2014, so my sense is that there are still some positions vacant. Are these professional levels?

Hon. Ramnarine: Yes, we have vacant positions for contract officers in the Ministry. The Ministry is currently going through a restructuring process, which we expect to complete shortly and once that is completed, we would seek to fill those positions.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: May I ask a further question to that? Are we able to retain our professionals?

Hon. Ramnarine: That is not a—it is a well-known secret that the energy sector is quite possibly the highest paying sector in the country and we struggle to retain people at the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs. That is not something that started today. It has been an historic thing with the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs.

In 1999, I think it was, a professional allowance was introduced, which subsequently, I think, was also applied to the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Works but we have to continually review the compensation for the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs, given the fact that we interface with such a high-paying sector.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Okay, is it that—in looking at Sub-Item 08, under Goods and Services, I notice that there is an additional \$7 million, is there new accommodation or new offices?

Hon. Ramnarine: We are looking at page 248, Sub-Item 08. Is that Rent/Lease Accommodation, et cetera? There is an increase of \$7 million and that is for two—we currently rent a facility in San Fernando for the Ministry's south office in the Maska building. We are acquiring more space from that landlord, from Maska, because the Ministry is currently very cramped in San Fernando.

San Fernando is also where the Ministry stores our wells files and a lot of our seismic data is stored in San Fernando and we have to ensure—that is the repository of the country's history of oil and gas—those things are properly stored. So we will be getting more space in Maska and we also have provision in here for renting an office in the eastern part of Trinidad and Tobago for the Minerals Division of the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs, given the fact that we need to have a greater oversight of what is happening in the areas like Matura and Valencia, and so on.

Mr. Chairman: All right.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Looking further, sorry, Sir, at 62, even though there is a decrease in expenditure, in terms of Promotions, Publicity and Printing, I wish to enquire about the types of promotions and publicity, from the point of view that I do not know that the man in the street, to whom these promotions would appeal, is actually interested in any product of the NGC, the NEC, and so on, and I noticed that these are the types of advertisements that are out there. So I am not sure if this is really benefiting the public. I mean, it is still an expenditure of \$6.5 million in 2014, and another projected \$4.5 million.

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Hon. Ramnarine: Right, I was not too clear on what the question was.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: I am saying that, even though I have seen a decrease, I am asking what types of promotional and publicity items are these for, bearing in mind that I do not think it really affects the man in the street, the kinds of promotions that I have been seeing under the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs for NGC, Petrotrin, and so on.

Hon. Ramnarine: NGC and Petrotrin's budget for promotion would not be here. This is strictly the Ministry. What we have recognized is that there is a need for the average citizen to have a better understanding, appreciation for how the energy sector works and how it affects his life directly. So we have launched some educational programmes on television. You may have seen a couple of them. There are some of them running on the radio right now and that is simply part of that entire promotional—it also includes the publications of the Ministry.

Mr. Chairman: All right, we go on.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Mr. Chairman, I had my hand.

Mr. Chairman: Which one are you on?

Mr. Deyalsingh: Chairman, you had recognized me third.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, I recognize the MP for St. Joseph.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under 02, sub-sub 08: Rent/Lease, you mentioned that you are renting premises from Maska?

Hon. Ramnarine: Yes.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Could you tell me what is the monthly rental charge and the size of the compound?

Hon. Ramnarine: Yes, we would get that for you, Member.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Okay. How was Maska chosen?

Hon. Ramnarine: Maska was—I do not know how Maska was chosen. When I became Minister, Maska was there, but we could find out for you. But I believe Maska has been the home of the south office for the Ministry for a while. Prior to that it was Jap's building in San Fernando.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Okay, thank you.

Mr. Jeffrey: I just want to go back.

Mr. Chairman: No, not you yet. I think I recognize the Member for St. Joseph.

Mr. Deyalsingh: No, I asked.

Mr. Chairman: Member for St. Joseph you are through? Okay, Member for La Brea.

Mr. Jeffrey: I just want to go back to 62. Could we get a breakdown of the Promotions, Publicity and Printing? I am a little curious here.

Dr. Moonilal: What you curious about?

Mr. Jeffrey: A breakdown of the—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Chairman: You would like to know what comprises.

Mr. Jeffrey: Yes, yes.

Mr. Chairman: Minister, could you indicate?

Hon. Ramnarine: Yeah, let me just—Member I will commit to get that information to you. Okay? If you would so allow me.

Mr. Chairman: All right, cool. So we go on to Minor Equipment, Sub-Head 03.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, did I hear the Minister say that, with respect to Item 28, Other Contracted Services, that it is anticipated that you would have a ranger squad?

Hon. Ramnarine: Yes.

Dr. Rowley: Is it that you intend to hire a contractor to function as a ranger squad, or you are going to establish within the Ministry, public officials as a ranger squad?

Hon. Ramnarine: No, it is the intention of the Ministry to hire people to work within the remit of the Ministry, not to hire a private firm to—*[Interruption]*

Dr. Rowley: Okay, so you are going to establish within the Ministry a squad?

Hon. Ramnarine: Yes, a unit in the Ministry. I just want to say, we have consulted with other stakeholder Ministries in this regard.

Mr. Chairman: All right, we go to Sub-Head 03: Minor Equipment Purchases; Item 001, General Administration. We go to Sub-Head 04: Current Transfer and Subsidies; Item 001, Regional Bodies; Item 004, International

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Bodies; Item 007, Households. I recognize the Leader of the Opposition, the Member for Diego Martin West.

4.45 p.m.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, I did hear the Minister say that approximately 95 per cent of the subsidy due, of that figure had to do with petroleum subsidy.

Hon. Ramnarine: Yeah, correct.

Dr. Rowley: Ninety-five per cent, so for all practical purposes we can say that that is the subsidy? What is the other 5 per cent?

Hon. Ramnarine: No, well what we are saying is that the total allocation, in terms of expenditure for the Ministry, is \$6,140,000,000, as per page 246, right, and the money allocated to the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs to treat with the subsidy in 2015, as per page 250, is \$6 billion. So what I am saying is that the bulk of the money—

Dr. Rowley: For the Ministry is subsidy?

Hon. Ramnarine: Yeah.

Dr. Rowley: So on page 250, Households, that figure there, \$4.4 billion in 2013, that is the petroleum subsidy?

Hon. Ramnarine: Yes.

Dr. Rowley: And that rose to \$7 billion in 2014?

Hon. Ramnarine: Yeah, correct.

Dr. Rowley: So it went from \$4.4 billion in 2013 to \$7 billion in 2014.

Hon. Ramnarine: Yes. And if you would allow me to—

Dr. Rowley: What was the—

Hon. Ramnarine: The reason?

Dr. Rowley: Yeah.

Hon. Ramnarine: First of all, the moneys that are reflected here on page 250, Sub-Item Description 01—just so that everybody is following, right—those are the moneys allocated to the Ministry to treat with the subsidy. It does not include the levy, which is roughly about 15 per cent of the overall subsidy bill, that is in the Ministry of Finance and the Economy. The significant increase is that there were arrears that were owing to Petrotrin. Well how the subsidy is reimbursed is that the Ministry of Finance and the Economy reimburses the wholesalers, NP and

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UNIPET, and they then reimburse Petrotrin. What had happened is that over the years arrears had built up.

Dr. Rowley: Please. Please. Please.

Mr. Chairman: Please, continue.

Hon. Ramnarine: What had happened is that over the years arrears had built up of moneys owed to Petrotrin and the Ministry of Finance and the Economy over the last couple of years had sought to make provision in every budget to begin to unwind that arrears.

Dr. Rowley: I want to get a clear picture of what the annual consumption is. So was 4.4 payment without arrears? So therefore that was the annual consumption?

Hon. Ramnarine: Yeah, there was arrears in there too. Yeah, there was a component of that figure in 2013 that was arrears.

Dr. Rowley: Could anybody tell us what—5 per cent, 10 per cent, how much? Because what I am trying to get at is what is the—forget the arrears, what exactly is the use of public money towards the subsidy? Is it \$3.5 billion? Is it \$4 billion? What is it?

Hon. Ramnarine: About \$3.5 billion would be what the Government puts towards treating with the subsidy. The oil companies would come in with the levy, which is about 15 per cent of the total sum, and that is about \$.6 to \$.7 billion per year. So we run at—

Dr. Rowley: But the levy is still public money once it is levy—

Hon. Ramnarine: Yeah, that is public money.

Dr. Rowley:—so let us not separate them.

Hon. Ramnarine: Correct.

Dr. Rowley: What I am trying to get at, Minister, is what the annual subsidy is—

Mr. Chairman: Without arrears.

Hon. Ramnarine: Yeah, without arrears. Correct.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, you are confusing me—

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Hon. Ramnarine: Yeah, it ranges from, I would say between \$4 billion to \$4.5 billion, and it is a function, of course, of oil price as you know, and of consumption.

Dr. Rowley: Yeah, but let me ask you something. Not too long ago we had a change in the price of fuel when we took the premium—

Hon. Ramnarine: We increased the price of premium.

Dr. Rowley: Yeah. Where can you show me in these numbers that that action had a significant effect on the subsidy? Because that was the intention; we raise the price of the premium gasoline and it was supposed to have reflected as a reduction in the subsidy. Could you show me where that is happening?

Hon. Ramnarine: Yeah, I do not have that exact figure now, but there has been some savings, but, generally, it has not been significant. What we have seen of course is people have migrated from premium to super. I think it is about 60 per cent of persons who were buying premium moved to super.

Dr. Rowley: So in other words, when that action was taken we were told that is what was going to happen and it has happened, so we have not really had any significant reduction in the subsidy as a result of that.

Hon. Ramnarine: It has not been significant. I think the intention was of course to treat with that—the persons who use premium are generally the persons who could afford to pay a higher price for fuel, the persons at the upper spectrum of the income brackets and so on. So I think that was the intention, but there has been some savings but I would agree that there has been a migration to super.

Mr. Chairman: Are we still on Households or we can move forward.

Dr. Rowley: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Having embarked on paying these arrears, where does that leave us, Ministry, NP, Petrotrin, on this matter? What is the picture there?

Hon. Ramnarine: As I mentioned, what had happened is that significant arrears had been built up as a consequence of NP and UNIPET owing Petrotrin.

Dr. Rowley: UNIPET?

Hon. Ramnarine: Well they are both wholesalers so they have to reimburse Petrotrin, and this is actually—I am advised this formula, methodology was something that you all came up with in 2009.

Dr. Rowley: Why is UNIPET owing anybody? Because UNIPET is a private organization.

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Hon. Ramnarine: Yeah, that is how it is reimbursed. The Ministry of Finance and the Economy reimburses the two wholesalers who then reimburse Petrotrin, because they pick up this fuel at Petrotrin and sell it, and Petrotrin of course has to be reimbursed because they are selling at an ex-refinery price, and the ex-refinery price is not what the consumer sees.

Dr. Rowley: So the Government owes UNIPET from time to time?

Hon. Ramnarine: Yes, that is a regular occurrence.

Dr. Rowley: So when the Government does not pay UNIPET, UNIPET does not pay NP?

Hon. Ramnarine: UNIPET has to reimburse Petrotrin.

Dr. Rowley: Petrotrin?

Hon. Ramnarine: UNIPET reimburses Petrotrin and NP reimburses Petrotrin, so the reimbursement for the subsidy goes from the Ministry of Finance and the Economy to the wholesalers, UNIPET and NP, and they then reimburse Petrotrin.

Mr. Chairman: I think this is a perfect subject for the energy committee of our Parliament. [*Laughter*]

Dr. Rowley: Yes, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairman: I think it is a very good topic for that committee, really.

Dr. Moonilal: We want the real questions for the Minister and a conversation going on.

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, it is a very good conversation.

Dr. Moonilal: It was exciting, I must say. [*Laughter*]

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, actually, these questions are in fact valid because we did take action on this problem in the Appropriation Bill, and what I am seeking to find out is whether the action had the desired effect. And I am also trying to get, as the Minister is quite helpful, in trying to get the picture, the nature of the problem subsequent to the action, because the problem still exists.

Hon. Ramnarine: Yeah.

Mr. Douglas: What problem? [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: I think I want to just bring in Diego Martin North/East on this topic. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Imbert: On the same page—

Dr. Rowley: “Why you eh go and beat yuh drum” [*Laughter*]

Mr. Chairman: Diego Martin North/East—please—yes, yes, you have my protection. Continue.

Mr. Imbert: You are not controlling the House, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, I am. I am. People must have some freedom to relax too. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Imbert: Okay, on 2014 Revised Estimates, 007—Mr. Chairman, could you tell the Member for Lopinot/Bon Air West to stop talking?

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, well I think, you know, you know when you sit down for too long you get a bit uncomfortable.

Mr. Imbert: He is always like that. So 007—[*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: Yes, I think you are now annoying me too. So could you just cool it and allow the Member to speak.

Mr. Imbert: Item 007, 01, that same Item, 2014 Revised Estimates, \$7 billion; what element of that would have been payment of arrears?

Hon. Ramnarine: Yeah, \$3 billion of that \$7 billion, \$3.52 billion were moneys that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago would put out to meet the subsidy liability in that year, and the arrears would have been \$3.48 billion.

Mr. Imbert: And those, you have not paid them yet or you intend to pay them?

Hon. Ramnarine: As far as I am aware there have been some payments to Petrotrin. I think it was in April and June, I think, of this year, yeah, there would have been two payments.

Mr. Imbert: Yeah, okay. The \$6 billion in 2015, is there an element of arrears in that? And if so, how much?

Hon. Ramnarine: Yes. The arrears in that \$6 billion is \$2.53 billion in 2015. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Imbert: After you pay the \$2.5 billion arrears—

Mr. Chairman: Please, please, Members.

Mr. Imbert: After you pay \$2.5 billion in arrears in 2015, will you still have arrears?

Hon. Ramnarine: Yeah, there would be arrears rolling forward into 2016.

Mr. Imbert: What is causing this? This constant accumulation of arrears in the billions of dollars, what is causing that?

Hon. Ramnarine: I mean, in my analysis of it, in previous years—and this is going back, you know, historically—the amount of money that was budgeted for treating with the subsidy was never—

Mr. Imbert: It was not enough?

Hon. Ramnarine: Was not enough—yes.

Mr. Imbert: And is it still not enough?

Hon. Ramnarine: We are now budgeting—the budgeting is now more realistic in terms of—we cannot predict exactly what the subsidy would be, but we certainly have a more realistic assumption for subsidy in the budget now. So, hopefully, over time those arrears would be unwound.

Mr. Imbert: Okay, and you answered the Leader of the Opposition with respect to super and premium. You said 60 per cent of premium users switched to super, but super is far more subsidized than premium, so surely that would have caused an increase in the subsidy. The switch from premium to super would be a far greater subsidy on super than on premium would cause a nominal increase in the subsidy.

Hon. Ramnarine: Yeah, well mathematically you are correct. There has also been 49 per cent of what we consider as the subsidy is diesel. Diesel is really the big driver of the subsidy, and we have had some success, as you would know, with regard to—

Mr. Imbert: With the WASET.

Hon. Ramnarine: With the WASET. So I think that has overall contributed to bringing the subsidy down.

Mr. Imbert: All right.

Mr. Chairman: All right, let us go on.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Mr. Chair?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, Member for Point Fortin.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: On that particular Item, 01, if it is that we are projecting that the ultra-low diesel plant, sulphur plant, would in fact be introduced during 2015, should there not be an accompanying subsidy shortfall to match?

Hon. Ramnarine: Subsidy shortfall?

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Yeah. If we are in fact producing a higher quality diesel, would you not then be looking at reducing your subsidy to the diesel market? In other words, the consumer can in fact get a better product.

Hon. Ramnarine: Well, you are talking about quality as opposed to price.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Both.

Hon. Ramnarine: I do not know if you are suggesting that we should increase the price or decrease the price—

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: I am not suggesting, I am asking you. Is there a correlation?

Hon. Ramnarine: I do not see it having an impact on the overall quantum of the subsidy. There will be an impact on the quality of diesel that is sold into the market.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: But not on the quantum? [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Ramnarine: Not on the quantum. I do not see that affecting the overall quantum.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Okay.

Mr. Chairman: All right, I think we had a good conversation there. Let us go on to Item 009, Other Transfers; Item 011, Transfers to State Enterprises—

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Chair?

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: May I just ask the reason for the non-implementation of the Quarries Authority as was projected to take place in 2014, and when is this likely to be established?

Hon. Ramnarine: My information is that Cabinet, as per in 2006, took the decision to establish a Quarries Authority and that has been put on hold pending the finalization of changes to the law, legislative changes. There is a draft Minerals Bill right now before the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs and the finalization of the restructuring of the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs, so that may be part of the restructuring of the Ministry.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Chair, on 011, Transfer to State Enterprises, I am not too sure where Petrotrin falls in this, 011, Transfer to State Enterprises, and if Petrotrin falls in this, where is the money from our victory on the World GTL in

terms of the Petrotrin issue?

Mr. Chairman: Can you answer that?

Hon. Ramnarine: Yeah. Petrotrin is not part of the transfer to state enterprises, but—

Mr. Chairman: All right, that is the answer. All right, we go on. We are going on to development now.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Yes, just one more question.

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: On Item 03—just for my edification, and I am sure the public as well—the Environmental Indemnity to the PowerGen Company of Trinidad and Tobago that continues, just give me a little explanation on it.

Hon. Ramnarine: Yeah, let me just explain that.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, explain.

Hon. Ramnarine: Thank you very much, Chair, for the quiet. When we sign the production—[*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: Diego Martin North/East, I think you are disturbing the proceedings with whoever you are talking to.

Hon. Ramnarine: Sorry, Chair.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, continue, hon. Member.

Hon. Ramnarine: When the 1994 Power Purchase Agreement was signed the Government agreed to indemnify PowerGen with regard to any changes in environmental legislation that may come in the future. In the year 2011 we had the various Environmental Management Act Rules, the Noise Pollution Rules, the Water Pollution Rules and so on, so whatever remedial work that PowerGen has to do, as a consequence of that, under the 1994 Power Purchase Agreement, the Government has agreed to reimburse them.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Okay, thank you.

Mr. Chairman: All right, we go to Sub-Head 09, Development Programme: Item 05, Multi-Sectoral and Other Services—I recognize the Members for St. Joseph, Diego Martin North/East, La Brea, Point Fortin and Arouca/Maloney.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Thank you, Chair. Hon. Minister, under Development Programme, 09, Sub-Item 003, Renewable Energy, \$16 million for the 2015 estimate. How much of that money has been allocated to the feasibility study for

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the wind farm project off the coast of Mayaro and Manzanilla?

Hon. Ramnarine: Sorry, just finding the page here.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Sure.

Hon. Ramnarine: You are referring to page 124, Member?

Mr. Deyalsingh: Yes, Minister.

Hon. Ramnarine: Okay. First of all, the \$16 million that is located there is—that \$16 million allocation, first of all, the Ministry had actually requested \$29.3 million for the following projects but we only got \$16 million allocated, so we therefore will have to prioritize these projects. But it is mainly for the hiring of consultants to conduct needs assessment for the establishment of a Regional Renewable Energy Research Centre in Trinidad and Tobago, and that comes out of a memorandum of understanding that we signed with the US Government.

Two, it is to hire a consultant to conduct a needs assessment for the establishment of a local test facility for solar water heaters. Three, hiring a consultant to conduct an analysis of the waste energy potential for Trinidad and Tobago, and those come mainly out of our deliberations with international bodies like the IDB and the United Nations Environmental Programme. There is also a project in there for the introduction—

Mr. Deyalsingh: Minister, is there any allocation for the wind farm project?

Hon. Ramnarine: I am coming to that.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Right.

Hon. Ramnarine: You want me to answer that and stop—

Mr. Chairman: No, I think you should just answer because we want to kind of move quickly.

Hon. Ramnarine: The Wind Resource Assessment Programme (WRAP) is a project which is a joint enterprise between the National Energy Corporation, the University of the West Indies and the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs. The lead in the project is the University of the West Indies and they have made an application to the Green Fund for funding that the Green Fund is currently considering. So that is where the funding for that is coming from.

Mr. Deyalsingh: So the Green Fund will be funding the feasibility study for the wind farms?

Hon. Ramnarine: Yes.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Okay. So that is one. Two, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiatives, the 2015 Estimate of \$4.1 million over the 2014 revised of \$2 million, a doubling of the amount, could you explain that, please?

Hon. Ramnarine: Yeah.

Mr. Chairman: All right, let me—No, there are five hands before yours, so I want you to know that in advance because you accuse me of not recognizing you.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Chairman, I “doh” accuse you of anything. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Chairman: Okay. All right, cool. So I am just letting you know, five before you. All right, so after the Member for St. Joseph, I am going to the Member for Diego Martin North/East, and then I am going to the Member for Point Fortin and then the Member for La Brea.

Mr. Chairman: Are you through?

Hon. Ramnarine: No, I am going to answer the Member for St. Joseph.

Mr. Chairman: I would like you to be very crisp in your responses because we are going until 12 and we have a lot of work to do. So these long introductions, just give us the answer and let us move, please.

Hon. Ramnarine: Yeah, thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, and you will help everybody. Right. So could you answer straight and direct, the concerns of the Member for St. Joseph.

Hon. Ramnarine: Yeah. Member for St. Joseph, \$4.11 million. That money is mainly for public awareness campaign, development of an electronic register; this is the computerization of the EITI process—

Mr. Deyalsingh: No, Sir, I am asking, the wind farm project feasibility study—no, sorry. Sorry.

Hon. Ramnarine: I just answered that.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Sorry. The extractives. I apologize. Sorry.

Hon. Ramnarine: So, I just gave the first two, and the final one is the completion and publication of the 2013 and 2014 EITI reports.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Finally, when would the wind farm project feasibility study begin?

Hon. Ramnarine: We are waiting approval from the Green Fund.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: All right, I recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East and then we go to the Member for Point Fortin, and then the Member for La Brea and then the Member for Arouca, and then the Member for Caroni East.

Mr. Imbert: Can I deal with IDF now or deal with that—

Mr. Chairman: No. No. No IDF at this time.

Mr. Imbert: No, no, Consolidated Fund, just a question.

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: All right, coming back to this same item there, Renewable Energy, could you itemize the solar energy projects that you are going to spend out of this \$16 million and what are the objectives of these projects?

Hon. Ramnarine: Yeah. The solar energy projects—just to follow the Chairman's instruction and be very crisp—we intend to introduce solar photovoltaic panels and solar stills in 25 schools around Trinidad and Tobago in fiscal 2015. That is one of the projects under that \$16 million.

Mr. Imbert: Any other solar energy projects?

Hon. Ramnarine: No. From what I am seeing here that is—

Mr. Imbert: But you spoke about a test facility?

Hon. Ramnarine: Yeah, that is a consultant to conduct an analysis of an establishment of a local test facility for solar water heaters.

Mr. Imbert: What is that? What does that mean? Test facility for solar water heaters.

Hon. Ramnarine: If you allow us we will provide you with some more information about that.

Mr. Chairman: All right, I recognize the Member for Point Fortin.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: All I want is that you provide us with a list relative to 003 in writing.

Hon. Ramnarine: Sub-Item 003.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Yes. The same Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Initiatives, I would like just a list in writing circulated.

Mr. Chairman: Member for La Brea. Yes, you will provide that, right.

Mr. Jeffrey: Public Buildings, 001, Construction and Upgrade of Service Stations; in 2013, roughly \$9 million was spent but in the 2015 just \$773,000, I would like to get an explanation as to what is the reason for that reduction. Secondly, given the scarcity or the acute shortage of service stations in the south-western peninsula offering CNG, I would like to know what plans the Ministry has to construct—

Mr. Chairman: Under what Item are you?

Mr. Jeffrey: Item 001.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, good.

Mr. Jeffrey:—to construct or upgrade NGC service stations to offer CNG.

Hon. Ramnarine: First of all, almost \$9 million in that was for the construction of the Roxborough gas station in Roxborough. So that was moneys that were allocated to NP for the construction of the Roxborough station, and the \$773,000 is for the installation of a mobile pump and tanks for the La Ruffin fishing depot in the Moruga area. So we do not normally give NP PSIP funding, but in these two instances we thought it was necessary for these two particular projects.

Mr. Chairman: Member for Arouca/Maloney and then the Member for Caroni East.

Mr. Jeffrey: Mr. Chairman, I did not finish yet. The second question in terms of the south-western peninsula, given the—

Mr. Chairman: CNG.

Mr. Jeffrey:—acute shortage of CNG.

Mr. Chairman: The one about CNG stations in the south-western peninsula.

Hon. Ramnarine: The National Gas Company is rolling out their CNG initiative as we speak. They have a list of stations that will be fitted with CNG compressors and dispensers and so on, and I am sure that there would be stations in the south-west peninsula.

Mr. Jeffrey: But can they give us a time frame as to when that is likely to happen?

Hon. Ramnarine: The procurement has already commenced, the RFPs are in the newspapers and so on as we speak, and we expect to have these stations with compressors and dispensers by 2015.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Miss Hospedales: Mr, Chair, I would like to pass, my questions have been exhausted.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. I recognize the Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Item 001, same Public Buildings; is there any line item for allocation for the completion of the administrative building in Petrotrin for which there has been about \$400 million spent already?

Hon. Ramnarine: That project has been, for all intents and purposes, abandoned, and it does not form any line item in this report but I think it was—

Mr. Chairman: All right, we hear you. We go on to Infrastructure Development Fund. I recognize the Members for Point Fortin, Diego Martin North/East.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Two questions, Mr. Chairman. Sub-Head 007, construction of a multi-fuel pipeline; this appears to be on its way finally, but you have 100 per cent increase in costs. So it appears to me to be substantial cost overruns because you have an actual of 152 then you went to 382, or is it a continuing project?

Hon. Ramnarine: The project is almost at the point where we are about to commence commissioning of the project. We expect to commence commissioning by the end of the year. As you know, that is a project that spans many years, and we have no allocation as you could see for the project in 2015. So that signals that the project is almost at an end.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: But if you said it commenced; when?

Hon. Ramnarine: We expect to commence commissioning, that is the introduction of fuel into the pipeline and the filling of the tanks and so on by the end of the year.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: So it is not a question of overruns, it just spanned over a couple of years?

Hon. Ramnarine: Well, yeah. The project had several design changes, one of them being the movement of the Petrotrin leg of the project from the west refinery into the east refinery, that meant a pipeline had to be built across the refinery. There was a decision not to have a new rack in Pointe-a-Pierre, so that meant that the loading rack in Caroni had to be made bigger, and there were, you know, moneys had to be expended for the acquisition of right-of-way and so on, where

lands were not lands belonging to the NGC.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: But what was the extent to the cost overruns on this project though?

Hon. Ramnarine: The project is at \$1.1 billion right now, and a lot of that had to do with design changes and the work set we had to do as a consequence of design change.

Mr. Chairman: Any further? One final question.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: One final question on 001, and the development of industrial sites; do you have projected sites and, specifically, what are these for industrial as against, let us say, your e Teck parks? So what are the industrial sites about?

Hon. Ramnarine: The \$40 million with regard to development of industrial sites is specifically for the Union Industrial Estate, right, and it treats with the relocation of persons who live in the radius of the proposed Mitsubishi plant who have to be relocated, and it also treats with moneys to be spent on drainage works for the Union Industrial Estate, and these moneys would be transferred to the NCE for their execution.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Okay.

Mr. Chairman: The Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Imbert: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I heard the Minister say that the multi-fuel pipeline is at \$1.1 billion?

Hon. Ramnarine: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: But of that about \$500 million would have been spent in the last two years?

Hon. Ramnarine: Well the project was in a very advanced stage in the year 2010. The last Cabinet approval for the project under your administration was for about \$762 million. The increase is as a consequence of design changes that were already in train in the year 2010, so the project has landed up now at \$1.1 billion, but the majority of that would have been spent by the year 2011.

Mr. Imbert: Okay, but I am seeing \$500 million in the last two years.

Hon. Ramnarine: Yeah, well I think that is to pay for—it was committed to prior 2010 but spent in that period.

Mr. Imbert: All right. What is this?

Hon. Ramnarine: What is that?

Mr. Imbert: What is it?

Hon. Ramnarine: The multi-fuel project?

Mr. Imbert: Yeah.

Hon. Ramnarine: The multi-fuel project entails the pipeline from the Pointe-a-Pierre refinery to Piarco, and then there is the facility at Piarco which includes the tank farm in Piarco, which is what you see opposite the Caroni Cremation Site, and the loading rack, there is an automated loading rack in there, and there is a pipeline then from that facility to the Piarco International Airport that allows for Jet A-1 fuel to be sent to Piarco.

Mr. Imbert: So this was to provide fuel to the airport?

Hon. Ramnarine: No, it is not just for the airport, the facility also has storage capacity for super, premium and diesel.

Mr. Imbert: Just in that location?

Hon. Ramnarine: In that location, yeah.

Mr. Imbert: All right, okay.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 40 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: I would like to thank you, hon. Minister and your team, on behalf of the Standing Finance Committee, for coming. Thank you very much. Hon. Members, I want to propose for your consideration—all right we are now going to Head 28, the Ministry of Health—

Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, a lot of us are suffering from the cold of the air conditioning and we are asking if it could be reduced a little bit. It is really, really very cold. [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Member: We need a break.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, I think Members are also saying they need a little 10/15 minutes to stretch their legs, so in the meantime we will do what you have requested. Okay, so this meeting of the Standing Finance Committee is suspended for 15 minutes—

Miss Mc Donald: Twenty. Twenty.

Mr. Chairman: We shall come back at 5.35.

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

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

Mr. Chairman: All right. Hon. Members, the Standing Finance Committee will now resume. There is an agreement that we will just stand down for the time being, the Ministry of Health, and there are three small entities, although in numbers they are small, they might be very powerful in their functions. One is the Equal Opportunity Commission, the other one is Pensions and Gratuities, and the third one is the Tax Appeal Board. So we will deal with these three Heads, and then we will revert to the hon. Minister of Health and his particular Ministry.

So we now have the Equal Opportunity Commission before us. Hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East, we will deal with the Equal Opportunity Commission now, after then, we will deal with Pensions and Gratuities, and the last one is the Tax Appeal Board. [*Interruption*] No, these were stand by we were saying that we ought to complete. These are small entities. This one is Head 75, page 436.

Head 75.

Question proposed: That Head 75 stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the sum of \$4,780,800 for Head 75, the Equal Opportunity Commission is comprised of moneys proposed for expenditure under the following Sub-Heads and Items, to be found in the *Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure*: 01, Personnel Expenditure; Item 001, General Administration; Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services. I recognize the Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair, under Sub-Item 22, Short Term Employment, could the Minister indicate exactly what has accounted for the gradual increase of the allocation from \$16 million in 2013 to \$40 million in 2014 and \$51 million in 2015?

Hon. Howai: \$51,000.

Miss Hospedales: \$51,000, sorry, Mr. Chair.

Hon. Howai: Short Term Employment. Now, I understand—is short-term employment, Sub-Item 22?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, it is Short Term Employment. The hon. Member would like to know what has caused the little drift in the numbers from the initial figure of \$16,000.

[Hon. Howai confers with his advisors]

Hon. Howai: This would be part of the summer programme that they have introduced, where they have been taking in interns to work with the Commission, and this is the increase that is representative of that.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Port of Spain South and then the Member for St. Joseph.

Miss Mc Donald: Yes, Sir. Minister, could you tell me how many people are employed with the Equal Opportunity Commission?

Hon. Howai: We have 20 persons employed currently.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for St. Joseph and then the Member for St. Ann's East.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Thank you. Hon. Minister, Sub-Head 02, Sub-Item, 27, Official Overseas Travel, which is a new Sub-Item, there was no revised estimate for 2014; 2013, \$130,000; 2014, we are now at \$424,000. What is this new item about? And could you tell us why the quantity has been increased to this extent?

Hon. Howai: This represents visits to—the judge thought that it would be important to see the operations of other anti-discrimination jurisdictions, and as a consequence, there has been a budget to allow for that, for a team to visit some of these jurisdictions.

Mr. Deyalsingh: So it is more in the line of judicial contact, similar?

Mr. Imbert: Could you tell me which judge you are talking about?

Hon. Howai: Yes, it is. So it is a judge and two additional assessors.

Mr. Imbert: You have a judge there?

Hon. Howai: Yes, the judge is Judge Joseph, Rajmanlal Joseph.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: I recognise the Member for St. Ann's East.

Mrs. Thomas: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am looking at Janitorial Services and Security Services. It is the first time janitorial services is budgeted, and also the security services have increased from the estimates for 2014. I just have one

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other comment. What exactly is the Overseas Travel Facilities, which is Sub-Item 98? So those three questions please, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. Howai: Okay. With respect to Janitorial Services and Security Services, right now the Commission uses the offices, Mr. Chairman, of the Attorney General. They will be moving into their own offices shortly. [*Hon. Howai confers with his advisors*] In Chaguanas and, therefore, in those new offices, they will need to provide for these services which are currently being addressed by the Attorney General.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, Member for Arouca/Maloney?

Miss Hospedales: Yes, Mr. Chair, thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Oh, Member for St. Ann's East?

Mrs. Thomas: Mr. Chairman, that Item 98, what exactly are Overseas Travel Facilities?

[*Hon. Howai confers with his advisors*]

Hon. Howai: This is an approved facility—a facility approved by the SRC for all judges, and this is for the judge.

Mr. Chairman: Apparently it is a facility approved by the SRC for judges.

Mrs. Thomas: And it is separate and apart from overseas travel which the Member asked?

Hon. Howai: Yeah, which is an operating expense, as opposed to a specific perk so to speak, or personal allowance.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Miss Hospedales: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Sub-Item 62, Promotions, Publicity and Printing, in 2013 there was a \$27,200 allocation and then 2014, it gradually went up to \$90,800 and now it is \$100,000. I want to find out what is the rationale behind that gradual leap in the allocation.

Hon. Howai: This would be, Mr. Chairman, the expenses for the signage for the new building. So it will incur some additional cost for the signage, as well in the normal printing, as well as their annual report.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Laventille West and then the Member for Port of Spain South.

Mr. Hypolite: The Minister just indicated that this agency will be moving to their own office in Chaguanas. Is that a rented office? Because when we look at

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08, Chair, I am seeing \$19,000. Is it \$19,000 for the year for that particular office?

Hon. Howai: Mr. Chairman, that expense is paid for by the Attorney General. The rental expense is paid for by the Attorney General.

Mr. Hypolite: Therefore, what is the cost of the monthly rental figure?

Hon. Howai: One hundred and fifty thousand dollars plus VAT.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Port of Spain South.

Miss Mc Donald: Yes, Sir. Page 438; Item 02, 58, Medical Expenses, could you tell me, is this part of a medical plan or is it an arrangement, private arrangement? What is it?

[Hon. Howai confers with his advisors]

Hon. Howai: This was again approved by the SRC, it is sort of a perk for the judge. Yeah, it is an additional payment for the judge.

Mr. Chairman: For the judge? Okay. We go on to Item 001, General Administration, Reconstruction, Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases, Item 001, General Administration.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 75 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, members of the Equal Opportunity Commission.

We now call on the members of the Pensions and Gratuities who will assist the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy.

Miss Mc Donald: Are we going to do pensions now?

Mr. Chairman: Pensions and Gratuities.

Miss Mc Donald: What page?

Mr. Chairman: What page is that?

Miss Mc Donald: 106?

Hon. Howai: Head 20. *[Crosstalk]*

Mr. Chairman: Okay. Hon. Members, we go to Pensions and Gratuities.

Head 20.

Question proposed: That Head 20 stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. 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*: Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies; Item 007, Households. Then we go well, Households, that is it.

I recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East and then the Member for St. Ann's East.

Miss Mc Donald: And me.

Mr. Chairman: And the Member for Port of Spain South.

Mr. Imbert: Could the Minister state whether any additional provision has been made for increased pensions for Members of Parliament and judges in 2015?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, whether any additional increase—

Mr. Imbert: Additional increased allocations for pensions for Members of Parliament and judges.

5.50 p.m.

Hon. Howai: No, Mr. Chairman, no such provisions have been made.

Mr. Imbert: What?

Hon. Howai: We have made provisions for the public officers.

Mr. Imbert: No, no. I did not ask about public officers—members of Parliament and judges. You have made no provisions?

Hon. Howai: No, we made no provisions.

Mr. Imbert: What? We have to do something about that. I never!

Mr. Chairman: Who is the next person who would like to speak?

Mr. Imbert: But you are something else.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Diego Martin Central and the Member for St. Ann's East.

Mr. Imbert: I never! What jail is this?

Dr. Browne: With respect to the pensions for defence force officers, it arose in an earlier line of questioning with the Ministry of National Security and they indicated you might be able to help to clarify why these payments seem to be coming traditionally late every month to retired defence force officers. They have been complaining about that, so under this line item, can you clarify?

Hon. Howai: Mr. Chairman, that is something that I would need to get back to the hon. Member on.

Mr. Chairman: Who is the next person? St. Ann's East.

Mrs. Thomas: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Item 10, Gratuities to Technical and Professional Contract Officers: what is the reason for the big reduction of \$35 million?

Hon. Howai: This was an adjustment which was made by the Budget Division based on their projections regarding—what they were saying was the figures that we had last year would have been an arrears of gratuity which was paid in 2014. Therefore, this would have been their estimate of the figure going forward.

Mr. Chairman: The Member for Port of Spain South and the Member for Arouca/Maloney after.

Miss Mc Donald: Minister, under the same 007, Sub-Head 12, Ex-Gratia Awards, could you tell me what that \$12 million is about and who is it payable to?

Hon. Howai: This would be for retirees. There has been an increase in the number of retirees. In 2013, they paid 160; in 2014, 202.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the question is—oh, yes, Member for Arouca/Maloney. Sorry, hon. Member.

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair, Sub-Item 02: Public Officers' Gratuities, I would like to know what accounted for a \$20 million decrease in the allocation.

Hon. Howai: Sorry, Mr. Chair. It is the same issue as had occurred with the \$35 million. It was arrears of gratuity, which was paid in 2014, which caused the number to look higher than in 2015.

Miss Mc Donald: I have another question.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, hon. Member for Port of Spain South.

Miss Mc Donald: Minister, you know I am just going through this quickly and I have seen increases all around: Public Officers, President's Pension; what do you have? VTEP, everything. Yes, Fire Service, President's Pension and everything inside of here. I am asking, with all these increases, no consideration—Minister, you are not looking at me.

Hon. Howai: I am hearing you. I only need to hear. I do not need to look. [Laughter]

Miss Mc Donald: No consideration has been given whatsoever for increases for parliamentarians nor to the judges?

Hon. Howai: I suppose that would be the mid-year review, Mr. Chairman. We come back in the mid-year review.

Miss Mc Donald: Minister, you know that is not true. You know that and I know that.

Hon. Howai: No, no provision was made, Mr. Chairman.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 20 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, members of the Pensions and Gratuities Section. We now invite the Tax Appeal Board to appear before us. That is Head 9 and it is on page 42.

Head 09.

Question proposed: That Head 09 stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the sum of \$7,313,000, for Head 09, the Tax Appeal Board is comprised of moneys proposed for expenditure under the following Sub-Head and Items to be found in the *Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure Draft Estimates of Development Programme*.

Sub-Head 01: Personnel Expenditure

Item 001, General Administration

Sub-Head 02: Goods and Services

Item 001, General Administration

Sub-Head 03: Minor Equipment Purchases

Item 001, General Administration

Sub-Head 09: Development Programme

Item 005, Multi-Sectoral and Other Services

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Question put and agreed to.

Head 9 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, Minister of Finance and the Economy. We now invite the Minister of Health to resume.

Head 28.

Hon. Members, first of all, Head 28, the Ministry of Health, \$4,554,142,700.

I will now invite the hon. Minister of Health, if he so desires, to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five minutes as it relates to your priority areas for fiscal 2014/2015.

Hon. Dr. Khan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank the committee for having the Ministry of Health as well as our head executives, the Permanent Secretary and others from the Ministry of Health.

What I would like to indicate to the committee as well as the meeting, the Ministry of Health has started a process of trying to increase the infrastructure as well as the human resources, as well as the service-oriented medicine in Trinidad and Tobago. We have had a history of having a decreased service mentality in Trinidad and Tobago, so we are starting on an education campaign for one, service orientation, as well as looking at different aspects of promotion.

You will see in the details of the Ministry of Health certain areas of increases, certain areas of decreases, as well as other areas. We have also embarked upon a promotion of education to the population of Trinidad and Tobago where the NCD epidemic has increased to such an extent that the majority of our individuals in this country, as well as children, are suffering from severe obesity. *[Interruption]*

Mr. Chairman: I am hearing—you know, you use an expression all the time. Is it “drone”? I am hearing, I am hearing, I am hearing, so I would like to hear the hon. Minister in silence.

Hon. Dr. Khan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So we are going forward this year. We have built the foundation of the infrastructure—as you see it is going at present—and we are going to continue with the infrastructure development. However, what I think is very important is the education of our population by means of proper promotion where they must understand healthy lifestyles as well as proper diet and exercise.

There has also been, over the years, a paucity of treatment of the mental health aspect of Trinidadians. We have found—and it is also a worldwide study—that

the mental health disorders are approximately 25 per cent. One in four people have some sort of mental disease, depression, et cetera, and mental health is going to be on the front burner, together with addiction and addiction in families. So that is exactly what the process will be.

We will go into the other parts of it where—those will be the broad concepts. However, mixed in this would be employment as well as places. You have different aspects of the Ministry of Health for the RHAs, as well as the vertical services such as insect vector. Right now, there is Chikungunya as well as the possibility of Ebola, which has not arrived yet, and dengue.

We are putting a thrust in that area with the insect vectors, trying to bring it up to a higher standard than it is already. So, Mr. Chairman, I think, in addition to that, what we also have embarked upon is the development of the electronic medical records, the paperless hospital; the digital hospital, as well as the Health Information Management System that will have a decreased amount of paper and an increased amount of efficiency.

The hospitals in Trinidad and Tobago and the health centres in rural areas, as well as other areas, have not been subjected to connectivity with the PAC System, the Patient Archive Computer System. We are going to be able to link every single health centre, as well, into the radiological department of the major hospitals and this will have a telemedicine type of approach to develop our citizens.

In addition to that, we are going to form a partnership with the possibility of an ambulance provider where we will have an increase in the number of emergency and intensive care ambulances, as well as ambulances specific to things like Ebola-infected disease, for transportation and also more ambulances and the training of paramedics and also emergency medical technicians.

We are hoping to do that this year and you will see, when you look through the details of the system, that is reflected in what we have forwarded. So, five minutes, I think Mr. Chairman, we would like to start into the—

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, hon. Minister.

Question proposed: That Head 28 stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the sum of \$4,545,142,700 for Head 28, the Ministry of Health is comprised of moneys proposed for expenditure under the following Sub-Heads and Items to be found in the *Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure Draft Estimates of Development Programme*:

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Sub-Head 01: Personnel Expenditure

Item 001, General Administration

I recognize the hon. Member for Diego Martin Central and then the hon. Member for Port of Spain South.

Dr. Browne: Minister, I am just seeing, under Item 14, what Cabinet-appointed committees are currently serving within the Ministry of Health?

Hon. Dr. Khan: The Cabinet-appointed committees will be things like the Food and Drugs Committee and other committees of that ilk.

Dr. Browne: How many committees are currently serving and which are they? Or can that be provided if you do not have the information?

Hon. Dr. Khan: We can provide that later.

Dr. Browne: Okay, thank you. And I have an observation—

Hon. Dr. Khan: There are quite a number of committees.

Dr. Browne: Just list them. And I just have an observation I would like you to clarify. I see that the Wages and Cost of Living Allowance have gone down; NIS has gone down; Salaries, Direct Charges have gone down, but the allowances budget has gone up. What is happening at the Ministry in that regard?

6.05 p.m.

Hon. Dr. Khan: What is happening, the Wages and Cost of Living allowances, if you notice in the 2013/2014, et cetera, it was a bit high. The arrears for the daily-paid workers were paid there. We do not have that arrears to do again, so that is why there is a decrease, basically, at that level.

Dr. Browne: Does that apply to Salaries-Direct Charges as well?

Hon. Dr. Khan: Yes, it does.

Dr. Browne: Same explanation.

Hon. Dr. Khan: It will reflect in that manner.

Dr. Browne: All right. Mr. Chairman, Vertical Services, I do not know if there is another question from someone else on this section.

Mr. Chairman: Well, I recognize the Member for Port of Spain South.

Miss Mc Donald: Yes, Mr. Chairman, 08. I am wondering what would cause—in 2014 your revised estimate was \$100,000 from \$1.5 million, and then you decided that you will go back to that \$1.5 million. What would you be doing different in 2015 that would account for a \$1.4 million increase?

Hon. Dr. Khan: There are a number of vacant posts in the Ministry of Health, and that will be for the filling of the vacant posts in the Ministry of Health.

Miss Mc Donald: How many vacant posts, do you know?

Hon. Dr. Khan: We will supply that.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the hon. Member for St. Ann's East.

Mrs. Thomas: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, I looked at Item 06, Remuneration to Boards Members, I saw there was an increase. Is it that the stipend to board members have increased or is it there are more board members? What exactly represents that increase?

Hon. Dr. Khan: The Toxic and Pesticides Board, they have all the members now, they did not have all the members before.

Mr. Chairman: All right, we go to Item 04, Vertical Services. I recognize the Member for Diego Martin Central.

Dr. Browne: Thank you, Chairman. Vertical Services still include the Insect Vector Control Division. Is that correct?

Hon. Dr. Khan: Yes.

Dr. Browne: So just a simple request, given the current situation, under Wages and Cost of Living Allowances, et cetera, I am interested in receiving the details of the current staffing at the Insect Vector Control Division. There are a lot of, you know, rumours circulating, I would like that clarified. In addition—no, well that will come under NWRHA. That is it for the—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Chairman: Okay. Do you want to answer?

Hon. Dr. Khan: It is just that what you are looking at is, once again, the same thing, the same explanation. The arrears of the daily-paid workers were paid, so you will find there is a decrease. The insect vector part of that \$60 million will be approximately about \$30 million mixed into that \$60 million.

Dr. Browne: I understand the explanation it would carry, so I am not so concerned about the decrease there. Just I would like a schedule in terms of the staffing at—*[Interruption]*

Hon. Dr. Khan: Insect vector.

Dr. Browne: Yes.

Hon. Dr. Khan: Okay. We will get that for you.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, the hon. Member for La Brea.

Mr. Jeffrey: Under 01, Travelling and Subsistence, we notice that in 2014, \$6.9 million.

Mr. Chairman: Where are you, under Vertical Services?

Mr. Jeffrey: Yeah, yeah, 01.

Mr. Chairman: That is salaries and cost of living, 01.

Mr. Jeffrey: Travelling and Subsistence, \$6.9 million.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, he is on page 185, Vertical Services, Travelling and Subsistence. Is it here you are on?

Mr. Jeffrey: That is goods and services.

Mr. Chairman: No, we have not reached there yet. Let us go on now to Item 005, North West Regional Health Authority. Nothing under that? Item 006 North Central Regional Health Authority; Item 007, the Eastern Regional Health Authority; Item 008 the South West Regional Health Authority.

Yes, I recognize the Member for Diego Martin Central.

Dr. Browne: Under 01, is there currently a neurosurgery service at the San Fernando General Hospital?

Hon. Dr. Khan: Yes.

Dr. Browne: We can be provided with the staffing of that unit or that service?

Hon. Dr. Khan: Most definitely, but I can tell you now, there are neurosurgeons from Cuba—two neurosurgeons from Cuba and there is also a Belizean, he is located there. There are approximately three Chinese neurosurgeons who have done really good work for the last couple weeks.

Dr. Browne: But I would still like the schedule.

Hon. Dr. Khan: There are also house officers as well as—but if you would like the—*[Interruption]*

Dr. Browne: Yes. There is a particular reason. I would like it provided in writing, all the staff.

Hon. Dr. Khan: Okay sure.

Mr. Chairman: All right. Item 009 National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention. I recognize the Member for Arouca/Maloney and the hon. Member for Diego Martin Central.

Miss Hospedales: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Sub-Item 01, specific to the NADAPP, I would like the Minister to indicate whether the allocation of \$1,071,400 is adequate for the number of staff required for that unit, and if he could indicate to us the current staffing at the unit. Based on the organizational structure and the required number of staff, if he can indicate when the new staff will come on and if he is even aware of the severe understaffing of that unit.

Hon. Dr. Khan: The hon. Member would bear with me. We had NADAPP come to the Ministry of Health, well just recently. I understand there is a decrease in staffing; I understand a lot of the things that you have said. However, if you notice in my opening statement I said that we are going to push forward with the addiction, mental health as well as families of addicts. So we will be trying to staff NADAPP in a different manner.

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair, through you, I would like to ask the Minister when they propose to beef up the staffing at NADAPP.

Hon. Dr. Khan: Within the year.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. We can go to Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services; Item 001 General Administration; Item 004, Vertical Services. I recognize the Member for La Brea and the Member for Diego Martin Central.

Mr. Jeffrey: Under Item 02, Goods and Services, number 23 Fees. In 2013, \$324,000; in 2014, \$1.4 million; and in 2015 an estimate of \$5 million. What it is you could say is responsible for that?

Hon. Dr. Khan: There are two things in that Fees: one software licences for the HIMS programmes as well as for the Ministry of Health licences which are quite expensive and also legal fees. What has happened, there is a high rate of litigation as you would read in the newspapers, and we have had to deal with that by increasing the amount of legal work.

Mr. Jeffrey: Is it that you are anticipating that in 2015 you would have more litigation.

Hon. Dr. Khan: The licences for the HIMS might come up this year.

Mr. Jeffrey: Okay.

Hon. Dr. Khan: The Health Information Management System.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the—do you have another question, Member for La Brea?

Mr. Jeffrey: Yes, I have another question. Under Vertical Services, Travelling and Subsistence; \$6.9 million for 2014, and you have an estimated \$9.2 million in 2015. What do you anticipate in terms of travelling that would cause that increase?

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister of Health.

Hon. Dr. Khan: What has been assumed in that area is that all the travelling officers for the Vertical Services will be travelling, so we have to make provisions for that.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, I recognize the Member for Diego Martin Central.

Dr. Browne: Thank you, Chairman. Under Vertical Services, Item 15, Repairs and Maintenance—Equipment; Minister, you have put into the public domain or it is in the public domain that there are issues with respect to the fogging machines—I am not sure what technical term you are using these days—and their current state of service. Can you provide a statement either now or to the committee in terms of the status of the equipment that deals with the mosquito vectors spraying?

Hon. Dr. Khan: That is a specific question, I would have to give you a specific answer. I would have to give you that.

Dr. Browne: That would come in writing?

Hon. Dr. Khan: It would have to come in writing, yes.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Chair, just a follow up question, please. In addition to the status—well, I do not know what status actually speaks to here—but could we get the optimum or optimal number of machines we need in Trinidad and Tobago and how many machines we have now, please?

Hon. Dr. Khan: Your second part of the question is the same as the Member for Diego Martin Central.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Just tell us what is the optimum.

Hon. Dr. Khan: Okay. We will try our best to supply that.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Thank you.

Dr. Browne: And then, Chairman, if I may.

Mr. Chairman: Yes. I think the Member for Diego Martin Central is on the floor. Are you through?

Dr. Browne: No, I am not through as yet, but it is a separate question. I do not know if another Member had a follow up on 15.

Miss Mc Donald: Yes, I am looking at Fees, Sub-Item 23.

Hon. Dr. Khan: Okay.

Miss Mc Donald: I just want to find out, Minister, if there is need in your Ministry for external legal advice—I am sure you would have a little legal unit there—but if there is need for external legal advice and you have to retain attorneys and whatnot to go to court: what is your procedure there? What do you do? Are you allowed to take your own attorneys or—?

Hon. Dr. Khan: Yes, we are and also the RHAs are allowed to take their own attorneys, as well as the Ministry of Health. We do have a list of attorneys and they tend to choose from the list.

Miss Mc Donald: All right, so you do not have to refer it to the Attorney General's Office?

Hon. Dr. Khan: Sometimes we do.

Miss Mc Donald: In what circumstances?

Hon. Dr. Khan: In most circumstances.

Miss Mc Donald: In most circumstances.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. We go on to Item 05.

Dr. Browne: Just one further question under 39, that is the largest item under this Sub-Head: Drugs and Other Related Materials and Supplies. I see an increase of just \$3 million with respect to drugs, other related materials and supplies, I am wondering if the Minister can provide any details with respect to improvement in the procurement process or distribution strategy for these pharmaceuticals.

Hon. Dr. Khan: That line item would be for the C40 total drugs and materials related. What we have done—because of what we have noticed happening—we have set up an evaluation and audit system from the Ministry of Health into the C40 looking at the supply chain—the methods of what is occurring; why there are so-called shortages although the drugs are available. So with that approach, we will be able to look at the whole supply chain, see where the snags are and deal with the problem.

Dr. Browne: Okay. Who is leading that particular effort?

Hon. Dr. Khan: The audit system? It is the Ministry of Health.

Dr. Browne: No, what office is leading that effort or officer? Can you provide that detail? Who?

Hon. Dr. Khan: It is the internal audit department of the Ministry of Health.

Dr. Browne: Okay.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. We will deal with Item 005 North West Regional Authority; Item 006 North Central Regional Health Authority; Item 007 Eastern Regional Health Authority; Item 008 South West Regional Health Authority; Item 009 National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention. I recognize the hon. Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Miss Hospedales: Sub-Item 16 under Contract Employment, I would like the Minister to tell us the number of existing staff on contract and the number of vacant contract positions in NADAPP.

Hon. Dr. Khan: You would like to find out that? Okay, we will make that available.

Mr. Chairman: We would deal now with Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases, Item 001, General Administration; Item 004 Vertical Services; Item 009 National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention, Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies; Item 09 Regional Bodies; Item 003 United Nations Organisations; Item 004—[*Interruption*]

I recognize the hon. Member for Diego Martin Central.

Dr. Browne: 01, International Atomic Energy Agency. I seem to recall they were playing a role with respect to a radio monitoring or support for a radiotherapy service—something to do with our cancer treatment cycle, et cetera—but I am seeing a large increase. Maybe the Minister could just tell us what they do and why the decrease.

Hon. Dr. Khan: What you see in 2014 is the two years subvention in one, and that is why you might see a decrease in 2015; it is once per year. Also what the IAEA has done, they are working together with the Ministry of Health and we do have liaison officers, they are Dr. Narinesingh and Dr. Chin. They are training these doctors to work with the radioactive material in our system as well as providing assistance in developing legislation for the radiation, et cetera, in Trinidad and Tobago.

Dr. Browne: That training is occurring in Trinidad or abroad?

Hon. Dr. Khan: No, abroad. But they were here recently and they were looking at our system.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. Item 004 International Bodies; Item 005 Non-Profit Institutions. I recognize the Member for St. Joseph, the Member for Diego Martin Central; the Member for Arouca Maloney and also the Member for Port of Spain South.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Thank you. Hon. Minister, could you explain why there are no provisions for any of the non-profit institutions?

Hon. Dr. Khan: If you notice there is a block figure at the end, we have lumped them into a block figure rather than each one. They are like subventions that we have at the Ministry of Health. Instead of putting each one—because it tends to change over the year—we tend to have a block figure and then we give it out.

Mr. Deyalsingh: And what is the policy position to determine how much each of these gets from that block?

Hon. Dr. Khan: It depends on the budget; what budget they submit and the budget is looked at, at the policy department, and they determine exactly what is necessary.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, the hon. Member for Diego Martin Central.

6.20 p.m.

Dr. Browne: I appreciate the answer, but I would like a listing of the current non-profit institutions that are supported financially from the Ministry of Health.

There was a question before about policy. What determines whether a non-profit institution gets support via the Ministry of Health, as opposed to those that have been transferred already to other Ministries such as Community Development and the NGO Support Unit? What determines the retention?

Hon. Dr. Khan: The Policy Department of the Ministry of Health assesses all the non-profit organizations, and if it has moved then obviously they would not have any subventions. But if you notice here, you have the NADAPP still there at No. 22.

Dr. Browne: Well NADAPP is not a non-profit institution; that is a division of the Ministry.

Hon. Dr. Khan: Sorry, yes. Now it is, it was not before.

Dr. Browne: Minister, I think you are getting a little confused. At least let me clarify. My impression of these institutions are separate and apart from the Ministry that receive financial support from the Ministry.

Hon. Dr. Khan: But what we are saying is that they are assessed by the Policy Department in the Ministry of Health.

Dr. Browne: But the Government had indicated a new policy where all of these non-governmental organizations and non-profit entities would be appraised, assessed and funded through a consolidated unit, the NGO Support Unit. I am just trying to determine whether—

Hon. Dr. Khan: I have been advised that the Ministry of the People and Social Development has that body you are describing. However, the Ministry of Health communicates with the Ministry of the People and Social Development and what they are not providing, we provide.

Dr. Browne: And you will provide the list hopefully.

Miss Mc Donald: Minister, I am back on that same Non-Profit Institutions, 005. I heard you when you said that you now have a big figure, just one lump sum, a block figure, and due to some policy you have in the Ministry then moneys will be allocated to various institutions. Is that block figure \$10.3 million?

Hon. Dr. Khan: No, it is \$15.909 million.

Miss Mc Donald: Okay, put it this way, for substance abuse, 21 and 22, it cannot be that, Sir. It cannot be \$15.9 million, because 21 and 22, and NADAPP which is substance abuse, has been transferred to the Community Development Ministry.

Hon. Dr. Khan: No, no, NADAPP is by us.

Miss Mc Donald: Well what am I seeing here—21 and 22 transferred from—you all have that from Community Development now. So you all have 21 and 22?

Hon. Dr. Khan: The \$10.36 million is what the block figure is.

Miss Mc Donald: Right, that is the block figure. That is what I wanted to know.

Hon. Dr. Khan: There is an increase of \$4.9 million.

Miss Mc Donald: Good, that is the original question I asked you. So it is out of this block figure that you would now make subventions to—and that would be determined on your stated policy?

Hon. Dr. Khan: Yes.

Miss Mc Donald: How would we know your stated policy?

Hon. Dr. Khan: The organizations supply information, audited statements, and we assess them and also we go to Cabinet for the subventions.

Miss Mc Donald: But how would an ordinary citizen know about this? Normally before, each year you make a budgetary allocation to each of these non-profit institutions. Now you are not saying how much the institution is getting. Let us assume, John Hayes Memorial Kidney Foundation was getting \$200,000, but now there is a block figure, so you do not know what part of that \$10.3 million John Hayes would get. Now the foundation has to apply, due to this new policy. How would we know that they would not be getting less than that \$200,000?

Hon. Dr. Khan: John Hayes Memorial Kidney Foundation is quite a large dialysis provider in Trinidad and Tobago, so I doubt that the money they get would be less, but I understand your point: how would we know?

Miss Mc Donald: I used John Hayes as an example. Look at New Life Ministries—the point I am trying to make is: how are we to know that the initial subvention that the NGO was getting prior to this new policy, it would not be reduced because it is all hidden in that block figure, and we do not know?

Mr. Chairman: We would not know.

Hon. Dr. Khan: What I will do, hon. Member, I will give you a listing of what we do have.

Miss Mc Donald: I would like to see a listing of the policy. I want to know what the policy is about.

Hon. Dr. Khan: I will give you a listing of the policy—written.

Mr. Chairman: Let us deal with Item 007, Households.

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair, you missed me.

Mr. Chairman: All right; I recognize the Member for Arouca Maloney and the Member for Diego Martin Central.

Miss Hospedales: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair; Sub-Item 21, Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Centres. Mr. Chair, through you, I would like to find out from the Minister whether or not this allocation is actually for the provision of a

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subvention to the Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Centres, and if yes, how many of those centres actually receive a subvention from the Ministry?

Hon. Dr. Khan: I could read here, it is a subvention: HEAL, Rebirth House, Oasis, Serenity Place, and you have one-off grants. The figures are here.

Dr. Browne: Where is that?

Hon. Dr. Khan: If you like me to make it available, I will.

Mr. Chairman: I think the Minister said that he will make available a policy on these matters, so that we will all be guided. Let us go on to Item 007.

Dr. Browne: I just want some clarity on Sub-Item 24, University of the West Indies TeleHealth Programme. I see it listed as a new Sub-Item, but I am not seeing any allocation at all. That is a very important programme up at UWI.

Miss Mc Donald: That must be part of the block figure that. That is in the \$10.3 million with the others.

Dr. Browne: That cannot be in the \$10.3 million.

Hon. Dr. Khan: The one you just told me, \$10.3 million is above that and this is coming down so that is part of the \$15 million. Now UWI TeleHealth is very important. What UWI TeleHealth does is that it links with sick kids, et cetera, with the University of the West Indies for a lot of childhood disorders.
[*Interruption*]

Dr. Browne: Minister—

Miss Mc Donald: That is lacking transparency; before it was easy to look at it and see what each NGO is getting. I do not understand why we are not putting the figures there, and why we are hiding it in a block figure. I take serious objection to this.

Mr. Chairman: I know you did object earlier, and I have noted your objection.

Hon. Dr. Khan: Mr. Chairman, could I say something?

Mr. Chairman: Wait.

Hon. Dr. Khan: This has been done forever. This is not the first time this is happening, you know. [*Interruption*] For you to come across here—it is the first time you are reading the document? It is the first time you are reading the document.

Mr. Chairman: All right, Minister of Health. [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Dr. Khan: This has been like this for the longest while.

Miss Mc Donald: I have the right to ask a question. [*Crosstalk*]

Dr. Browne: Chairman, could I bring something—

Mr. Chairman: Listen, I am invoking the Standing Orders—listen, order, order, order in this House. Minister of Health, I can ask you to leave if you continue, you know.

Miss Mc Donald: Exactly, tell him so!

Mr. Chairman: You too. [*Laughter*] We cannot continue how we are going, and I understand the point that you are making. Remember this is the first time, hon. Members, we as a Parliament and many of us who are Members of this honourable House, are taking the time to go through these documents. For years we have been Ministers and we have been Members of Parliament and we have not gone through those documents. So for the first time maybe the hon. Member for Port of Spain South is going through and seeing things for the first time. What the Minister is saying is that this has existed before now, but we are seeing it for the first time. So what I am saying, we must bear with each other. It is not the Minister trying to hide. In any event, he said he is going to make available to this Standing Finance Committee, a policy. So I ask the Member for Port of Spain South to hold your fire. [*Crosstalk*]

Miss Mc Donald: I am not tired.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Diego Martin Central, and let us be disciplined. We did not cut a good picture today. I got a lot of calls from members of the public, and they are not happy with how Members of this honourable Parliament behaved this morning. We cut a very, very sad story in the minds of the people out there, how we behaved this morning, so let us be disciplined and dignified. The hon. Member for Diego Martin Central.

Dr. Browne: Thank you, Chairman. Just to be clear, I think it just went completely off course. We are talking about separate Sub-Items, so I do not agree that the TeleHealth programme is included in the vote under 20. Non-profit Institutions is Sub-Item 20, and the UWI TeleHealth Programme is Sub-Item 24. So I am simply asking the Minister for that listing of the non-profit institutions—that is number one; he has agreed to that. But just to clarify, why even though this is a new Sub-Item and an important programme, there is no allocation identified? That is all.

Hon. Dr. Khan: It was part of the block figure initially when Ministry of Finance and the Economy was putting it together, that is why they put it like that in those areas, but it was part of the block figure I am being advised.

Mr. Chairman: Let us go to Item 007, Households. I recognize the hon. Member for Diego Martin Central.

Dr. Browne: Medical Treatment for Nationals at Institutions, \$65 million. I would like the Minister to provide some detail of what this covers, separate and apart from the RHA subvention.

Hon. Dr. Khan: That will be for radiation treatment in the institutions; dialysis treatment, that is growing as we speak. That is why we are promoting the healthy lifestyles, to decrease that amount of kidney disease, and also medical aids which sometimes is a one-off treatment or multiple treatments for people who need assistance. The majority is radiation and dialysis.

Mr. Chairman: Item 007, Households; we go to Item 009, Other Transfers; Item 010 Other Transfers Abroad.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Under Other Transfers, Sub-Head 04, sub-sub 06, Children's Life Fund Authority. Could the hon. Minister tell us how these sums are administered, is it by a board under 01/06 earlier, Board Members.

Hon. Dr. Khan: Yes.

Mr. Deyalsingh: The Children's Life Fund Authority or board, when is the term of office for that board expiring?

Hon. Dr. Khan: It expired about a couple of months ago, and there is a new board in place.

Mr. Deyalsingh: So it has expired?

Hon. Dr. Khan: Before.

Mr. Deyalsingh: And there is a new board in place?

Hon. Dr. Khan: There is a new board in place.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Just for clarity, yesterday we had the issue of fraud at the Children's Life Fund, and we heard the board is examining the issue. Which board is doing the investigation?

Hon. Dr. Khan: The new board.

Mr. Deyalsingh: The new board is investigating the member of the old board who allegedly—

Hon. Dr. Khan: There is no member of the board.

Mr. Deyalsingh: It was not a member of the board? So the new board is conducting the investigation?

Hon. Dr. Khan: Into the allegations.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: All right. I recognize the Member for Arouca/Maloney and then the Member for Diego Martin Central.

6.35 p.m.

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair, I am looking at Sub-Item 07, and I am asking the Minister, if \$4 million is adequate for the allocation of National Emergency Ambulance Services Authority? And I am putting it in a little more context, what is happening with the ambulance services in Trinidad and Tobago? Because I am saying this—the Member for Arima I had an experience one night when there was an accident on the Priority Bus Route. It took approximately an hour and half for the ambulance service to arrive to remove the injured, and it was actually five minutes away from the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex, Mr. Chairman, so I would like the Minister to tell us what is going on.

Hon. Dr. Khan: Okay. I will first start with 04/07. That is the National Emergency Ambulance Services Authority, that \$4 million that is operating expenses. That is not the ambulance you are talking about. Right. If you look back at 009/01, Regional Health Authorities, you will see 01, Emergency Ambulance Service—\$86 million. That is the emergency ambulance service that we speak about. And if you recall, back to the start of my presentation when I said that we have to start looking at a provider, a public/private provider that will increase the number of ambulances, and also increase their type of ambulances, as well as the training, and also the staffing—then we will take care of that, that problem that you see there.

Mr. Chairman: Yes. The hon. Member for Diego Martin Central.

Dr. Browne: 08 and 06, request to the Minister to provide a schedule of all the staff members currently under this response to HIV/AIDS, including if there is an advisory council. There may be an advisory council, a schedule of the membership of such council. Same applies to the Children's Life Fund Authority, a listing of all the current board members, as well as all staff members employed at the Children's Life Fund.

Hon. Dr. Khan: Okay. We will do that.

Mr. Chairman: Sub-Head 06, Current Transfers to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies. Item 004, Statutory Bodies.

Mr. Jeffrey: I want to go back to 009, Current Transfers and Subsidies, 05. South-West Regional Health Authority, \$810 million. Could we get some details on that?

Hon. Dr. Khan: That is going to be a lot of details, you know. What specifics do you want? What specifics are you asking about?

Mr. Jeffrey: I do not know if the \$810 million—[*Inaudible*]

Hon. Dr. Khan: What is that? No. I mean, to go into that would be a lot of details. If you could point me in a direction where you are looking, I could—

Mr. Jeffrey: I am curious about what comprises the figure.

Hon. Dr. Khan: What comprises it? It is a massive region, you know. What specifically are you looking for? I need to know so I could look for it.

Mr. Jeffrey: You see, there is the figure we have for \$810 million. Right. So, I thought we would have had somebody submitting an explanation—

Hon. Dr. Khan: When we go down you will see it.

Mr. Chairman: If we go through the documents you will find them, Member for La Brea.

Hon. Dr. Khan: It is there.

Mr. Chairman: In the documents. I am now under Sub-Head 006, Current Transfer to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies; Item 004, Statutory Bodies. I recognize the Member for Diego Martin Central.

Dr. Browne: 14, Princess Elizabeth Home for—well it is an old name—for Handicapped Children. Can the Minister just provide some clarity to a concern, I understand, has been expressed at the institution, that the clinic there might be removed from Woodbrook to somewhere else in the country. Is the Minister aware of anything like that?

Hon. Dr. Khan: No. No. No.

Dr. Browne: Some new facility?

Hon. Dr. Khan: No. What we have done recently is put a new elevator for a dental clinic. So we most likely we will—

Dr. Browne: I did not hear what you said.

Hon. Dr. Khan: We have put in a new elevator for the clinic, the dental clinic. I do not think that that will be moving at any time.

Dr. Browne: The dental clinic you said?

Hon. Dr. Khan: We have started—the Rotary Club of Trinidad and Tobago, the Port of Spain Rotary.

Dr. Browne: I am referring to the orthopaedic, Dr. Toby's—

Hon. Dr. Khan: No. In fact, we have just brought C-arms, et cetera, for him, so I cannot see that we are moving.

Dr. Browne: You are staying right there.

Hon. Dr. Khan: Yeah. The only problem I will tell you is it tends to flood sometimes—

Dr. Browne: Well a lot of money was spent.

Hon. Dr. Khan: So, we are trying to work with that.

Dr. Browne: Okay.

Mr. Chairman: We go on to Sub-Head 09, Development Programme; Item 004, Social Infrastructure; Item 005, Multi-Sectoral and Other Services; the Infrastructure Development Fund. We are under Sub-Head 09, under the item Infrastructure Development Fund. Any matters, I shall now put the question.

Dr. Browne: Hold on.

Mr. Chairman: Are you under Infrastructure, hon. Member?

Dr. Browne: Well, I am not too sure—no, I am under the Consolidated Fund, Development Programme 07.

Mr. Chairman: No. No. No. I am under Infrastructure Development Fund, and if you go to your Development Programme Expenditure, go to page 87.

Dr. Browne: Okay. Good. We are on the same page.

Mr. Chairman: 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 253. So, I am looking at 253, 254 and 255. Those are the three pages that you can look at now.

Dr. Browne: All right. I am on 89, 90 and 91.

Mr. Chairman: Oh, so you want us to go back now.

Dr. Browne: I do not know if we are right there at all, Chairman.

Hon. Dr. Khan: No. We can do the IDF first, and then we can go back to that.

Dr. Browne: Sorry. Okay. I thought, it seemed as if you were skipping over that.

Mr. Chairman: All right. Member for Diego Martin Central, you can go to the Development Programme, starting from 87. Let us go.

Dr. Browne: Thank you. Well, I have some questions under 07, Other Services, waiting lists for surgeries, 007. Can the Minister provide us with some detail on how this waiting list programme operates, and what measures are in place to prevent possible abuse by surgeons or others in terms of routing?

Hon. Dr. Khan: What—I could tell you that, it is really—

Dr. Browne: Routing of patients.

Hon. Dr. Khan: No. What we have done—well I will give you that in writing, it is normally called EPP, the external patient programme, and the money for the waiting list is a line item that has always been there. So, we have increased that to utilize—a lot of procedures where people have been waiting a long time in institutions. However, we are also cognizant of the fact that we could have that routing of patients, and it is being very closely managed in that regard. But I will give you that in writing. I will give you it in writing.

Dr. Browne: More than what you have just said, hopefully.

Hon. Dr. Khan: That is a lot, but if you want more I will give you more.

Dr. Browne: Well I want a lot more, Minister, serious.

Hon. Dr. Khan: You see, the thing about it, what you are asking is supposition, how do I stop routing a patient? I cannot stand up in every single clinic and watch a patient.

Dr. Browne: No. No. No. No one is asking at this committee for you to go and stand up and watch at what is going on.

Hon. Dr. Khan: No. What I am saying—

Dr. Browne: Chairman, I want to be clear here. We are talking about taxpayers' dollars.

Hon. Dr. Khan: Exactly.

Dr. Browne: As a member of the committee, I am asking what measures the Ministry has put in place to reduce that potential for abuse under that—

Hon. Dr. Khan: We will give you that in writing.

Dr. Browne:—once that is provided, I am happy.

Hon. Dr. Khan: We will give you that in writing, Member.

Dr. Browne: Do not have to get into all of that now.

Mr. Chairman: Any further question, hon. Member?

Dr. Browne: Medical Research and Development, 03. I see that this has been decreased. What is this line item? [*Crosstalk*] 023, Medical Research and Development.

Hon. Dr. Khan: That was a stimulus for members of the RHAs to do papers on any research in the Regional Health Authorities and the public health institutions. It was not taken up much, but it has been taken up by one or two of the university doctors. One is the BOLD study which we have started, as well as we have been looking at a dementia study. So that is what has been placed in line item to stimulate the research in the actual institutions, based on not only policy, but on activity.

Dr. Browne: Why have you cut it because they were not—

Hon. Dr. Khan: It was cut, but we can always get more funds for it.

Dr. Browne: From where?

Hon. Dr. Khan: It depends on the amount—you see, people are applying for research grants. There were not many last year.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the hon. Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Miss Hospedales: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Sub-Item 010 under Community Outreach Family Medicine Programme. Could the Minister provide some details with reference to the implementation of this programme?

Hon. Dr. Khan: 010?

Mr. Chairman: Yes. That is on page 89.

Hon. Dr. Khan: Oh, 010. Yes. Well, that is basically—I could tell you that money has been put in there for the mobile blood banks, and the evaluation is finished. So, we should be able to be going out to purchase these mobile blood banks.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Member for Laventille West.

Mr. Hypolite: Chair, page 91.

Mr. Chairman: 91?

Hon. Dr. Khan: We have not reached there yet, you know.

Mr. Chairman: Page 91.

Mr. Hypolite: 234.

Mr. Chairman: Item 234.

Mr. Hypolite: Chairman, I am interested in knowing, which health centres are up for—

Mr. Chairman: A physical upgrade?

Hon. Dr. Khan: All health centres—

Mr. Hypolite: All?

Hon. Dr. Khan: Yeah—are earmarked for an upgrade. The Ministry of Health will be putting their activity in the health centres, as well as—we are asking if the CEPEP and URP, with their funds, would assist most of the health centres. North-west, I think, is being done—which is your constituency—by the CEPEP programme, as well as the Ministry of Health.

Mr. Hypolite: The CEPEP Programme?

Hon. Dr. Khan: Yes. We are trying our best to ask them to assist us.

Mr. Hypolite: In upgrading community centres.

Hon. Dr. Khan: Upgrading the health centres.

Mr. Hypolite: Health centres.

Hon. Dr. Khan: Painting, plumbing and those types of things.

Hon. Member: “Why yuh eh put dem central?”

Hon. Dr. Khan: What is that?

Mr. Hypolite: CEPEP, not the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure?
[*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Dr. Khan: Central where?

Mr. Chairman: All right. I think the point has been made. Let us go on?

Dr. Browne: Chairman—

Mr. Chairman: Yes, Member.

Dr. Browne:—I have a question with respect to the Point Fortin hospital. I am trying to identify it. I am seeing an item “Hospitals”, so I think I would just ask the question, and it is really on behalf of my colleague, Member for Point Fortin.

Hon. Dr. Khan: The Point Fortin hospital—the sod turning with Austria—

Dr. Browne: There was some arrangement with—

Mr. Chairman: Yes. He is answering now—hon. Minister of Health.

Hon. Dr. Khan: There is an arrangement, and the loan is being—what they say—the loan with Minister of Finance and the Economy is being done, you know, with Austria, the due diligence has been done, and hopefully the sod turning will be done early in October.

Dr. Browne: What is the estimate in terms of cost?

Hon. Dr. Khan: Approximately \$1.5 million.

Dr. Browne: And there is no allocation here for that.

Hon. Dr. Khan: I spoke to the Minister of Finance and the Economy on that, and after the loan has been achieved, then we will be placing that on the system.

Dr. Browne: We will be coming back for the supplemental—

Mr. Chairman: All right. I recognize the hon. Member for Couva North.

Miss Ramdial: Chairman, Sub-Head 09, Multi-Sectoral and Other Services, construction of the oncology centre. Minister, is this \$56 million for the completion for the long-awaited oncology centre?

Hon. Dr. Khan: Yes. And also the oncology centre is approximately \$891 million for that. Hopefully it would be completed very soon.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Member for Arouca/Maloney. That is the final one under Development. We will be going to Infrastructure—

Hon. Dr. Khan: No more. No more.

Mr. Chairman: After that it is you, and then we go to Infrastructure. Yes.

Miss Hospedales: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am focussing my attention on page 90 under the social and community services, Sub-Item 086 HIV/AIDS Social

Marketing. I want the Minister to indicate what has accounted for the \$5 million decrease in the allocation for this particular social marketing programme, and if he thinks that the \$4 million that is allocated is adequate for the fiscal period?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister of Health.

Hon. Dr. Khan: That figure was adjusted by the Ministry of Finance and the Economy, but if we do need to go back for money for the agency, we will do that.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the hon. Member for Diego Martin Central.

Dr. Browne: Chairman, that is precisely the question that I wanted to ask, so we could save some time.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. Let us go to the Infrastructure Development Fund. Is there any question under there? I recognize here the hon. Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chairman, under Sub-Item 001, I would like to ask the Minister, when do they propose to construct the Trincity health centre? I have written several times—

Mr. Chairman: All right. The Trincity health centre, when would you be able to construct that health centre?

Hon. Dr. Khan: Well, I will have to get that information and give it to you.

Mr. Chairman: He will get that information and return to us with that information.

Hon. Members, the sum of \$4,554,142,700, Head 28: the Ministry of Health stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 28 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, hon. Minister of Health and your team. Thank you very much.

Hon. Dr. Khan: Could I say that I want to thank my team as well as the Committee, as well as the Members on the Opposition.

6.50 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, thank you very much.

Hon. Members, we have three small Heads that we could dispatch before we go on to the Ministry of Food Production, and I seek your indulgence here. The first one is the Service Commissions Department or we are going with CPO first, Personnel Department, Service Commissions Department after and the Statutory Authorities Service Commission.

Head 17.

Hon. Members, that is Head 17, page 60, Recurrent Expenditure and page 54 Development Programme. Okay, so Members are guided accordingly. It is Head 17, Personnel Department.

Hon. Members, Head 17, Personnel Department, \$126,570,700. I will now invite the hon. Minister of Public Administration who is responsible for these agencies, has some role to deal with these agencies, to make if she so desires, a brief opening statement for no more than five minutes as it relates to the Personnel Department at this time, and maybe what you can do, seeing that the next two—[*Crosstalk*] no, just the Personnel Department.

Hon. Minister, would you like to make a statement?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, we are ready. I just want to say I have here with me the Chief Personnel Officer, Ms. Stephanie Lewis and Deputy Chief Personnel Officer, Mr. Beresford Riley. So, Mr. Chairman, we are ready for the questions.

Question proposed: That Head 17 stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the sum of \$126,570,700 for Head 17, is comprised of moneys proposed for expenditure under the Sub-Heads and Items found in both the *Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure* as well as the Development Programme. We now go to Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure; Item 001, General Administration.

I recognize the hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, could I find out what is the establishment at the Personnel Department, how many staff members and contracted employees the department is supposed to have?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Okay, 160 on the establishment, and in terms of contract positions we have 33 for which we have already received Cabinet approval, and we have another 48 which is going into what we call a six-year contract plan.

Mr. Imbert: Okay, so that is a total of how much?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: 160, plus—

Mr. Imbert: Total, total.

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: 160 plus 33, 160 in the establishment so that is 193 and then we have 40 that is being proposed on contract.

Mr. Imbert: That is 230?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: About that, yeah.

Mr. Imbert: How many bodies do you have in posts?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Okay, we have 43 vacant postS with bodies in them and we have 39 vacant posts without bodies.

Mr. Imbert: Well, that is only 80, what about—is 230 positions you spoke of.

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Yeah.

Mr. Imbert: So of the 230 approved posts that you have, how many have bodies in them, out of the 230?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: No, we have 230 what we just gave you, you have to add on the vacants on to them, yeah? [*Hon. Seepersad-Bachan confers with advisor*] Let me just say, take out the 48, as I mentioned earlier, that we do not have approval for yet. It is going into the six-year contact plan which will go to Cabinet for approval. So go with your 33 plus 193—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Imbert: Of all the positions that are approved now and the positions you hope to fill, how many of them are empty, vacant?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Okay, let us deal with established positions first. So let us go back. We have 160 established positions. Out of that you have 43 vacant but with people acting in them, and then you have another 39 which is vacant without any bodies in it.

Mr. Imbert: And of the other 70 positions—

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Of the other—33 approved contract positions, okay, those are filled. Are they filled? [*Hon. Seepersad-Bachan confers with advisor*] Can we get that information to you?

Mr. Imbert: And the others are obviously not filled.

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: The 48 no, that is now in the process of—they do not exist. We are now in the process of creating those positions.

Mr. Imbert: You are talking about 100 existing and potential vacancies then. You need about 100 more people. Is that what you are saying?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Yeah, “umm hmm”.

Mr. Imbert: Is this why there is such a backlog with the preparation of contracts for public servants and contract employees.

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: That is the reason?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: There is a shortage.

Mr. Imbert: But is your department not responsible for hiring people? Are you not responsible for hiring yourself? Who does hiring? Is it not the Personnel Department?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: The Service Commissions Department.

Mr. Imbert: Okay, who is the support unit for the Service Commissions? Is it not the Personnel Department?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: The Service Commissions have to be the one and that is the issue you would have seen going right through with all the Ministries.

Mr. Imbert: Who is the liaison between the Ministry of Public Administration and the Service Commissions? Not the Personnel Department? There is no relationship between the Personnel Department and the Service Commissions?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: There is a relationship, but that is when matters may be referred to them for comment on issues of—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Imbert: What is the function of the Personnel Department?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Sorry, let me hear what you are saying.

Mr. Imbert: What is the purpose of the Personnel Department?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: The Personnel Department is to determine terms and conditions. And terms and conditions for whether they are established positions as you would know, they carry out wage negotiations. From time to time they would have to look at classification of positions in order to determine if you will need to revise the remuneration package for established positions, and when we are dealing with contract positions they determine the terms and conditions for contract positions.

Mr. Imbert: And they do job evaluation exercises also?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: And they do job evaluation exercises.

Mr. Imbert: Like the one that is supposed to be done for parliamentarians for all these years?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Yes, but—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Imbert: What is keeping that back?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: That is the SRC, but, Mr. Chairman, I think we need to stay on the—

Mr. Imbert: No, it is Personnel Expenditure, staffing—it is directly related.

Mr. Cadiz: That is an operational issue.

Mr. Imbert: No, no, no.

Mr. Cadiz: We have the budgets for it.

Mr. Imbert: No, no, no.

Mr. Cadiz: You either agree with the budget or you do not agree with the budget.

Mr. Imbert: No!

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: In fact, if you go down the line, all I am suggesting, Member, let me just suggest, as you go through the budget items there are other areas again that will come under the Development Programme, you will see that there is moneys budgeted for a project under PSIP for the very same project you are referring to.

Mr. Imbert: How are you going to deal with this problem of not finalizing terms and conditions of people within the Government service, since you are missing 100 bodies? How are you going to deal with it?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Terms and conditions—

Mr. Imbert: There is a huge backlog. I know people working two, three contracts, working for nine years and they cannot get a contract.

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Minister, if I may, Member, let me just say that during the budget contribution I explained some of the strategies that we are deploying to expedite the terms and conditions through standardization of contracts which the CPO's office, together with the Personnel Department,

together with the Ministry of Public Administration, has established a project which was allowed to standardize many of these contract positions so that we have standard terms and conditions, so that people know their terms and conditions before they even come onto the job, and we have done that for 49 positions.

And secondly, the area of the backlog itself, we have established a project and we have cleared 1,400 or so of the backlog. Now, you are quite right it was really in an appalling situation that we inherited, when we looked at the number of people who were on contract for ten years and had no terms and conditions determined, and yes, we are going forward and I had outlined that in detail with respect to the backlog project.

Mr. Imbert: I noticed Minister Cadiz for some reason is thanking you, I do not know why. You said you cleared a backlog of 1,400—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: And we are continuing—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Imbert: What is the remaining backlog?

[*Hon. Seepersad-Bachan confers with advisor*]

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: I had mentioned it in the debate, you know.

Mr. Imbert: Remind me, “nah”.

Mr. Cadiz: Remind the Minister, “nah”.

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: I cannot recall now, I will get back to you, but—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Imbert: You do not know what the backlog is?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: We cleared 1,400 in the backlog—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Imbert: I think I better let somebody else talk—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: I will pull the *Hansard* for you if you want—

Mr. Imbert: I will let somebody else talk since the Minister does not know how many public servants working without a contract.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, I recognize the Member for St. Joseph.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Thank you, hon. Minister, of the 43 vacant positions that you have acting bodies in, whose responsibility is it to transfer these people from acting to a state of permanence? Which department sees about that?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Service Commissions Department.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Right. And how long have these 43 people been acting, and has the Service Commissions been responsive to your overtures?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Okay, Member for St. Joseph, we have been trying for a number of years, I am informed, I am advised by the CPO that she has been urging the Service Commissions Department. We have gotten some at the entry level but the others there is a commitment now that we would be able to get it possibly within the next year, and this is why you will note that you do have allocations there, requests have been made for the rest of the positions to be filled.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Because, hon. Minister, the issue of the Service Commissions has been propping up time and time again and it seems to be a fly in the ointment in having positions filled.

Mr. Chairman: Hold your fire on Service Commissions. They are coming.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Okay, let me ask another question. Of the 39 positions where you have no one acting, what is the modus operandi there now? What steps are you taking to at least fill those permanently or with acting bodies? You said you have 39 positions, 39 vacancies with no one.

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Some of them may have to be abolished because they may be outdated.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Right.

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: So they may have to be abolished. I can always forward that information, the details on the 39 positions to you, but again too, requests have been made to the Service Commissions to have them filled, whatever remains that will not be abolished we have made our requests to the Service Commissions.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Chair, I will take your advice and hold my fire for the Service Commissions.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, we are going to Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services; Item 001, General Administration. Member of Parliament for Laventille West.

Mr. Hypolite: Chair, Sub-Item 08. We are seeing where in 2014, rental of office space, \$19 million, but in 2015 we will be looking at \$58.9 million. Can the Minister indicate what is the reason for that increase? If it is that they are moving to a new building, where would that new building be and who will be the landlords?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Well, you know the new building that they are moving into, and it is a fact—[*Hon. Seepersad-Bachan confers with advisor*] I think five offices for the Personnel Department are located in Port of Spain. We were able to get them to go into a building in Barataria. This was a building selected by the Properties and Real Estate Division of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development. It includes an estimated cost, that is why you are seeing that increase for outfitting that new building, and there is an amortized rent in there for the rental cost, because as you—the outfitting is going to be done by the owner, and therefore we are going to be amortizing that cost with an increased rental. The owner of the building is GV Holdings.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Member for St. Ann's East.

Mrs. Thomas: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am looking at Item 16, Contract Employment. Minister, are there plans to take on new contract workers?

7.05 p.m.

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Yes, there are plans to take on new contract officers who are needed to perform functions of the department pending the appointment of persons—the existing vacant positions. Is that okay, Member?

Mrs. Thomas: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: All right. We go to Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases; Item 001, General Administration. We go to Sub-Head 04, Current Transfer and Subsidies; Item 001, Regional Bodies; Item 004, International Bodies. We go to Sub-Head 09, Development Programme; Item 005, Multi-Sectoral and Other Services. Any questions? I recognize the Members for Arouca/Maloney and Laventille West.

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair, thank you. Sub-Item 038, there is a \$10 million allocation for the Conduct of a Job Evaluation Exercise for Offices within the Purview of the Salaries Review Commission, I think. Mr. Chairman, I would just like to find out if this is an ongoing exercise and, if not—exactly when will the evaluation exercise be complete?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, hon. Minister?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: The tendering process commenced in July 2013. Four firms responded to the advertisements. The evaluation committee, comprising staff from the Personnel Department and a representative from the Central Tenders Board, was appointed on September 13, 2013. There was an

evaluation of technical proposals which was in October of 2013, and the committee completed its evaluation and submitted its report to the CTB in March of 2014.

The evaluation committee commenced its deliberations on the financial proposal in April 2014. The negotiation process started in June 2014 and it is ongoing. In this regard, the committee has been seeking additional information or clarification from the preferred consultant on a number of issues, which I do not think you want. Do you want the details, Member?

Mr. Cadiz: You could give it in writing.

Miss Hospedales: Yes, we would like to have the details.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, could I come in on this item?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Sure.

Mr. Imbert: We are on 09, Development Programme, 038?

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: Did the Minister just say you took one year to invite tenders? Is that what you said?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: To do the job evaluation exercise for our salaries? And you have not started yet? That is what you said?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Yes, the SRC.

Mr. Imbert: So one year to start the process for a job evaluation exercise for offices within the purview of the SRC and it has not begun. The actual physical work has not begun. That is what you are saying?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: Could we get full details so we could understand this calamity? And I notice the 2014 Revised Estimate for this sub-item is \$3 million. What is that spent on? 038, \$3 million Revised Estimate for 2014, what was that money spent on? There is no wonder we “cyar get better salaries and pension in here”.

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Member, that money has not been spent because, as I indicated, it was expected that the consultants would have been on board by July 2014. It was reviewed by the Ministry of Finance and the Economy but, to

date, all that has been spent is \$8,214.

Mr. Imbert: Do you think you will do anything in 2015 on this very important matter, improved terms and conditions for people under the purview of the SRC? “You spend a whole year and do nothing.” Do you think you will do something in 2015?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Yes, Member. I am advised by the—

Mr. Imbert: What is your time frame? You have a schedule?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: I have been advised by the Chief Personnel Officer that they would be doing something in 2015. They are about to complete negotiations and—

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, through you, could I ask the Minister, could you give us timelines, targets, objectives; what do you plan to do; when will you start; when will this exercise be completed?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Member, we will forward that information to you.

Mr. Imbert: You have any idea when it will be completed?

Mr. Cadiz: It will be forwarded to you.

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: The estimated time is 12 months from the start of the project.

Mr. Imbert: So it would not be finished until next year—end of next year? “We in September, yuh know, and yuh eh start yet.”

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: We would be forwarding the timelines for you, Member.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, I “cyar” stay here. This is just ridiculous. I think I will go and have some tea.

Mr. Chairman: Any other questions? Okay. Did the Member for—okay. Hon. Members, the question is that the sum of \$126,570,700 for Head 17, Personnel Department, stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 17 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, Personnel Department and the Chief Personnel Officer and the deputy and staff.

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the members of the Personnel Department and the Chief and her deputy for being here.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much. We now go to the Service Commissions. We invite the Service Commissions before this Standing Finance Committee to appear at this time.

Head 6.

We are under Head 06, Service Commissions. Hon. Members, the question is that the sum of \$91 million.

Miss Mc Donald: “We aih find it yet.”

Mr. Chairman: Oh, you have not found it as yet.

Hon. Member: Page 28.

Mr. Chairman: Page 28. [*Interruption*] Yes, we know. But we are moving fast.

Question proposed: That Head 06 stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the sum of \$91,021,200 for Head 06 to Service Commissions is comprised of moneys proposed for expenditure under the following Sub-Heads and Items to be found in the *Draft Estimates of the Recurrent Expenditure* and the *Draft Estimates of Development Programme*: Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure; Item 001, General Administration. I recognize the Member for St. Joseph.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Thank you. Minister, under Service Commissions, 01 sub, sub, 08, Vacant Posts, are these vacant posts within the Service Commissions?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Yes.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Within the body of the Service Commissions?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Yes.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Right, good. How many vacant posts are there, hon. Minister? A rough figure.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister of Public Administration.

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: I am advised about 60.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Sixty, great. Under line item 26, Vacant Posts, Salaries and Cost of Living, how many would there be there, hon. Minister?

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Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Under 26?

Mr. Deyalsingh: Yes.

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Okay. Just remember, if I could just distinguish for you—

Mr. Deyalsingh: Sure.

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: The vacant posts, wherever you see direct charges, will be posts, for example, like State Counsel.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Okay.

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: So those are people falling under the SRC. So under that, we have one State Counsel—

Mr. Deyalsingh: So if you had to guide me and tell me how many, let us say, administrative vacant posts there are then?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: 08.

Mr. Deyalsingh: 08?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Vacant posts without—

Mr. Deyalsingh: Let us say for, administrative, not for senior counsels, or anything like that.

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: No. Without incumbents, you go to 08.

Mr. Deyalsingh: 08, okay. If it is that the Service Commissions cannot even hire themselves, to man themselves, how do the Service Commissions intend to do the work to hire other people for other Ministries?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Mr. Chairman, I feel that is an opinion. I am not sure if that is related to the Estimates.

Mr. Deyalsingh: But if it is that the Service Commissions have these vacancies to fill their own positions—are they able to fill their own positions? I am not asking for an opinion.

Mr. Chairman: So are you asking the Service Commissions what time frame it will take—

Mr. Deyalsingh: To fill their own positions.

Mr. Chairman:—to fill those vacancies.

Mr. Deyalsingh: And could the hon. Minister tell us what are some of the reasons why the Service Commissions cannot fill their own positions?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: I am advised, Mr. Chairman, that in these cases here where we are talking about vacant posts without incumbents, that you have officers not yet qualified to move into these senior positions. Sometimes you have the vacant posts but people are not qualified with the right qualifications, or they do not meet the requirements and, therefore, until they meet the qualification requirements, then they can move into those posts.

Mr. Deyalsingh: So is it that one of the major reasons you are saying is that we do not have qualified persons to fill these positions?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: In some cases, yes. I am advised that we do not have the qualified people to fill those positions at this point, in some cases.

Mr. Deyalsingh: But, surely, Minister, these positions are not positions that require a degree in rocket science. I am really stunned to hear that with all this boast of 64 per cent tertiary education participation rate, that we cannot find administrative people in Trinidad and Tobago to fill administrative posts in the Service Commissions. And we boast that we have 64 per cent participation rate in tertiary education.

Mr. Chairman: Minister, would you like to respond?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Mr. Chairman, I think during my budget contribution I did try to treat with some of these challenges that we face, as we know, in all Ministries. We know that the current systems for promotions, and so on, are not based on merit. It is not strictly merit as yet and it is based on seniority for promotions, which are systems that we are trying to change. Hon. Members would know—from opposite—that when they were in Government, those were the same challenges that they faced. Hence, that is why, if you go back, you will see that this is the same trend that has obtained.

Mr. Deyalsingh: So has any progress been made from 2010 to 2014?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: In terms of that—and again, too, we are getting back into the budget debate—

Mr. Deyalsingh: Yes, no problem.

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: I think, Mr. Chairman, we would have a public administration committee for monitoring where we can discuss some of these

issues, but we have started looking at merit-based-systems implementation. It would require the review and a revision of the regulations. We have been doing some of that. We have started looking at advertising in and out. Again, too, the regulations have been revised. So these are now kicking in, Member, but, as you know, it takes time when we are dealing with a regulatory framework. And you would also appreciate that the Service Commissions Department and the Personnel Department, they are recognized as constitutionally independent bodies, and as a result of that it takes some time for us to discuss.

I also mention, Mr. Chairman, a couple years now we have been talking about our SHRM Council, the Strategic Human Resource Management Council, where we have been discussing some of these reform measures and taking them into consideration and are currently in implementation mode.

Mr. Deyalsingh: My last intervention, Chair. Surely, Minister, the role of independence of the Service Commissions, in my view, does not excuse them, or does not justify their tardiness. Independence from political interference, in my view, has nothing to do with their tardiness. Thank you.

7.20 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services; Item 001, General Administration. The Member for St. Ann's East.

Mrs. Thomas: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I go to Sub-Item 62, Promotions, Publicity and Printing, and through you, Mr. Chair, Madam Minister, I am aware of the advertisement for several jobs because I know every week in the papers, there are two days where you advertise a lot of jobs in the Government service, in Service Commissions, just this weekend had a lot of jobs. What I want to ask the Member, are people responding to these ads and if so, how is the recruitment and selection process going—or is it that the ads are just placed and no persons in the HR department or no time to do recruiting because every single week, there are always ads on the papers for positions in the Government service.

In all the various Ministries, I noticed, in particular, this last weekend, there were a number of ads. How are these ads being addressed and are you getting to fill the positions?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Okay, you are on 62? Is that it?

Mrs. Thomas: Yes. Well, I know the advertisement will come under that line.

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Okay, these are advertisements for established positions in Ministries. I would say that I know since I have been the Minister of

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Public Administration, even for Service Commissions, we had complaints and, Mr. Chairman, Parliament has also had complaints for the compensation/remuneration packages not being adequate to attract people to the positions and I think that is what you are getting at.

But the second issue you are referring to is contract positions which are not under the Service Commissions Department. What you see, Ministries are advertising sometimes—you refer to many Ministries—are contract positions. That too, when terms and conditions are determined for those contract positions, we are not finding many takers.

However, I would like to indicate that since the Service Commissions Department has started advertising, recently in and out, I think in the case of the customs officers, they had almost 15,000 applicants for customs officers, so you are finding people responding. So it has been a step-up process for the Service Commissions Department to institute more panels and you will see the expenses higher in some areas for that reason where you have had to have more interview panels, you have to go to Tobago and carry out more interviews and so on. So I just want to make sure that we got that distinction in terms of—

In this one here, in Sub-Item 62, we are talking about advertisements for established positions in the public service, not contract positions. What you are referring to are contract positions you are seeing advertised by Ministries. So, Ministries will not advertise public service positions, Service Commissions will advertise public service positions and Ministries will advertise their contract positions.

Mrs. Thomas: Okay, so just to piggyback on what the Member for St. Joseph mentioned about the filling of positions, you have identified a shortlist of staff that you need to do the work that you want to do, so is there some aggression being placed into really filling the positions and so allow the commission and whoever to do their jobs?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Yes, we have had the selection centres. In fact, even in Tobago, special interviews were carried out for just Tobago alone, so you will see the cost actually increasing as we go along. There are other Items in here that you will note where there are increases because of those interview panels and so on that have to be set up and more selection panels as well.

Mrs. Thomas: Okay, great.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the hon. Member for La Horquetta/Talparo.

Mr. Seemungal: Chair, on that same point with advertisement and recruitment, can the Minister say what is the process by which the shortlisting occurs? For instance, in the Land and Surveys Division department of my Ministry, I have known that an interview was done more than two years ago, a shortlisting was done, and it is only now they started filling the position. Has the Ministry—

Mr. Chairman: Which particular line are you on?

Mr. Seemungal: I am on the same one with advertisement and—. Has the Ministry sought to engage newer technology by way of computerized system to assist them in the shortlisting and the recruitment after the advertisement is done, maybe an online applicant system and shortlisting?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: You are talking about an electronic document management system, yes, there is a move to technology, but there was not much allocation this year under PSIP for that particular project, so yes, there has been a move towards that. But if you want the details for what you are talking about with those positions two years ago, we can always forward that information to you and we do not have that information at this point in time.

Mr. Chairman: All right, let us go to—yes, Member for Couva North.

Miss Ramdial: Under Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services; 99; Employee Assistance Programme, could you explain a little bit about what that is?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: All Ministries carry an Employee Assistance Programme. Your Ministry would also have that as an EAP. That is where employees themselves, if they have problems, they are able to meet with an expert, but it is done in a confidential way. No one knows who they are. In this particular case, are you asking who is the—

Miss Ramdial: No, no.

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: What is an EAP is what you are asking? What is the programme?

Miss Ramdial: Yes.

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: All Ministries have an EAP programme. So this is why this is here. If you look at the Estimates under all Ministries, you will see an estimate for EAP. It is, again, a programme that allows for employees to access these services and it is confidential in nature.

Mr. Chairman: All right, we go to Item 002, Tobago Services; Item 003, Public Service Commission; Item 004, Teaching Service Commission; Item 005, Judicial and Legal Service Commission; Item 006, Police Service Commission. Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases.

Miss Ramdial: Chair, sorry, Teaching Service Commission. Just to go back, 004.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, Item 004. Quickly.

Miss Ramdial: Hosting of Conferences, Seminars and Other Functions, the estimate for that, I am seeing \$200,000. Can you say when these or how often these activities take place within—?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Okay, there is a conference for school principals, annual school supervisors, seminars with managers of school boards and stakeholders. The conferences are held once a year, seminars as well for the managers of school boards, once a year.

Miss Ramdial: So it is funded solely by Service Commissions, nothing to do with the Ministry of Education in terms of funding?

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: No, this is by Service Commissions—well, the Teaching Service Commission.

Miss Ramdial: All right. Great. Thanks.

Mr. Chairman: All right. We go to Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases; Item 001, General Administration; Item 002, Tobago Services. We go to the Development Programme, Sub-Head 09; Item 005, Multi-Sectoral and Other Services.

Hon. Members, the question is that the sum of \$91,021,200 for Head 06 Service Commissions stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 06 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, members of the Service Commissions. We now proceed to the Statutory Authorities' Service Commission.

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Mr. Chairman, let me just thank the DPA, Director of Public Administration and her deputy, Miss Creed for being here today with her, together with her staff.

Head 07.

Question proposed: That Head 07 stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: The sum of \$6,554,200 for Head 07, Statutory Authorities' Service Commission is comprised of moneys proposed for expenditure under the following Sub-Heads and Items to be found in the *Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure*: Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure; Item 001, General Administration. Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services; Item 001, General Administration. Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases; Item 001, General Administration.

Hon. Members, the question of the sum of \$6,554,200 for Head 07, Statutory Authorities' Service Commission stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 07 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, members of the Statutory Authorities' Service Commission.

Hon. Seepersad-Bachan: Mr. Chairman, let me just thank Miss Charleen Phillip, the Executive Officer of the Statutory Authorities' Service Commission and her deputy for being here with us today.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much. We now go to the Ministry of Food Production, after we go to the Ministry of Land and Marine Resources and the final Ministry is the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development. Where is the Minister? If he is not here, we will take Land and Marine Resources. Okay, let us take the Ministry of Land and Marine Resources whilst we await the arrival of—[*Crosstalk*] Okay, you will have to hold on, the Minister has arrived. We were now about to take someone else but you have arrived.

Hon. Maharaj: You moved a little fast.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, thank you.

Head 25.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the question is that the sum—well, first of all, Head 25, Ministry of Food Production, \$665,851,000. I now invite the hon. Minister of Food Production if he wishes to make a brief opening statement as it relates to your priority areas within a period of less than five minutes.

Hon. Maharaj: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and Members of the House. I am pleased to have with me today my Permanent Secretary and members of the technical staff with me at this hour. I would like to thank you for this

opportunity to come before the Standing Finance Committee and really give you an idea in brief of the Ministry's priority.

As you know, the Ministry of Food Production was given the mandate in its national food action plan to pursue increasing our food security in Trinidad and Tobago, reducing our food inflation and reducing our food import bill. In setting out to do this work, the Ministry recognized that the country was on a tightrope as far as food security was concerned, and if we did not take corrective and immediate action, we may have found ourselves as a nation in an unenviable position to have a robust economy based on oil and gas but being unable to purchase food from the global market.

Today, therefore, the Ministry of Food Production as outlined in our national food action plan, we were more likely to grow food locally and make available to our citizens in a safe, nutritious and affordable manner in sufficient quantities so as to ensure the nation's food and nutrition security and provide an attractive and profitable livelihood for all producers.

The Ministry's food action plan provided comprehensive strategies which aligned with resources with national priorities and created the platform for the national Government and private sector to venture into strategic partnerships, to effectively mobilise and utilize the available land and marine resources, labour, human resources and technology. It allows the stakeholders to actively participate in the development of the sector with the potential to extend into the national economic and social development.

7.35 p.m.

The growth of the sector was driven by a number of initiatives, including but not limited to the strengthening of the agriculture infrastructure across farming communities, unprecedented private sector initiatives, the Ministry revamping its incentive programme, the increase of access to land through the awards of leases, and so on, in collaboration with the sister Ministry of Land and Marine Affairs.

This resulted in several achievements, more notably, with the reduction of food inflation. The Ministry's, in this area, I think, achievement is historic in nature. Food inflation, as you know, Mr. Chairman, is calculated using the retail price index. Components of that index included food such as bread and cereals, meat, fish, milk, cheese, eggs, oils, fats, and so on. Additionally, non-alcoholic beverages such as coffee, tea, and so on, are included in this food price index. Food inflation is very important to the agricultural sector and in fact headline

inflation, a core component of it, is food inflation. So, if food inflation is down, our headline inflation also follows.

Mr. Chairman, food inflation in January 2014 measured 3.2 per cent; for February 2014, it was 5.2 per cent; for March it was 6.7 per cent and for April it was 4.1 per cent and for May the figure measured at 3.8 per cent. The recent figures for June 2014, put food inflation at 3.5 per cent. This signifies an unprecedented achievement for the Ministry of Food Production as it marked, for the first time in over 21 years in Trinidad and Tobago, that food price inflation rate remained at single digit figures for the first consecutive six months of the year.

I could go on about what we are doing in food, but you get an idea.

Mr. Chairman: No, no. Thank you very much. I think you did a very good job.

Question proposed: That Head 25 stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the sum of \$665,851,000 for Head 25: the Ministry of Food Production 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; Item 001, General Administration. I recognize the hon. Member for La Brea.

Mr. Jeffrey: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I have four questions under Personnel Expenditure. Under 03, Overtime - Monthly Paid.

Hon. Maharaj: What page is that?

Mr. Jeffrey: Page 151.

Hon. Maharaj: Okay, I am following.

Mr. Jeffrey: For 2013, it was \$604,000. It went down to \$300,000 in 2014, when things looked good but, we see for 2015, the estimate is \$550,000 and it raises a few questions. What happened in 2014, when it was reduced by 50 per cent, that cannot be replicated in 2015? That is my first question.

My second question has to do with 06, Remuneration to Board Members. From \$3,760 in 2014, it went to \$20,000 and then \$130,300. This raises a few questions. One, is it that the remuneration package for the board members went up? Or two, we had an increase in the number of board members between 2013

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and 2014? Could we get some clarification on that?

And the same thing goes for under 14, Remuneration - Members of Cabinet-Appointed Committees. Can you tell us, because we recognize here again \$58,200 in 2013? It went to \$195,000 in 2014 and we see an estimate for \$500,000. So it is rising all the time. Could you tell us the number of persons on that committee, or whether or not the remuneration package has increased over time in that scenario?

And under 29, Overtime - Daily-Rated Workers, in 2013, \$1.6 million and in 2014, \$2.9 million. It raises a question as to whether or not it may not be more prudent to increase the complement rather than pay overtime for the daily-rated workers? So those are my four questions.

Hon. Maharaj: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. With regard to the first question, the overtime to the monthly-paid officers, that is where the general admin is paying the overtime for most of the divisions that fall under the Ministry of Food Production in the various regions, and so on. So that accounts for the increase in overtime there.

Mr. Jeffrey: I mean, in 2014, it went down to \$300,000. So what we want to find out is what happened in 2014, that could not have been replicated in the other two time periods?

Hon. Maharaj: Well what you had was the adjustment of salaries, and so on, there. This is an estimate, a 2015 estimate. If you look at the actual, it may not materialize to be \$500,000. So the Ministry of Finance and the Economy has allocated an estimate expenditure of \$500,000. That does not mean that the Ministry will actually spend \$500,000. And given the historical evidence before us that we have spent \$300,000 in 2014, we have spent \$300,000 in 2013, it is more likely and conservative to estimate that in 2015, we would similarly spend \$300,000. While, however, we are grateful that the Ministry of Finance and the Economy has given us \$500,000 that if the need arises we can accommodate for overtime arrangements.

Mr. Chairman: All right, we go on to the next question.

Hon. Maharaj: The next question regarding the board members, 06, well there have been two new additional boards the Cocoa Company of Trinidad and Tobago and Caroni Green. We have filled out the complement of all the boards that fell under our remit, so that may have taken up for the additional board members, an additional costing.

With the Cabinet-appointed committees, those rates, as well as the board members, are standard rates set by Cabinet. So it is not that it would raise for one Ministry and remain the same for some other Ministry. What we have found is that there were several Cabinet-conceptualized committees but were never implemented. We have so now implemented those committees and these committees include the National Task Force for the Management and Control of Zoonotic Diseases, which is a new committee and this is to prevent the transfer of diseases from animals to human beings; Monitoring and Advisory Committee of Inshore Coastal, National Advisory, Agricultural Advisory Commission Committee under the purview of the NAAC Commission, the World Food Day Committee. Those are the committees that fall there.

The daily-rated workers, 29, the overtime rates, again that is another estimated position of 2.9.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, we will now go to Item 002, Agriculture. I recognize the Member for St. Ann's East.

Mrs. Thomas: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, under agriculture, I know a lot of focus in our country is on agriculture but I see a big reduction in the estimates of \$17 million.

Hon. Maharaj: Which one?

Mrs. Thomas: Page 152. We are on 002, Agriculture and it is Sub-Item 02, Wages. Right? There is a big reduction of \$17 million. So, in my mind when thinking that the focus should be on agriculture, we see a big reduction here. Is it a reduction of staff or what is it?

Hon. Maharaj: No, that is a function of the new collective agreement.

Mrs. Thomas: So they are getting less salary, \$17 million less?

Hon. Maharaj: And remember too that there has been a reassignment of staff from this Ministry to the Ministry of Land and Marine Affairs. So that Ministry would have taken some of the staff for fisheries, and so on, land administration.

Mrs. Thomas: Okay.

Mr. Chairman: All right. I recognize the Member for Laventille West.

Mr. Hypolite: To the Minister, earlier on we were told that URP was divided into three. One part of it would have been under agriculture. Can you say whether 002, if the Wages and Cost of Living Allowances that are placed there take up the wages—

Hon. Maharaj: Let me clarify. In terms of the splitting of the URP, the URP was divided among the Ministry of the People, Ministry of Food Production and the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure. Our function has been to identify projects to be done under the URP project. The administration, procurement and payment of staff falls under the administrating agency, which is the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure.

Mr. Hypolite: So, am I hearing that the Ministry of Agriculture is not responsible for making any payment?

Hon. Maharaj: None at all. All we do is identify projects.

Mr. Chairman: All right, we go to Item 004: Animal Production and Health; Item 010, Horticulture; Sub-Head 02: Goods and Services; Item 001, General Administration.

Mr. Jeffrey: Mr. Chairman, Travelling and Subsistence, you had 2013, \$2.8 million; 2014, \$3 million and 2015, \$4 million. Could we get some explanation as to whether or not there is a policy for Travelling and Subsistence? What is the policy they use for Travelling and Subsistence?

Hon. Maharaj: That is set by the terms and conditions by the Public Service Commission and the Statutory Authorities' Service Commission, not by the Ministry itself. So whatever applies to all Ministries across the board applies to this Ministry.

Mr. Jeffrey: Well, in terms of who gets travelling and when?

Hon. Maharaj: That is when the post is classified, it is determined to be if it is a travelling post or not. There are cases when officers put up arguments that their posts should be made a travelling position and they would have to go through a process in which they would claim under regulation 16 after a year or so and justify their claim.

Mr. Chairman: All right, we are going now to Item 002.

Mr. Jeffrey: No, Mr. Chairman, I still have another question again.

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Jeffrey: It has to do with Contract Employment.

Hon. Maharaj: Where are you seeing that?

Mr. Jeffrey: That is 16 on the said 155, \$9.8 million in 2013. We see here in 2014, the revised estimate of \$21 million and the estimate is \$24 million. All

right? Is there not a case for more permanent staff?

Hon. Maharaj: No, this jump here really is to take into consideration the establishment of the Praedial Larceny Unit of the Ministry of Food Production, which constitutes a large part, not all but a large part, over 75 per cent of this figure here.

As you know, there was an attempt to introduce a praedial larceny unit under the last administration, which failed abysmally. We have introduced the Praedial Larceny Unit and it has been working and we have in fact had calls from various sections of the national community, farming communities, and so on, to have that praedial larceny unit go into those different areas. So this year is really to provision that squad to prevent praedial larceny from happening in our farming communities.

Mr. Jeffrey: What is the size of that praedial larceny squad now?

Hon. Maharaj: About 101 persons right now.

Mr. Hypolite: Do you have an organizational structure that you can submit?

Hon. Maharaj: Yes, we have an organizational structure. Would you like to have it?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, you can submit it. We go to Item 004, Animal Production and Health; Item 010, Horticulture; Sub-Head 03: Minor Equipment Purchases; Item 01, General Administration; Item 002; Agriculture; Item 004, Animal Production and Health; Item 010, Horticulture.

Sub-Head 04: Current Transfers—no, listen, listen, listen follow.

Mr. Deyalsingh: What page are you on, please?

Mr. Chairman: I am on Sub-Head 04: Current Transfers and Subsidies. Under that, I am dealing with Item 002, Commonwealth Bodies. Then I go to Item 003, United Nations Organization. We go to Item 005, Non-profit Institutions; Item 007, Households; Item 008, Subsidies. I recognize the Member of Parliament for Arouca/Maloney.

Miss Hospedales: Thank you, Mr. Chair, Sub-Item 06, Agriculture Incentive Programme. Could the Minister tell us exactly why there is an \$11 million—

Hon. Member: What page is that?

Miss Hospedales: That is page 163.

Mr. Chairman: Page 163, yes.

Miss Hospedales: Could the Minister indicate why is there an \$11 million decrease in the subsidy for this particular programme? That is one.

7.50 p.m.

The number of beneficiaries of this Agricultural Incentive Programme to date and is this incentive programme not a measure of impacting on the amount of money that is spent on the food import bill? Is it not supposed to create some measure of impact and reduce our food import bill?

Hon. Maharaj: As to why the reduction is made, I think that question is best suited for the Ministry of Finance and the Economy. We would have put in an application for as much as we would have liked to have gotten in the Ministry, as other ministries. We would have liked to have gotten more money than what—the Ministry of Finance and the Economy has assigned us this figure and allocated this.

As to the numbers, which is the second question, last year we processed 2,975 incentives in region north for the sum of \$90,727,426.46. In region south, we processed 2,210 applications for the value of \$10,091,057.63. As to its impact into the agricultural programme and the food import bill, everything we do at the Ministry of Food Production is geared at reducing our food import bill and as such it is hard to quantify one or the other because this programme, the Agricultural Incentive Programme, really is to add an incentive and provide some sort of relief or financial support to farmers when they buy equipment and so on, so that they get some taxation off and the like.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we go to Item—

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, hon. Member.

Miss Hospedales: Sub-Item 07—

Mr. Chairman: Yes?

Miss Hospedales: I would like to find out the number of beneficiaries for the Relief of Flood Damage.

Hon. Maharaj: I will provide that.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister will provide that in writing. We go to Item 09, Other Transfers; Item 010, Other Transfers Abroad; Sub-Head 06: Current—

Mr. Deyalsingh: Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Deyalsingh: May I ask a question under Sub-Head 06, Current Transfers to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, of course.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Thank you. Sub-Head 06, Sub-Item 08, Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago. Minister, was the sum of \$5.1 million for 2013 paid?

Hon. Maharaj: No.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Any reason why, Sir?

Hon. Maharaj: Yes, the election, as conducted, has been challenged in the courts of Trinidad and Tobago by persons who felt that the elections were less than fair. The Ministry's report indicated as such and the matter is before the courts at this point in time.

Mr. Deyalsingh: So the 2014 Estimates of \$4.7 million and the Revised Estimates—because you see, the Agricultural Society, as far as I know, is supposed to be the flagship for agricultural development and to really drive the agricultural diversification away from sugar. What is the Ministry doing as far as helping them to overcome their problems, instead of just withholding the funds?

Hon. Maharaj: Well, I think, Mr. Chairman, through you, your premise is wrong that the Agricultural Society is supposed to help farmers away from the dependency on sugar because the composition of the Agricultural Society is 24 members, of which eight come from the sugar industry, eight come from the coffee industry and eight come from the cocoa industry. It is a function of an Act which is close to over 100 years old, really to reinforce the plantocracy of the colonial society of the day.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Sorry, sorry, could you just repeat? You are saying the Agricultural Society is to reinforce the agricultural plantocracy—

Hon. Maharaj: The colonial plantocracy, indeed, because it is an Act of the 1900. As such, it has never kept in step with the modernization of the agricultural sector in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Deyalsingh: So you are saying that they are outdated, outmoded?

Hon. Maharaj: They are outdated. By no stretch of the imagination—they are outdated and they have never driven the sector in the last four years. It is the Ministry of Food Production that has taken the lead in driving the sector.

Mr. Deyalsingh: But the allocation for 2015 of \$4.827 million, so that will be held in abeyance again.

Hon. Maharaj: Well, our recommendation to the Ministry of Finance and the Economy was to have a substantially less figure than this.

Mr. Deyalsingh: What figure does the Agricultural Society need to conduct their affairs?

Hon. Maharaj: Well, that is something which is something of a court matter right now and I would not like to go in much further there.

Mr. Chairman: All right, I—

Mr. Deyalsingh: Okay, could I—

Mr. Chairman: Yes, one final question, Member for St. Joseph, then we go to the Member for La Brea and then the Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Thank you. Sub-Item 10, Cocoa and Coffee Industry Board, I think that has been replaced by the cocoa board, I believe?

Hon. Maharaj: The Cocoa Development Company.

Mr. Deyalsingh: The Cocoa Development Company, thank you. Could you tell me who are the members of that company?

Hon. Maharaj: I know the chairman's name offhand, Mr. Brandon Khan. I could provide the list of—

Mr. Deyalsingh: Mr. Brandon Khan.

Hon. Maharaj: Yeah.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: All right, I recognize the Member for La Brea and then the hon. Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Mr. Jeffrey: Okay, Sub-Item 09, National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO), from \$34.6 million, 2013; and 2014, we have \$45.5 million. My question is, when was the last audited statement received from NAMDEVCO?

Hon. Maharaj: Mr. Chairman, if I am not mistaken, I laid in the Parliament the latest audited figure from NAMDEVCO, the Parliament could check the date.

Mr. Chairman: You cannot remember the date.

Hon. Maharaj: I cannot remember it offhand, Sir, sorry.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister said a report was laid but he cannot remember the date but he will certainly—what other question do you have, hon. Member?

Hon. Maharaj: I have the last audited figure, 2011.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, 2011.

Hon. Maharaj: We laid that in the Parliament.

Mr. Jeffrey: Really and truly, my question was premised on the basis that if, in fact, we had a lot of audited statements outstanding then there may not be any justification in giving them allocation in 2015 but we will wait and see.

Mr. Chairman: All right, let us go to the Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair, Sub-Item 08, I would like to find out from the Minister whether or not they have done an audit on the Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago and if they have not, if they intend to do so in the near future.

Mr. Chairman: Have you done an audit?

Hon. Maharaj: The Ministry of Food Production has done an audit.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, an audit has been done.

Miss Hospedales: And one other thing, Mr. Chairman, Sub-Item 09 with reference to the National—well, NAMDEVCO, there had been reports of the officials there not following procurement procedures. What measures have been put in place to ensure that those procedures are followed?

Mr. Chairman: Is that an allegation or is that a fact?

Hon. Maharaj: Mr. Chairman, I am not aware of any allegations by any persons that NAMDEVCO follows any other procedure other than what is prescribed by the Ministry of Finance and the Economy.

Mr. Chairman: All right, we go to Sub-Head 09: Development Programme; Item 002, Productive Sectors; Item 003, Economic Infrastructure; Item 004, Social Infrastructure. I recognize the hon. Member for Laventille West.

Mr. Hypolite: Chair, I am on page 76. I am looking at 276: Development of Fishing Centres and related Facilities. I am seeing, in 2013, \$1.9 million being spent but 2014 and 2015, I am seeing no—

Mr. Chairman: That is under what heading?

Hon. Maharaj: What head? What heading?

Mr. Hypolite: Sub-Item.

Mr. Chairman: Which Sub-Item? Because I am under Social Infrastructure. Which one are you under?

Hon. Maharaj: Mr. Chairman, that is because it has been moved to the Ministry of Land and Marine Resources. So when my colleague comes after me, you can ask him.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, Item 005, Multi-Sectoral and Other Services; Infrastructure Development Fund. Hon. Members, the question is that the sum of \$665,851,000 for Head 25—

Dr. Browne: Mr. Chairman, I just want some clarification on what the Minister just said because these allocations appear under the Ministry of Food Production still. Is it that the Minister of Land and Marine Resources will be prepared to answer questions on the allocations here, these Sub-Items once they are associated with Fisheries that has been transferred? I just want to be clear on that. Because if not—

Mr. Chairman: Which Sub-Items? Do you want to tell us which Sub-Items you are referring to?

Dr. Browne: Well, he just said anything under Fisheries, the Fisheries Division. I will give you some examples: 508—

Mr. Chairman: Is it any item—

Dr. Browne: 8—

Mr. Chairman: Just hold a second. Hon. Minister, is it any Item under Fisheries?

Hon. Maharaj: All marine fisheries fall under the Ministry of Land and Marine Resources. All land fisheries, which is aquaculture such as tilapia and so on, fall under the Ministry of Food Production.

Dr. Browne: I am referring to marine fisheries. I just want to be clear whether that Minister would be prepared to answer questions even though it does not—it is not listed under his ministry.

Mr. Chairman: Well, the Minister is not here as yet but I am sure that when he comes you would bring those matters to his attention. Okay? Hon. Members, the—

Dr. Browne: No, Mr. Chairman, it is not a matter of bringing it to his attention. I want to be clear, otherwise I would ask them now.

Mr. Chairman: Well, it is not before us.

Dr. Browne: It is before us.

Mr. Chairman: No, I am saying that the hon. Minister has said even though it is before us, he is claiming that those matters have now been transferred to the hon. Minister of Land and Marine Resources. So, we are saying that when he comes here, he should be in a position to deal with those matters.

Dr. Browne: I am just saying, in the manner in which you have been approaching the task, when you call the Heads, Sub-Heads, Ministry, this will not arise. So it will take a specific decision of the Committee to cover these Items then.

Mr. Chairman: May I ask the Minister whether in the 2015 Estimates any provision was made for marine fisheries under—I am talking about the hon. Minister of Land and Marine Resources.

Hon. Maharaj: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: All right. So, then we will deal with that when it comes. So you are correct. So you can hold your fire. The sum of \$665,851,000 for Head 25, the Ministry of Food Production now stands part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 25 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister of Food Production, we would like to thank you and your team very much for gracing us with your presence at this Standing Finance Committee. Thank you very much.

Hon. Maharaj: Thank you, Members.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much. We now proceed to the other Head, which is Head 76, Ministry of Land and Marine Resources. After this, we have one more, which is the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development. We would then have completed 15 today. *[Interruption]* Fifteen and 10 is 25, so we have 25 again to go. Any other officers or is that it? *[Interruption]* Oh, your

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officers are coming. All right, whilst your team is assembling, let me proceed. Hon. Members, the question is—well, first of all Head 76, Ministry of Land and Marine Resources, \$254,994,700.

8.05 p.m.

Head 76.

Hon. Minister, would you like to make a few opening remarks before we get into the substantive matter?

Hon. Seemungal: Mr. Chairman, let me thank you for allowing my technocrats from the Ministry to be here to assist me with these questions. Well, Mr. Chairman, this Ministry, this month, is exactly one-year-old. You see, it is one of the newest Ministries that had been created under this People's Partnership Government.

My Permanent Secretary, Miss Sheryl-Anne Haynes, who sits on my left, she actually comes from the Town and Country Planning Division, where she spent some 24 years of her life, and I think she was well placed in this Ministry, because a lot of what this Ministry does requires the assistance of the Town and Country Planning Division. We have many programmes which impact on having the regulations of the State with respect to development of lands and the creation of housing estates, which requires the Town and Country Planning Division's input.

The Fisheries Department of the Ministry was just transferred to the Ministry just about a month ago, and we are still putting things in place to have the remainder of the staff transferred to us. This Ministry comprises of staff who came from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and the Ministry of Food Production, and now the last piece of the puzzle also came from the Ministry of Food Production.

Mr. Chairman, the Ministry of Land and Marine Resources has, I would say, a client base of just about over 200,000 in terms of who we have to deal with, just the programmes which fall under the Ministry which include the Agriculture Land Programme, the Caroni VSEP Programme, the Land for the Landless, the Squatter Regularization Programme. These alone have a large impact, because just over 60 per cent of the lands in this country still comprise of State lands which falls under the Ministry of Land and Marine Resources and the Commissioner of State Lands office. Incidentally, that is a position which actually reports to the President by way of this quasi-jurisdiction, because the lands in this country, State lands, are

still vested under the President of the Republic. Under the Ministry, there are two arms that deal with these lands, one of which is the Land Settlement Agency and the Commissioner of State Lands.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, thank you very much. Hon. Members, the question is that the sum of \$254,994,700 for Head 76, the Ministry of Land and Marine Resources, stand part of the Schedule.

Question proposed: That Head 76 stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the sum of 254,994,700 for Head 76, the Ministry of Land and Marine Resources. Hon. Members, the sum of \$254,994,700 for Head 76, the Ministry of Land and Marine Resources 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; Item 001, General Administration; Item 002, Surveys and Mapping; Item 003, Land Management.

I recognize the hon. Member for La Brea.

Hon. Jeffrey: I want to refer to Contract Employment, 16; Goods and Services.

Mr. Chairman: You are on Personnel Expenditure, right?

Hon. Member: No. That is the wrong page.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, just hold a second for me. I will come back to you. We are on Item 003, Land Management; Item 004, Fisheries; Item 005, Agricultural Land Administration Division. We now go Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services. I think there is where you are.

Hon. Jeffrey: Yeah, Mr. Chairman. Contract employment for 2014, \$1.5 million, but the estimate for 2015 is \$8 million. I would like to get some clarification on what informed that decision to increase to \$8 million?

Hon. Seemungal: Mr. Chairman, the Ministry of Land and Marine Resources though newly formed, and much of its staff is now being transferred from different Ministries, including the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and the Ministry of Food Production. We also took a Note to Cabinet which allowed for the establishment of additional posts, and this will account for the increase in the allocation.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, shall we go to Item 002, Surveys and Mapping?

Hon. Jeffrey: No, Mr. Chairman, I still have one, 23, Fees. In 2014, \$3.5 million, but we saw a reduction in 2015 for the estimate of \$393,000. Again, we are looking for some clarification on that. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: Are you dealing with Short-Term Employment?

Hon. Jeffrey: Yeah, Fees, 23.

Mr. Chairman: Which one are you dealing with? [*Cell phone rings*] Does somebody have a phone on? Could you switch off all phones?

Hon. Seemungal: “Yuh kinda” confusing me because—

Mr. Chairman: All right. I think you are not clear. Whilst you are clarifying, I am moving on. Item 002, Surveys and Mapping; Item 003, Land Management; Item 004, Fisheries; Item 005, Agricultural Land Administration Division; Sub-Head 03: Minor Equipment Purchases; Item 001, General Administration; Item 002, Surveys and Mapping; Item 003, Land Management; Item 004, Fisheries; Item 005, Agricultural Land Administration Division. Sub-Head 004: Current Transfers and Subsidies; Item 005, Non-Profit Institutions; Item 007, Households; Item 008, Subsidies; Item 009, Other Transfers; Item 010, Other Transfers Abroad. Sub-Head 06, Current Transfers to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies; Item 004, Statutory Boards.

We now turn to Development Programme: Item 001, Pre-Investment; Item 003, Economic—I recognize the hon. Member for Diego Martin Central.

Dr. Browne: Chairman, I am on page 221. I just want to confirm that you are there as well? 001, Marine Baseline Study in the North Western Peninsula.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, I am with you.

Dr. Browne: Yes. Minister, what are the objectives of this study? When will it be initiated? Which agency is being contracted if it is not an in-house study? What is the duration?

Hon. Seemungal: That is a study that is being done by the Institute of Marine Affairs, and they will be commencing that very early in this new financial year.

Dr. Browne: What is the objective?

[*Hon. Seemungal confers with his advisors*]

Hon. Seemungal: This is to pick up any illegal reclamations that may have occurred, so that we can have this entire mapping of the area, so that we can then start dealing with some of these reclamation matters.

Hon. Jeffrey: Land Acquisition, K, 001, Acquisition of Sites for Non-Agricultural, 2014, \$50 million. Could you tell us where these sites are located?

Mr. Chairman: Are you following him?

Hon. Seemungal: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, continue, hon. Member.

Hon. Jeffrey: Could you tell us where these sites are located?

Mr. Chairman: Could you indicate where those sites are located? Do you have that information? If you do not, make it available in writing.

Hon. Seemungal: We have more than 50 sites that are located throughout the country. Actually, the estimate that will be submitted next year, is over \$140 million. These are reclamation matters going back as far as 20 and 30 years that have not been satisfied. I have given the Ministry the mandate that we are to settle all of these outstanding matters. Last year we got \$50 million. This year we are at \$10 million, by March of next year we will then be submitting another \$100 million to satisfy these backlogs throughout the country.

Hon. Jeffrey: Can we get a listing of those sites?

Hon. Seemungal: Yes, I could provide a listing of the sites for you.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Member for Diego Martin Central and then the Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Dr. Browne: All right. Mr. Chairman, I want to revert under Ministry of Food Production now as promised prior. I take you to page 77, under the Consolidated Fund, and I have a question with respect to—tell me when you are there—line Items 508 and 534. I am seeing past expenditure on two related aspects of research in the marine fisheries industry and Inshore/Costal Fisheries. I am not seeing any allocation for this year, and I am tempted to assume that those studies have been completed. I am asking whether they have been completed. I want to confirm that. Are the findings available? I would like them to be made available to this Committee. Further, I am asking the Minister, again, under these items, if there are any plans to protect fish spawning—I do not know if he is listening.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, he is following you.

Hon. Seemungal: Sorry.

Dr. Browne:—sites in the Gulf of Paria. And on the north coast there are some specific locations in which these fish spawn, maybe based on this research, are there any plans within the Ministry? And finally, assuming again that the research is completed, is it aimed at culminating in laws that will assist in the protection of our marine fisheries industry?

Hon. Seemungal: Yes. Mr. Chairman, through you, we have both international and regional obligations as far as the fish spawning sites are concerned. And also some of this research goes into the protection of the queen conches as well. Some of this research will go off the baselines as far as Tobago, because of our regional obligations, but many of these projects have been absorbed within the recurrent expenditure, because they are no longer considered to be the development programme. Many of them have almost reached to their end and the Ministry is now looking at a comprehensive overview of our fishing Act to bring it into modernization, and to also bring it in tune with upgrading the fines and penalties, so that we can continue to manage the fish spawning sites, and also continue to manage the fish resources of the surrounding seas.

Dr. Browne: Are there any plans for an artificial reef programme within the Ministry?

Hon. Seemungal: That is something that we are considering. Actually, one of the research projects that we are looking at right now is the research with respect to sharks and that entire programme, but we are, in fact, looking at some of the waters off Tobago. We actually will be having the—we have started having discussions with the Tobago House of Assembly on it already. One of the areas that we are seriously considering, whether or not to make it into a marine park or some form of protected area, is that Speyside seas. Actually, that is considered the clearest water in the entire world, that is the best water for recreation diving. So at least that is an area which we are seriously considering in protection of the marine environment and also the protection of the fish spawning areas around that particular region.

Dr. Browne: I have a question on the IDF. I do not know if now is the time, maybe—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Jeffrey: I still have one question under—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Chairman: No, let us deal with DP first, and then IDF after.

Hon. Jeffrey: I have a question, Mr. Chairman, G, 001—

Hon. Seemungal: What page?

Hon. Jeffrey: Page 224, Equipment and Vehicles, right. I would like to find out firstly, which company is scheduled to do the refurbishment of the hydrographic unit's vessel? And secondly, is it seaworthy at this point in time?

Hon. Seemungal: Yes, we are looking at a project under the Central Tenders Board. We have not chosen any particular company, and we have done the research. It can be made seaworthy. Actually, I am talking—we are having discussion with the Ministry of Transport to assist us with respect to those vessels—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Browne: What is the name of that vessel?

Hon. Seemungal:—to make available a couple vessels that we can use for this marine survey. The marine survey is necessary, that is the hydrographic survey is necessary with the opening up of the Panama Canal, that is necessary to survey the waters around the land so that we can create now a digital mapping system.

We are also having discussion with the hydrographic unit of the United Kingdom who we are engaging in consultation and they are recommending—they have seen the vessels and they have recommended other vessels that we need to procure as well.

We are also having discussion with the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs to use some of their barges so that we can then use their vessels to survey the east coast, that is along the Maracas—all those areas, and with the coming into stream of their new port, that will make it much cheaper and much easier for us to continue those surveys.

Miss Hospedales: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to take you all to page 223, Sub-Item 240, Residential Lots Programme (Land for the Landless). I would like to find out from the Minister, how many lots have been distributed to date? The number of lots that you all have reserved for distribution? And if you can tell us about the number of applicants for the programme? And I also want to link this back to Item 001 on page 222, to ask whether or not the land acquisition that you speak of for non-agricultural purposes is for the Land for the Landless programme. And actually, if you can tell us the actual locations of those parcels of land that you are looking at.

8.20 p.m.

Hon. Seemungal: It is about 10 questions in one, but I will try to see how many of them I can answer. The Residential Lots Programme, which was started just about two years ago, we have thus far prepared close to 1,000 lots of land to be distributed. None has been distributed to date, the reason being that it takes close to 22 months to actually have the final approval from Town and Country Planning, which is a requirement of the Act, State Lands (Regularisation of Tenure) Act, before we can actually distribute lands to persons.

We have an applicant database of just over 40,000 persons who would have applied, many of whom would fall into the Squatter Regularisation Programme as well, but because they did not have lands, they applied under the programme itself.

We have right now 10 sites being prepared under the IDB Programme, which is not really cited here as an allocation, but that is a project we are doing through the Ministry of Public Administration and Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development, and those projects will be starting very soon. They are not here because there is no requirement to list those, but those will be starting very soon. They will bring an additional 3,000 lots, making them available for persons under this particular programme.

We continue to take applications. Every single day, persons can go down to the Land Settlement Agency situated at Orange Grove and lodge their application.

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair, follow-up. I would like to find out from the Minister if they can provide us with a list of all the recipients to date.

Hon. Seemungal: I just said we have no recipients because they have not allocated any as yet.

Miss Hospedales: We were provided by the media with information that there were two distribution programmes where 500 persons for each programme were identified.

Hon. Seemungal: But, I am giving you the correct information. This is the Minister of Land and Marine Resources who is giving you the correct information.

Mr. Chairman: All right. The Minister is giving you the correct information. Let us go on now to the Infrastructure Development Fund and I now recognize the hon. Member for Diego Martin Central and the Member for La Brea.

Dr. Browne: Thank you, Chairman. I am on page 311—

Hon. Seemungal: Same book?

Dr. Browne: Yes, the DP, Head 76 and Land Management Services, 003, Upgrading/Construction of Fishing Facilities in Trinidad. And I see a 2015 allocation of \$10 million and my question to the Minister is, as he did mention it in his budget contribution, this \$10 million, does it specifically include funding for development for the fishermen at the Cocorite Fish Facility and market? If so, how much of this \$10 million is identified for Cocorite and what other locations would be allocated under this sum?

Hon. Seemungal: Mr. Chairman, through you, the Cocorite Facility was tendered and a contract has been awarded and signed by NIPDEC to the tune of \$6.2 million to one RGB Contractors. That funding, though, would be taken out of the 2014 and only if they have not been able to draw all the funding, then we will take it out of the 2015.

In addition to that, the Blanchisseuse Facility has also been tendered and that contract is in the process of being awarded, but this funding here, we wanted to make sure that we have coverage. Remember, I only received this Division just about a month ago and I wanted to make sure that we have coverage for these two particular facilities for which contracts have been signed.

In addition to this, the Cabinet has approved \$300 million by way of raising of a bond or funds to be raised by NIPDEC, which will take into consideration all the other 39 facilities that we have throughout the country to make sure that we bring some kind of at least first stage or part one of what we want to do to bring some of these facilities up to scratch.

Dr. Browne: On behalf of the Cocorite fishermen, I am very pleased to hear that and I hope the Ministry will follow through quickly. It is good news.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member for La Brea.

Mr. Jeffrey: 003 again, Construction of Fishing Facilities in Trinidad. I see that the 2015 estimate, \$10 million. I would like to find out whether or not the La Brea Fishing Facility is factored in that.

Hon. Seemungal: La Brea Fishing Facility and all the other fishing facilities are factored into a project. I just said the Cabinet has approved \$300 million-plus for NIPDEC to raise a bond this year, so that we can complete all these facilities during the course of this year. We have already visited most of the sites and we have held consultation with at least 80 per cent of the sites thus far.

What we are doing now, we have brought into my Ministry an architect and a senior civil engineer and they are hard at work trying to refine all of the proposals that we have received thus far and trying to standardize, as far as possible, the designs, so that we can move forward with what the fishermen want and, in addition to that, make the facilities very user-friendly and easy to maintain in the long run.

Mr. Jeffrey: You said you visited 80 per cent of the sites. I just want to find out if La Brea was one of those that you visited.

Hon. Seemungal: La Brea was one of those that we have visited.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 76 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, hon. Minister and your team.

Hon. Seemungal: Mr. Chairman, through you, I would like to thank the Commissioner of State Lands, the PS, Director of Fisheries, the CEO of LSA and all the other staff for coming out and assisting us.

Mr. Chairman: We would like to thank you as well. We now invite the Minister of Gender, Youth and Child Development and his team. This is the final Head that we would be looking at.

Head 66.

Mr. Chairman: I will now invite the hon. Minister of Gender, Youth and Child Development, if he so desires, to make a brief opening statement for no more than five minutes.

Hon. De Coteau: Thank you, Chairman. The Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development was established in 2011 to ensure that dedicated attention is given to the issues of gender, youth and child development. Over the past three and a half years, the Ministry has focused on developing the necessary framework for effectively managing the gender, youth and child development portfolios.

In this regard, the Ministry focused on policy formulation, institutional strengthening, improvement of service delivery and building a robust monitoring and evaluation platform to measure growth and address gaps which may occur, to ensure that success is achieved.

In 2015, under the gender portfolio, the Ministry will continue its focus on the policy, the legislation and programme to address gender equality and gender-

based and sexual violence and developing the national strategic plan. Further, development of the tool kit for gender-responsive budgeting, the establishment of the National Commission for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equity and the IT-based National Domestic Violence Registry are some of the key initiatives for 2015.

Under the portfolio of youth, the Ministry will continue its implementation of the National Youth Policy while focusing on youths in challenging circumstances; a new and different curriculum for the Youth Empowerment Centres; and the refurbishment of the existing centres with two additional centres for girls will also be the focus. These will include the Game Keepers Project, Youth Volunteer, the programmes at all the youth centres and relevant intervention programmes.

In the area of child development, the Ministry is aware of this country's need to catch up with other developing nations to bridge the gaps existing. The focus will be on ensuring that the Children's Authority is fully operational and the legislation and infrastructure are in place for its operations. A large portion of the development programme will be used for the construction and refurbishment facilities to meet the growing needs of the children associated with this strengthening of the families.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for the opportunity to make that comment.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much.

Question proposed: That Head 6, stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the sum of \$230,282,670, for Head 66, the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development, 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*.

We go to:

Sub-Head 01: Personnel Expenditure

Item 001, General Administration

Item 002, Gender Affairs Division

Item 003, Youth Affairs

Item 005, National Youth Development and Apprenticeship Centres

Item 006, Child Development Centre

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Item 007, National Family Services

Sub-Head 02: Goods and Services

Item 001, General Administration

Item 002, Gender Affairs Division

Item 003, Youth Affairs

Item 004, Youth Centres

Item 005, National Youth Development and Apprenticeship Centres

Item 006, Child Development Centre

Item 007, National Family Services

We go to:

Sub-Head 03: Minor Equipment Purchases

Item 001, General Administration

Item 003, Youth Affairs

Item 004, Youth Centres

Item 005, National Youth Development and Apprenticeship Centres

Item 006, Child Development Centre

Item 007, National Family Services

We go to:

Sub-Head 04: Current Transfers and Subsidies

Item 002, Commonwealth Bodies

Item 003, United Nations Organizations

Item 005, Non-Profit Institutions

Item 007, Households

Sub-Head 06: Current Transfers to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies

Item 004, Statutory Boards

We now go to the Development Programme:

Sub-Head 09: Development Programme

Item 004, Social Infrastructure

Item 005, Multi-Sectoral and Other Services

Infrastructure Development Fund

Question put and agreed to.

Head 66, ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, I wish to thank you and your staff. Thank you very much.

Hon. De Coteau: Chairman, I want to thank my colleagues, the members of the committee, for their 150 per cent support. Thank you.

8.35 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, hon. Members, before we bring the proceedings to an adjournment, I just want to let you know—and I want to thank all Members—we have been able to complete 14 Heads of expenditure today, bringing us up to 24 and we now, therefore, have 26 more Heads to complete. Tomorrow being Republic Day, we resume on Thursday at 1.30 in the afternoon, and I want to serve notice that we will be dealing with 15 Heads on that day:

1. Ministry of Sport
2. Ministry of the People and Social Development
3. Trinidad and Tobago Police Service
4. Ministry of Education
5. Ministry of Tobago Development
6. Ministry of the Arts and Multiculturalism
7. Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development
8. Ministry of Public Administration
9. Ministry of Transport
10. Ministry of Public Utilities
11. Ministry of Community Development
12. The Judiciary
13. The Industrial Court
14. Tobago House of Assembly
15. Ministry of Legal Affairs

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On Friday, we bring the curtains down, first before us:

1. The Attorney General
2. Ministry of Local Government
3. Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources
4. Ministry of Housing and Urban Development
5. Ministry of Foreign Affairs
6. The Office of the President
7. Elections and Boundaries Commission
8. The Public Service Appeal Board
9. The Parliament
10. Auditor General

These will constitute the final 26 Heads, and we hope to bring these matters to a close on Friday evening.

Hon. Members, I would like to thank all of you. It has been a long day, and we would like to thank all of you, especially the Members who came out today, for being cooperative. Today we were a bit tense at times, that is understandable. We are going through a very new period of transparency, accountability and openness, and there is an old culture that is still in the system that we have to shift from, but we know that that is going to come by as we proceed. So we ask all our Members to be patient, and to ensure that when we proceed, we deal with matters in a very cool, calm and collective way.

How could I forget the hon. Minister of National Diversity and Social Integration, and you said nothing. [*Laughter*] Well, I want to let you know, you have not been forgotten, and you are incorporated. I want to serve notice on you [*Laughter*] that on Thursday, September 25, you will be No. 16. If you feel that you were going to escape scrutiny of this Legislature, you are wrong. You are going to be fully scrutinized. So I want to let you know that on Thursday you are going to be part of the examination.

Hon. Members, at this time, I want to move that the proceedings of this Standing Finance Committee is adjourned to Thursday at 1.30 p.m. This sitting of the committee is adjourned until Thursday at 1.30 p.m. in the evening.

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