



REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Debates of the House of Representatives

5th Session – 10th Parliament (Rep.) – Volume 31 – Number 12

**OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)**

THE HONOURABLE WADE MARK
SPEAKER

THE HONOURABLE NELA KHAN
DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thursday 25th September, 2014

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(TYPESET BY THE HANSARD STAFF, PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY THE GOVERNMENT PRINTER, CARONI,
REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO— 2022)

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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APPROPRIATION (FINANCIAL YEAR 2015) BILL, 2014

[Ninth Day]

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

[*Chairman: Mr. Mark*]

1.30 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the meeting of the Standing Finance Committee is called to order.

I recognize the Member for Tobago West.

Dr. Baker: Thank you, Chairman. After having sat with you to work through the new rules by which this committee is now sitting and meeting, I think we would be at a loss if we did not have the Chief Secretary of the Tobago House of Assembly appear before us to answer for his administration.

Mr. Chairman: You are asking before we reach there, whether the Chief Secretary would appear here?

Dr. Baker: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: He is not the accounting officer.

Dr. Moonilal: Mr. Chairman, could I indicate that over the past three days or so, Ministers of Government have been attending. They themselves are not the accounting officers, but they carry responsibility for the Ministry, and while the Chief Secretary is not the accounting officer, he carries the responsibility for the Tobago House of Assembly.

If Members of the Finance Committee are so minded that the Chief Secretary should be asked to present himself to the Finance Committee, as each Minister has done, to give a proper account for the expenditure, along with his accounting officer, the Chief Administrator, I believe that is something that the Member for Tobago West is making a request for, and other Members of the Finance Committee may be so minded. There is no proper reason why the Chief Secretary should absent himself, if asked to come here and explain, because Ministers are giving explanations, not only on the dollars and cents, but on certain

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policy issues that Members are asking. I think it would be helpful if the Chief Secretary would be properly invited to attend on the Finance Committee.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman—

Mr. Chairman: Before you speak. Hon. Members, in accordance with Standing Order 83(2):

“The procedure in Standing Finance Committee shall be as follows:

- (a) the Estimates shall be considered first; and
- (b) the Committee shall be empowered to send for relevant Accounting Officers and technocrats to provide information to the Committee.”

I do not see in this instance where—unless, for instance, the Member for Tobago West and the Member for Oropouche East are submitting that the Chief Secretary is a technocrat. But as far as I am aware, he is an elected official in the Tobago House of Assembly. In accordance with our Standing Orders we are empowered to send for the relevant Accounting Officers and technocrats. Unless we change our Standing Orders, that is what the Standing Order says.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman—

Mr. Chairman: Hold on, hold on, hold on.

What I am suggesting is that unless—I could always seek advice subsequent to what these Standing Orders say, but I am guided by the Standing Orders. Therefore, in those circumstances, until I get further advice on the matter, I would want to ask that we proceed with what we have before us. Okay?

I recognize the Member for Diego Martin West wanted to say something earlier, and also the Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, it is unfortunate that we are getting off on the foot that we have been placed by the Member for Tobago West, because my understanding of the Standing Orders is exactly as you have read them there, but if the Committee would like to talk to any public official and the Committee makes that request, I would find it reasonable if the request is properly made.

When I was given the responsibility to speak to issues under various Ministries, by proper channels, through the Clerk of the House, I did indicate who I would like to see here, and I think a piece of correspondence went quite properly. For example, this afternoon we are seeing the Head under Police, and I specifically asked the Clerk so that the Commissioner of Police should be here as the Accounting Officer, and so on.

But to come here on the day when the THA is to be examined, and to make the request in this way as though the THA Chief Secretary should be here and somehow is evading this Committee is quite wrong. The argument as put forward against those Standing Orders, I may want to ask, this afternoon we are supposed to examine the Judiciary, is it that we are expecting the Chief Justice?

Let us be guided by your correct ruling, Mr. Chairman, and if it is that the Committee requires the presence of the Chief Secretary, then let us make the request in the proper way and not in this way as though something wrong is happening.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I have ruled on this matter. I do not think that we should proceed there.

Mr. Imbert: Just a related matter. That would also apply to corporations. So I cannot ask the Mayor of Chaguanas to come here?

Mr. Chairman: I have ruled on this matter specifically raised by—let us go to Head 68, the Ministry of Sport, \$466,657,704.

I will now invite the hon. Minister of Sport to make a brief opening statement for no more than five minutes, if he so desires.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I really have no brief statement to make, more than to introduce the team that is with me here today. We are prepared to answer any questions that are forthcoming.

We have here the Permanent Secretary, Mr. Amroodeen Ali. We have Mr. Adrian Raymond, the Acting CEO of the Sport Company, and Mr. Bhaggan from the Boxing Board Company.

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

Head 68.

Question proposed: That Head 68 stand part of the Schedule

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the sum of \$466,657,704 for Head 68, the Ministry of Sport, 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*. I go to Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure, Item 1, General Administration.

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I recognize the hon. Member for Diego Martin West, Leader of the Opposition.

Dr. Rowley: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I would like to preface my questions under 01 under the summary Sub-Head 01 on page 368, because when I examined the expenditure pattern in this Ministry in preparation for this exercise, I observed that in 2014 this Ministry was responsible for spending \$682 million. That draws my attention to what is recurrent expenditure. Recurrent expenditure seems to have exploded in this Ministry.

The Revised Estimates show under recurrent \$682 million and a request in 2015 of \$451 million. But to get the full impact on that on recurrent, one has to understand that the documents available to this Parliament, maybe not all in front of us here, show that the recurrent expenditure in the Ministry of Sport, as recently as 2011 was just over \$28 million. So it would mean that in a period of stricture, in a deficit budget, we have somehow contrived to move the recurrent expenditure in this Ministry in a way that is quite substantial.

I would like to ask the spokespersons for the Ministry today to explain to us, what was the reason for the explosion in expenditure to \$682 million in 2014 as per the Estimates, and what is going to be cut out of the Ministry's programme with respect to the Estimates for 2015 of \$451 million? We start with that, Mr. Chairman, before we get to 001, General Administration.

Mr. Chairman: We have to go through, if you want the Items under 01, which is Personnel Expenditure—you see, what I suspect you are doing is dealing with all the Items, that is, Goods and Services, Minor Equipment Purchases, as well as Current Transfers and Subsidies, which is going ahead of the Standing Finance Committee.

So we are taking things by Item, and the first Item I called was Item 1, Sub-Head 1 which is Personnel Expenditure. Under Personnel Expenditure we have Item 1, General Administration. Which one are you dealing with in terms of—

Dr. Rowley: If you go the way we have been going, Mr. Chairman, what I have discovered by examination of all the numbers in front of us, is that if we go the way we have gone, it is possible that we will not get the answers that we are looking for with respect to what happened in 2014, because there have been significant omissions in terms of recurrent in this Ministry. So what I was looking for was a general comment as to what has happened with the general pattern before we get to the specifics. I do expect to go through the specifics as we have

normally gone, going down the Heads on the various pages. But if you find a difficulty with that, I will not push the point.

Mr. Chairman: I would suggest that we go with the specific Items first and maybe as we go along we would get the general answer. Let us deal with the specifics first.

Dr. Rowley: That takes me, Mr. Chairman, to 001. Again, we are talking about an increase in the expenditure under Personnel. I would like an explanation—if you look at page 369,001, the total under Personnel Expenditure, we are looking at \$21 million for Personnel Expenditure. I would like that to be explained in the context of the recent expenditure. Has there been any increase in Personnel Expenditure in the Ministry and if so, what is the basis for this increase?

1.45 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister of Sport.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to note that the Member in his initial—except we nullify what he said initially, but he made mention of 2011 which is not before us. So if that is nullified, we then could look at 001 and you will note that the revised estimate for 2014 was \$21 million, for 2015 it is \$19.5 million. So, I think the question pertaining to what were the increases, you would see over to the left there is a decrease, not an increase.

Dr. Rowley: What is the basis for that?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: What is the basis of the decrease? Well a number of things. One, the LifeSport is no longer in the Ministry of Sport, there was some migration there, and then there are other positions that are still vacant in the establishment that are not yet filled. And I do remind the Member, this is an estimate—the 2015 is an estimate.

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Miss Mc Donald: I have a question.

Mr. Chairman: Yes. Member for Port of Spain South.

Miss Mc Donald: I think I want to follow up on the question that Dr. Rowley had asked. And let us look at 2013 actuals: \$16.3 million; and 2015 \$19.5 million. There has been a major increase there of some \$3 million. What has accounted for that increase?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Of course, these are estimates, and as was already mentioned in previous discussions, an estimate is merely what is expected for 2015, it is not saying that that will be expended in 2015.

Dr. Rowley: Well then the question follows because—I raised this last Friday to the Government—the revised estimates used to mean something. It meant that, with respect to the actual expenditure, the Ministry is in a better position to determine what the final outcome will be at the end of the fiscal year. And if the Ministry of Finance and the Economy has told this House, this committee, that the revised estimates is \$21 million, I would like to ask the Minister, since he is taking this position, what was the basis for revising the estimates upwards by \$3 million?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Okay. I am guided by the PS, he says the revised estimates—and I think he is correct on that—between 2013 and 2014 went from \$12.2 million to \$12.8 million.

Dr. Rowley: That is not before us, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Well it is there, if you look at 20—

Mr. Chairman: Yes, the information is before us, but that is not the question.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Well if he is prepared to ask the question again. Maybe I misinterpreted what you meant.

Dr. Rowley: We have some numbers that we are relying on the Ministry of Finance and the Economy. The Ministry of Finance and the Economy tells us—let us take General Administration. They said the actual figure in 2013, which is last fiscal year, not the one that is ending now, the one that we have confirmed expenditure on, was \$9.7 million. There was an appropriation, right, for \$12.8 million for 2014 which was close to the estimate, which is the revised estimate, so there is a \$12 million that is a \$3 million approximate difference in there. And you are now asking in 2015 to pitch the level at \$12.5 million. And I am asking, what moved the expenditure from \$9.7 million to \$12.8 million?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Well the \$9.7 million was at 2013; you note that.

Dr. Rowley: So because—[*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: Well let him answer.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: I am answering your question.

Mr. Chairman: Continue, please.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Then you would see the estimate in 2014 was \$12.27 million, and the revised estimate is \$12.8, million; so just a .7.

Dr. Rowley: What is the basis? Because the Ministry has an establishment; we knew what the cost to the establishment was in 2013. You are telling us now that it would have changed by almost \$3 million. I am asking you, what has changed in the Ministry to require that additional money for the establishment?

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister of Sport.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Well, there are certain positions on the establishment that are not yet filled, and there are projections to have those filled. That is going to incur additional cost.

Dr. Rowley: No. No. Vacant posts are already included in that figure.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Just relax. I am giving you the answer, except you said—

Dr. Rowley: The answer you gave me cannot be held up.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Well if you are not satisfied with the answer, we can move on to another question. So if you ask me the question, I am going to give you the answer. All I am asking you to do is to be patient so I can help you with the answer that you are seeking.

Mr. Chairman: Well, I think if you address the Chair as opposed to addressing the Member, it would avoid a lot of crosstalk.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Yes. I agree with you.

Mr. Chairman: Just address it to me. And if for some reason, hon. Minister of Sport, you are unable to provide the answer to the hon. Member, you reserve the right always to provide the proper answer, rather than providing answers that you may not be 100 per cent certain of. You can always check your records and submit your proper and correct answer at a subsequent time. So, I just want to guide you on that.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Okay. I am guided by that, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, may I draw to your attention: I am not wanting to get into any fight with the Minister, except that the Minister gave me an answer in the offering of explanation that it is vacant posts that would answer the question I asked. I simply want to draw to his attention, through you, Mr. Chairman, that Item 08 is Vacant Posts. That tells its own story as a component of the figure I put

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to him. So, he cannot raise Vacant Posts as an explanation. That is all I am saying to the Minister.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, may I suggest that once we understood what is being requested, if we can provide that answer in subsequent time because I do not get the impression we have that answer now. So let us go on now. Any other further questions under General Administration? We can go on to Goods and Services, Sub-Head 02, Item 1 General Administration; Item 2 Physical Education in Sport; Item 3, Dwight Yorke Stadium. We go on to Sub-Head 03.

Mr. Imbert: 02, Mr. Chair?

Mr. Chairman: Okay. I recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East, Item 3, Dwight Yorke Stadium.

Mr. Imbert: No. No. No, 02, Goods and Services. I am waiting for you to go through 02.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. All right. So, we go to Sub-Head 02, Item 1, General Administration. [*Crosstalk*] Under Goods and Services. The first Item, General Administration. I recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Imbert: Yes, Mr. Chairman, could the Minister please explain what 08 is for, and where are these facilities that are being rented? And could the Minister explain what 16 is for? Who is this for? Who are the people being employed under 16? Similarly 22, could the Minister explain what that is for, and who are the people who are being employed under what terms and conditions? And could the Minister also explain what 62 is for, and give us some details on 62? And in addition, 002, I would like further details on 16, Contract Employment, exactly what this is for?

Mr. Chairman: Where is 002?

Mr. Imbert: Physical Education and Sport Division. We are still on 02.

Mr. Chairman: No. No. No. We have not reached there. We are still on General Administration.

Mr. Imbert: No. When you called it out, you went all the way—

Mr. Chairman: No. No. No. I have come back. So, we are just only on Item 1.

Mr. Imbert: So, 08, 16, 22, 28, 62, could I get further and better particulars.

Mr. Chairman: The hon.—is there any question, hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East, you would like him to consider one time, the hon. Minister? Or you want him to answer? Hon. Minister, could you respond to those concerns?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: The first one, 08. These are currently rent being paid, like for instance, the head office and the four stadia where it is being paid for.

Mr. Imbert: You are renting the stadiums?

Mr. Ali: No, it is a lease.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: It is not a rent, it is a lease.

Dr. Rowley: Chairman, could we ask the persons on the other side to provide us with a list of all the components of this expenditure, which is \$52.9 million spent in 2014, and a similar amount to be spent in 2015? We would like to know who that money was paid to in 2014, and who they propose to pay in 2015, the actual recipients and the amount for each recipient?

Mr. Chairman: All right. So, you will take a note of that.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, before they go on. Am I correct to conclude, this is built up of rent for buildings and lease for stadiums?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Yeah. That is the answer.

Dr. Rowley: I will look for the breakdown, please.

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: No problem, we can provide that, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Could we now go on to 16, hon. Minister, Contract Employment?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Contract Employment. All right. These are contracted employees throughout the Ministry at this time. We have a number of contracted employees in the Ministry. If the Member so desires to get the list, we could provide that for you. That is what it is for.

Mr. Imbert: Let me tell you what I am driving at, Mr. Chairman. I asked the question.

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: I am trying to find out, the sport development officers assigned to areas, like my constituency for example, are they hired under 16 or 22? That is

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my first question. And when you tell me which one of them they are hired under, could you tell me what their terms and conditions of employment are?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister of Sport.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Okay, Mr. Chairman, one moment.

Mr. Chairman: No problem.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: 16, Contract Employment.

Mr. Imbert: The people who are hired to manage sporting activities in constituencies.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Community officers.

Mr. Imbert: And they are hired under—it appears to me they are in a very unstable, erratic basis. Sometimes they are at home. Sometimes they are at work. Their contract expires. They have to wait months for it to be renewed. Which one of the Items is it?—16 or 22?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: They are hired under 16 and they are all on contracts.

Mr. Imbert: Okay. Why would it be that these sport officers would be at home for months at a time because their contracts, which seem to be just for a couple of months, have expired?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Well, that is news to me. I do not know if that is a fact.

Mr. Imbert: No. That is a fact. It is a fact.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Do you have evidence of that?

Mr. Imbert: Yes, I do. I can speak for myself. In my area, the sport officer was at home for months, and received no allocation for sporting activities either in 2014. Could you look into that for me, please?

Mr. Chairman: Could you look into that particular allegation? [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Imbert: I would like some sort of explanation.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: That, to me, is speculation.

Mr. Imbert: No. No. No. It is a fact.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: So I am going to ask.

Mr. Imbert: It is not speculation.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: If you have the evidence per se.

Mr. Imbert: It is not speculation.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: I would like if you could produce it to us.

Mr. Imbert: Just let me put on the record. In previous years the people were hired, received an allocation, and were able to conduct cricket competitions and other sporting activities. I was very pleased with it. In the last 12 months, the persons were sent home and got no allocation. I just want an explanation as to why this programme came to an abrupt end, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Chairman: May I suggest, hon. Minister of Sport, if an allegation is being made and you are not fully aware of it, could you give us an undertaking that you will just look into it?

Mr. Imbert: Look into it and give us an answer.

Mr. Chairman: Because if it is not true, you will just say so, you know.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: But, Mr. Chairman, we are on record here and we are going live. I think we ought to be reminded, I am not aware of that situation. What I am aware of is that these officers are on contract at various terms, and they expire at various terms. The Member is speculating in my opinion—

Mr. Imbert: This is fact.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: The Member is speculating—[*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: Please.

Mr. Imbert: I am telling you what has happened in my area.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: But I do not accept what you are telling me.

Mr. Imbert: How would you know? You just come.

Mr. Chairman: All right. [*Crosstalk*] Okay. Member for Diego Martin North/East, you cannot badger. [*Crosstalk*] No, wait “nah”. No. No. No. Wait “nah”. If anything, talk to the Chair. You are not talking to the Minister.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, through you—

Mr. Chairman: Wait. I just want to ask the hon. Member, an allegation has been made. I would prefer that you just look into it and let us move on because this is only detaining the process. You have already said that there is no truth in the statement, that is on record, but you will look into it and say further. So let us move on.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: And on the record, each officer is on contract with terms and conditions.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. Let us move on to the next item, please.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, please, before you go to the next item.

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Dr. Rowley: Could I ask the Minister, with this substantial budget under 16 and 22 for Contract Employment and Short-term Contract Employment, who determines who is hired on contract in this Ministry, and by what process are contract officers sourced?

2.00 p.m.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Well, Ministries can, through advertisements in the newspaper, contract persons to carry out certain functions on contracts. Normally, how it happens is that there is an interview panel. Having gone through the advertisement procedure, advertisement process, there is an evaluation panel and persons are selected and offered contracts. That is how it is done.

Dr. Rowley: Is it that all the persons who have been employed in the Ministry as contract officers have been by way of public advertisements?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: As far as I know.

Mr. Chairman: Let us move on to the next one that was raised. Any other? Let us go to Sub-Item 62: Promotions, Publicity—

Dr. Rowley: Sub-Item 43 first, what is the cause of the doubling of the security budget?

Mr. Chairman: No, the Member for Diego Martin North/East did not raise that. I am dealing with the—

Mr. Imbert: Sub-Item 28.

Mr. Chairman: You dealt with Sub-Item 28. Could you deal—

Mr. Imbert: And Sub-Item 62.

Mr. Chairman: And Sub-Item 62. And then we will go to Security Services.

Dr. Rowley: Okay.

Mr. Chairman: Let us deal with Sub-Item 28, hon. Minister. We are not dealing with security now, eh.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Yes, I understand. The PS advised that most of those contract services you are referring to are more like janitorial services and maintenance.

Mr. Chairman: All right, could we go on to Sub-Item 62, Promotions, Publicity and Printing? He would like you to explain the numbers involved here. The hon. Member, that is.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Well, we had a decrease in that Mr. Chairman, I am not sure what they are referring to.

Mr. Chairman: In other words, could you indicate to the Committee what the money was spent on, whether it is advertisement, for what, that sort of thing? I think that is what the Member is trying to get.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Oh yes, basically the ads, newspaper ads, television ads and other types of promotions, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: All right, I now turn to the hon. Member for Diego Martin West and you were dealing with the Sub-Item 43, Security Services.

Dr. Rowley: Yes, Mr. Chairman. We have had a steady allocation from 2013 of \$740 million—\$747.20 million—and now we see it is gone to \$1.5 million, that means a doubling of the budget. I am asking the Minister, what is the reason for a doubling of the allocation for security in the Ministry?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I am advised that this is a revised contract for security and also increase in manpower. There are also some new rates.

Dr. Rowley: I just would like to ask—

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Dr. Rowley:—was this obtained by competitive arrangements? This is 100 per cent increase—for the last two years—and I am sure if I go back off this chart to 2011, 2012, I am likely to see a lower figure, so am I being told that because you have gone for a renewal of the contract, the contractor doubled the price and you accepted that?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: You said “renewal”, we said new contracts. There is a difference between “renewal” and “new contracts”. And also there is the increase in manpower.

Dr. Rowley: Was the new contract obtained by competitive means?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Yes, it was.

Mr. Chairman: It was, okay. Let us go on to—

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Dr. Rowley: We would like to get a list of who the contractor is and what price is being paid per hour and details as to how many contractors are involved and so on, for 2014 and 2015 proposed.

Mr. Chairman: That is under Security Services?

Dr. Rowley: Yes, it is.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, we go to Item 002: Physical Education and Sport Division. I recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Speaker, could the Minister explain whether 002/16 involves community sports in any way?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: 002/16? 06?

Mr. Imbert: Um hmm. 16. 00—does that involve community sports in any way? And if it does, where is the allocation for services and goods associated with the employment of community sporting officers?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: 16 says, Contract Employment.

Mr. Imbert: Is that to hire people to work in the community and community sporting events and programmes?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: One moment, please. I am advised by the PS that these are 16 community sport officers.

Mr. Imbert: Fine. Where is the allocation for support to NGOs, local sporting groups, provision of trophies and other support to community sporting activities? All I see here is employment. Where is the allocation to support the activities?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: I think you may be ahead of yourself. I think that will come, Mr. Chairman, under 04.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, well under 04, we shall again deal with it. We go to Item 03. When we come to 04, we will look at that, right?

Mr. Imbert: It is not there.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: 04.

Mr. Imbert: It is not there.

Mr. Chairman: We will look at that. We go to Dwight Yorke Stadium, Sub-Item 003; then we go to Sub-Head 03: Minor Equipment Purchases; Sub-Item 001: General Administration; Sub-Item 002: Physical Education and Sport Division; Sub-Item 003: Dwight Yorke Stadium. We go to Sub-Head 04: Current Transfers and Subsidies. I recognize the Member for Chaguanas West, the hon. Member for Diego Martin West, then the Member for Laventille East/Morvant; then I recognize the Member for Port of Spain South, the Member for Diego Martin North/East and the Member for Arouca/Maloney. The Member for Chaguanas West.

Mr. Warner: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Based on what I see here, is the Minister saying, categorically, that the Boxing Board of Control got no allocation for 2014?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: To answer the question for the Member for Chaguanas West, I am advised that it is under—they received some funds under 04, the 2014 Revised Estimates; the \$57 million, they got some moneys through that.

Mr. Warner: Where? Where is that?

Mr. Chairman: Under what Item?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: 04.

Mr. Warner: The Boxing Board, I said, you know.

Mr. Chairman: 04?

Mr. Warner: The Boxing Board of Control. Under 04, are you saying they got no money for 2014?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: I will provide that information for you because what I am being told now is that they got \$2 million from 2014 and that is why it is reflected in the Estimates under 2015. But I think, specifically, I would provide that information for you, Member.

Mr. Chairman: All right, I go on to the Member for Diego Martin West.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, as you know, there are questions over the reliability of some of these figures raised in the debate itself and I would like to ask if there was any allocation made in 2013, or any expenditure made, because we do have a Sub-Item 02 which specifically says Boxing Board of Control and I

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am confused to be sent somewhere else to look for moneys that were directed to the Boxing Board of Control. I see here, according to these documents, that we are being told that there was no expenditure to the Boxing Board of Control in 2013 and none in 2014.

A request is now being made, because the 2015 figures here are the requests that we are dealing with. So I cannot understand and accept from the Minister that the figure of the request is, in fact, the expenditure of 2014. If we accept that, we would be accepting a serious level of unreliability on these numbers. So I would like to ask again whether, in fact, there was any expenditure, a transfer to the Boxing Board in 2013 and in 2014, and what is the basis on which the request for \$2.9 million is being made for 2015?

Mr. Chairman: The Minister said he would provide that information to us. I go to the Member for Laventille East/Morvant and then the Member for Port of Spain South. [*Interruption*] You were not through?

Dr. Rowley: No.

Mr. Chairman: But he will provide that in writing.

Dr. Rowley: I have gone past that.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, you continue, Member.

Dr. Rowley:—29—so that when you leave me, you would just come to the answers. The Non-Profit Institutions. If one goes back, Mr. Chairman, I have done that—I am not saying it is here but it is part of the appreciation of what is happening. We have figures here for the actual expenditure for 2013, under Non-Profit Institutions. My researchers have told me that this would have been—this \$72 million—\$23 million in excess of what was approved and I would like to ask if the Minister or his technocrats know anything about that. And if they do, to justify for what that increase was generated by and we would like a breakdown for how that money was expended. And then tell us how the \$57 million in 2014 was expended, who got it in each individual case, which agency and how much? And how is the 2015 to be allocated?

There is one question I want to ask after that about these transfers and I am directing this to the accounting officer, through the Minister. How is this money transferred to these agencies? And once the transfer is made, is there a bank account in these agencies in which this cash goes? And how does the Ministry's accounting officer proceed to account for what has been transferred to these agencies?

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister of Sport.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Let us take your first question which is Sub-Item 29. That is quite an extensive question and I will provide that information for you.

Dr. Rowley: Which one, which one?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: 29.

Mr. Chairman: That is the breakdown that you requested.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: 29 was about a four-part question. That is a four-part question you asked and some of the details are quite extensive so what I would like to do, Mr. Chairman, for the point of accuracy, I would like to provide that to you.

Dr. Rowley: Well, the questions are all there.

Mr. Chairman: Yeah. And what about the accounting procedures that was asked?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: The accounting—

Mr. Chairman: These non-profit organizations when they request money, do we have a banking account and what is the accounting procedure and what follow-up takes place? I think that is the question that was asked.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Yeah. What he says is a combination of things. The body would probably make a request and going through a committee in the Ministry, if it is approved, a cheque is issued, Mr. Chairman, and on some occasions if there is a bank account that is given too, it can be placed into that account rather than giving the individual a cheque. That is what I am advised.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Laventille East/Morvant and then the Member for Port of Spain South.

Miss Cox: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a spin-off from the same question, Sub-Item 29, I would like to know where the elite funding money comes from, is it from that same vote? If yes, I would like to get a list of persons who received that money from 2013, 2014 and the amounts. I would also like to know how many sporting organizations were funded because I am seeing here Assistance to Sporting Organizations and I know there is normally assistance to sporting organizations but there is no money expended under this. So, I would like to know if that money comes from there also and we would like a list of those sporting organizations.

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I would like to know where the money for the funding of Malabar FC, where that money came from, if it came from the same vote. I would also like to know—I have a letter here that was—I would like to know how much they got in total, Malabar FC. I have a letter here, Malabar FC writing, asking for an increase from \$60,000 to \$80,000 and there is a note from the Minister to the then Permanent Secretary approving it as per policy. I would like to know what policy existed or exists that Malabar FC could get this funding. And did they get the increase of \$80,000?

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister of Sport.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: You said a note from the Minister to the Permanent Secretary.

Miss Cox: Yes.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Just for the record and for clarity—

Miss Cox: I will give you a copy of the letter.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Yes, please. Pass a copy to me. The Minister you are speaking of is the former Minister.

Miss Cox: The former Minister.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: The former Minister.

Miss Cox: Malabar FC letterhead, asking for the increase. This is the original letter.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Yeah. If you would be so kind to give us a copy.

Miss Cox: No problem.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: And the second part of your—well the first part of your question, we would be more than happy to provide you the list of the elite athletes and—

Miss Cox: The funding they received.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Yeah, well all that, the funding they received, et cetera. Okay?

Mr. Chairman: All right. The Member for Port of Spain South.

Miss Mc Donald: Mr. Chairman, I am at Sub-Item 20, St. Paul Street Gymnasium. I notice that there has been a persistent non-allocation of funds for

this multipurpose complex. I am asking why no allocation has been made to this particular complex?

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister of Sport.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: PS will have to check that information for you.

Miss Mc Donald: Check? I am seeing a dash there. That means none.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: There is none but he is—[*Crosstalk*]*—*the Member seems a little confused. What he is saying is that it is part—

Miss Mc Donald: I am not confused.

Mr. Chairman: No.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Well then, fine, then okay, let us move on.

Mr. Chairman: All right, listen, you said that you would provide the information?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Sure.

Mr. Chairman: All right. I recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East after, then I will deal with the Member for Arouca/Maloney and then the Member for St. Joseph. So, I recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East. [*Interruption*] Well within the time frame that we said.

Mr. Imbert: A similar question, 005/01.

Mr. Chairman: 005—

Mr. Imbert: 01, Assistance to Sport—[*Crosstalk*]

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

Mr. Imbert: Assistance to Sporting Organizations. I see a zero allocation and a zero expenditure. Could I get an explanation for that? Regional Complexes, zero allocation, zero expenditure, could I get an explanation for that? Other Social Programmes in sport, zero allocation, zero expenditure, could I get an explanation for that? Could I get an explanation as to why it appears on the face of the document that the West Indies Players Association has been abandoned by the Ministry of Sport? Because there is a zero allocation and a zero expenditure. And could the Minister explain what falls under the heading Non-Profit Institutions, which is 29?

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister of Sport.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: That is a very simple answer. The way how this document is laid out, you will see a lot of dashes under the things, all of that is included in the \$57 million.

Mr. Imbert: Which you will give us a list of.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: If you request, I will—

Mr. Imbert: Yes, give us a breakdown, please—

Hon. Dr. Griffith: I will be happy to do that.

Mr. Imbert:—so we could verify the accuracy of what you have just said.

Mr. Chairman: All right. So, we recognize the Member for Arouca/Maloney, then St. Joseph and then we would come back to the Member for Diego Martin West.

Miss Hospedales: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I would like to make reference to Sub-Item 02, the Boxing Board of Control and to find out from the Minister whether an audit has been conducted on this particular organization? And to also find out what systems have they put in place to ensure accountability and transparency with reference to the allocation that has been given to the Board.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister of Sport.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Yes, Mr. Chairman. The Boxing Board of Control, an audit was done by the internal auditors and I am just advised that the report is about ready for submission.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Member for St. Joseph.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Thank you, Chair. Chair, my question follows on that of the Member for Arouca/Maloney, but not whether an audit was done on the Boxing Board of Control but whether the Boxing Board of Control is requested to submit audited financial accounts before they get this \$3 million? And when last has the Boxing Board of Control submitted any audited financial statements?

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister of Sport.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Yes, Mr. Chairman. The request for any allocation, the Boxing Board of Control, like many similar organizations, must submit a statement. With their request, they must submit a financial statement. I am told that the Boxing Board—I am just advised that the Boxing Board of Control did not submit a statement.

Mr. Deyalsingh: So, hon. Minister, am I to understand that the Boxing Board of Control will not be able to access this \$3 million until and unless they submit audited financial statements?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: That request has been made and they are in the process of submitting that statement before any allocations are made.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Hon. Minister, could you tell me, for the years 2013/2014, 2013, whether the Boxing Board of Control received any taxpayers' funds without submitting audited financial statements?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: I think I answered that question already.

Mr. Deyalsingh: No, for 2013, I am asking. Did they receive any moneys without the provision of audited financial statements?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: All right, I will have to check that one for you.

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

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, from a procedural standpoint at the Ministry, we have six Sub-Heads that have been established here before 2015 and these Sub-Heads are 01 to 28. Could the Minister tell us why the expenditure to these various Sub-Heads have not been reported as expenditure on the existing Sub-Heads and that there is a lump sum figure under 29 which now has us asking all these questions because there are Sub-Heads in the structure for each of these recipients. Therefore, I am asking the Minister why did this happen and how can we get this improved so that we can have, in the next go-around, a report from the Ministry where the expenditure to each agency or organization is put under the relevant Sub-Head?

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister of Sport.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Mr. Speaker, this is the way the Ministry of Finance and the Economy presented the information. I already established that all of these organizations here, the expenditure came out of that \$57 million that is listed.

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, but I think what the Member is asking—

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Well, then if he wants us to drill down—

Mr. Chairman: No. What he is asking is that in future, it would be more tidy, seeing that we have all these items, that the allocation should be recorded so that when you add up the figures, you will get \$57 million.

Dr. Rowley: And we would know, at a glance, who got what.

Mr. Chairman: Exactly. In the future, is that something that you are willing to do?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Well, we will so advise the Ministry of Finance and the Economy because we know in our budget proposal, the run-up to the budget proposal, we have all the details by each item. The Ministry of Finance and the Economy chose to give a block vote and present it in this way so I think the Ministry of Finance and the Economy could be so advised.

Dr. Rowley: Yes, but the Ministry of Finance and the Economy, having taken the liberty of ignoring the Sub-Heads and doing that, how does the Minister proceed in allocating to the various bodies from this lump sum figure? Who makes that decision?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Well, we have that proposal we made to the Ministry of Finance and the Economy for each Sub-Head. We would be guided by that as long as it falls within this overall limit that is allocated here.

Dr. Rowley: Now that we are approving a block figure, I am asking, who is going to make the decision as to how the various components are disbursed?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: The accounting officer and the accounts department in the Ministry of Sport.

Dr. Rowley: Based on what criteria?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Based on the criteria they used in the submission of the proposal for the budget.

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

Miss Cox: Mr. Chair, I just wanted to be clear on something. There is some information I need to get. It concerns the national sporting organizations. I want to know where their funding is coming from and if we could get a list—

Mr. Chairman: Where is that? Where is that under the Item we are dealing with? That is a separate matter. That is a general question.

Miss Cox: No, no, no, no. It is not. It is under 29.

Mr. Chairman: Where?

Miss Cox: 29.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Non-Profit Institutions?

Miss Cox: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. National sporting organizations, you would like to know where they get their funding from.

Miss Cox: I would like to know where they are getting their funding from, the national sporting organizations, okay? Where is the money coming from? How much does each organization get? And which organizations receive funding from the Ministry?

Mr. Chairman: All right, you could provide that information?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Yeah, because, Mr. Chairman, I think it should be known that that funding comes from the Sports Company but we could provide the information.

Miss Cox: I would like to get a listing, please.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Not a problem.

Mr. Chairman: We go to Item 007: Commonwealth Bodies; Item 009—*[Interruption]* Are you under Commonwealth Bodies?

Mr. Warner: Item 009.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, we go to Item 009: Other Transfers. I recognize the Member for Chaguanas West, the Member for Diego Martin West, the Members for Laventille East/Morvant and Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Warner: 009/04.

Mr. Chairman: 009/04.

Mr. Warner: The Sports Company of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Chairman: Right.

Mr. Warner: They got \$134 million. Can I get a breakdown on how this money was allocated? And on 13, National Football Development Plan, \$13.7 million, how was that figure arrived at? *[Interruption]* Sorry, \$15.0 million, how was that figure arrived at?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, you heard that?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Yes, Mr. Chairman, just one moment, please.

Mr. Chairman: Okay.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: All right, the first one is 04, Member for Chaguanas West?

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Mr. Warner: Yes, \$134 million.

Mr. Chairman: Yes?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Mr. Chairman, the Sports Company just gave me a breakdown, as the Member requested for the \$134 million. That is with effect up to August this year. We would be happy to give it to him so he can see for himself in great detail, as it seems a voluminous breakdown.

Mr. Chairman: Well, could you provide it to the Members in writing? You can pass it to me, I can get it copied and pass it on to the Members.

Mr. Warner: And the same question, Mr. Chairman, the same figure was there for 2013, 2014 Revised Estimates, same figure.

Mr. Chairman: Where are you?

Mr. Warner: Same 04, Sir.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Same 04, 009.

Mr. Chairman: You would like to have a breakdown for what?

Mr. Warner: 2014.

Mr. Chairman: You will get 2014, not 2013.

Mr. Warner: 2014.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, 2014, no problem.

Mr. Warner: All right.

Mr. Chairman: And the other one you asked the Member for?

Mr. Warner: Sub-Item 13.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: That is the National Football Development—

Mr. Warner: How the figure, \$15 million, was arrived at?

Mr. Chairman: How was that figure arrived at?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: The 009/13, that was the basis of a Cabinet decision, Member, and I have the Cabinet Minute before me. So, that was a Cabinet decision.

Mr. Chairman: All right, let us go on to the Members for Diego Martin West, then Laventille East/Morvant and then Diego Martin North/East.

Dr. Rowley: I refine a question on 13, that \$13 million. I know it is a Cabinet decision because I hope that all these decisions are Cabinet decisions because the Cabinet has the responsibility for all the expenditure. What I want to ask is, what is the Ministry expecting to spend that money on?

Mr. Warner: That is the question. That was the question I asked.

Dr. Rowley: Yes, the \$13 million increase under Sub-Item 13, from \$1.2 million to \$15 million, we are now told, and we are very happy to hear that, that there was a Cabinet decision to do that. So, I am asking, what is that money to be spent on?

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister of Sport. Do you have that information?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Could you provide it?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: There are about seven bullet points here, it is kind of long.

Mr. Chairman: Well, you could just list it for us.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: The seven bullet points?

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Okay.

Providing technical content and directions for initiatives such as...

Dr. Rowley: Sorry, I missed—could the Minister start at the beginning again, please?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Okay.

In this regard...

Do you want it from there?

...the Minister proposes the establishment of a Football Development Unit within the Ministry to provide leadership and support for all football stakeholders with the objective of effectively implementing new initiatives and enhancing existing ones.

And they give an appendix II refers. I do not know if you want to go into that.

The Unit would be responsible for:

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- Providing technical content and directions for initiatives such as small-sided football, national youth league and national academies.
- Developing and disseminating national skills testing such as national strength and coordinating standards and accreditation of clubs and coaches.
- Development of a national curriculum.
- Creation and production of support resources such as marketing, capacity building, research and planning.
- Creating commercial partnerships.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, question to the Minister. Is the Minister aware that that workload covered by this \$13 million of the Ministry's allocation is, in fact, the mandate of the Trinidad and Tobago Football Association? And is it the Ministry's intention to run a parallel organization in the Ministry which duplicates the effort of the Trinidad and Tobago Football Association, which in itself would also look to the taxpayer for support?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: What the Minister is aware, Mr. Speaker, is that we are partnering with the Association.

2.30 p.m.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, before we move on, I heard the Minister. I made my point that I just draw to his attention that this increase from \$1.2 million to \$13 million based on what he has just told us here, the work programme of that money, this is a parallel organization to the Trinidad and Tobago Football Association to be run within the Ministry, and I, Mr. Chairman, have difficulty in approving that. And I draw the Minister's attention to Item 10, the Pathway Programme-LifeSport. And the first question I would like to ask the Minister, was there a Pathway Programme in this Ministry before LifeSport was born or is LifeSport and Pathway one and the same?

Mr. Chairman: After him I will recognize the Member for Oropouche East.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: It is one of the same as the Member I am sure is aware.

Mr. Chairman: All right, if it is one and the same—I recognize the Member for Oropouche East and then go to the Member for Laventille East/Morvant.

Dr. Moonilal: 001, Transfers to State Enterprises, could we ask a question?

Dr. Rowley: No, no—

Mr. Chairman: We have not reached there as yet. I would like to reach there.

Dr. Rowley: We are on Other Transfers.

Mr. Chairman: No, are you on Other Transfers? [*Crosstalk*] No, we have not reached there as yet, Member for Oropouche East. Member for Laventille East/Morvant and then the Member for Diego Martin North/East. You are still— [*Interruption*]

Dr. Rowley:—indulgence— [*Interruption*]

Mr. Chairman: Okay, sorry.

Dr. Rowley: Since they are one and the same, how was the Pathway Programme, at its initiation, different to the LifeSport programme that emerged in 2013, 2014 and 2015?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Mr. Chairman, I think that question is one that I think we need to exercise some reserve judgment. That LifeSport issue is under serious investigation at this point in time and I think any statement made on record, and we are on record here, could be prejudicial to the outcome. So I rather not say much more about the LifeSport.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, this finance committee has expended or has caused to examine an expenditure of \$109 million in 2014. As a member of this committee, I know of no stricture to prevent this Parliament from asking this Ministry how that money was spent, especially since, in 2013 the expenditure was \$29 million. It jumped to \$113 million in 2014 and then it disappears in 2015. I happened to have known that there was a Pathway Programme in the Ministry which original intention was to be a cradle for developing sportsmen to move up and how eventually they will get to the elite level of sportsmanship which is another programme mentioned a while ago.

What I am asking these officers, is how did that programme of the Pathway Programme which was meant to nurture athletes who would move towards elite state, how did that programme become LifeSport and the scandal that he is now asking us not to mention?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: I have answered the question already, and my answer still stands.

Dr. Rowley: Is the Minister telling his colleagues in this House that the matter is sub judice and therefore we cannot discuss it. [*Crosstalk*] In which case, I reject that, Mr. Chairman. There is no sub judice issue here.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Chairman, I think it is noted that the only person mention sub judice issue here is the hon. Member for Diego Martin West.

Dr. Rowley: Well then why we cannot talk before that.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: I have said—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Chairman: Yes, we know what you have said.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: It is under serious investigation.

Mr. Chairman: I cannot force the Minister to answer a question. I go to the Member for Laventille East/Morvant.

Miss Cox: Mr. Chairman, I actually had another question on LifeSport, but I will go a little later.

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

Miss Cox: I want to find out about the Anti-Doping in Sport Organization.

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, that is later. Let us go on to the Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Miss Cox: This is under Other Transfers.

Mr. Chairman: I thought you said you wanted to ask something later?

Mr. Imbert: Anti-doping.

Mr. Chairman: Where is Anti-Doping?

Miss Cox: You on LifeSport, Member for Diego Martin North/East?

Mr. Imbert: No, no, I am helping him. It is 08.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, Anti-Doping. What is your question, Member?

Miss Cox: I give way to the—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Chairman: Okay, the hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Imbert: Could the Minister tell us of this \$134 million transferred and spent by the Sport Company in 2014, whether any of that \$134 million was spent on anything associated with the LifeSport programme?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: What Head is he under, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Imbert: I am on 04.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: All right, okay. The \$134 million he is referring to—
[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: Is it LifeSport?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Yes. None of it was spent on LifeSport I am advised.

Mr. Imbert: And we are getting a breakdown of this \$134 million.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: If you request it.

Mr. Imbert: I am asking for it, further and better particulars of the ones that they gave.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Laventille East/Morvant and then the Member for Diego Martin West.

Dr. Rowley: The same thing 10. Since the Minister is saying that because some investigation is taking place, that investigation cannot be facilitated by any question asked here. I am asking the Minister to provide us with a breakdown of the expenditure under 10 Pathway Programme-LifeSport of \$109 million in 2014, and to tell us why no provision is made for this programme in 2015.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Well, first of all, Mr. Chairman, that programme is now within, well, it is disbanded for one, and two, it was transferred to the Ministry of National Security. That answers the why part.

Dr. Rowley: Okay, the Ministry of Sport, expenditure in this programme took place in the Ministry of Sport in 2013/2014. We are asking the Ministry of Sport for a detailed breakdown of the expenditure of \$113 million in 2014, which has been revised to \$109 million. So the Ministry of Sport is responsible for that expenditure.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Okay, well, we can give for 2014, you can have that breakdown.

Dr. Rowley: Yes, a detailed breakdown.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East and then the Member for Laventille East/Morvant.

Mr. Imbert: The question on 10 has been asked by the Leader of the Opposition. I have a question on 12. Since Trinidad and Tobago did not make it to the World Cup in 2014, could the Minister explain the reason for expenditure of \$283,000 in 2014? We did not have a team at the World Cup.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: I smile at that question because the World Cup—and my good friend from Chaguanas West will tell him—does not only include the players on the field.

Mr. Imbert: I would like to know, since we had no team, we were out for a whole year before 2014, what are we doing spending \$283,000 in 2014?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: If you would like to know, all you have to simply do is just—[*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: Yes, but he is going to answer you, but you are going on. He is not getting a chance to answer.

Mr. Imbert: No problem, no problem.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister of Sport, please. Would you want to provide a breakdown for the hon. Member?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Yeah, I mean if he would request it he will receive it.

Mr. Chairman: The Member for Laventille East/Movant. I am going on to item—[*Interruption*]

Miss Cox: No, I am not finished.

Mr. Chairman: Item 07 Commonwealth Bodies.

Miss Cox: No, I just want to ask him on the Anti-Doping. I gave way to LifeSport.

Mr. Chairman: “Ohh”, you gave way. All right, Anti-Doping.

Miss Cox: I want to find out what is the present position on Anti-Doping Organization, what is the status?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Good question.

Mr. Chairman: The status of the Anti-Doping Organization.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Good question. Mr. Chairman, you will recall we debated the Anti-Doping Bill in this honourable House and it was passed in both Houses. It is being proclaimed and the rules are currently being developed by the Ministry.

Miss Cox: Okay.

Mr. Chairman: All right, let us deal with the whole issue of Other Transfers and Transfers to State Enterprises. I think Oropouche East wanted to raise something under Transfers to State Enterprises. We are now on that item.

Dr. Moonilal: Yes, thank you, Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I wanted to raise a matter here for really clarification under 011/01. I am seeing here from 2013/2014 revised 2015, the estimates \$67 million plus for repayment of loan for the Brian Lara Cricket Stadium. I wanted to confirm whether that is the Brian Lara Cricket Stadium in Tarouba or the Brian Lara facility somewhere else. [*Crosstalk*] I wanted to also ask—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Chairman: Please, please, you have the chance to ask your question in silence, you know. So allow the Member to ask in silence. He has the right to ask.

Dr. Moonilal: Mr. Chairman, let me repeat that because he may not have heard.

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, you go ahead.

Dr. Moonilal: I am asking for the status of this loan arrangement, whether it involves the Ministry of Sport, whether it involves UDeCOTT. For what facility is this Brian Lara Cricket Stadium, where is that facility, and—[*Crosstalk*] Mr. Chairman, please.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, you have my protection.

Dr. Moonilal: Let me repeat again. Which facility is this? Because I am aware that there are other facilities with the name Brian Lara on it, eh. Recreation ground and so on, and I am seeing repayment of loan from 2013 to 2015 of \$67 million plus. I would like to know first, what is the size of that loan that was taken? When was it taken? I am seeing every year there is a figure for the Ministry of Sport in their estimates here of \$67.8 million per year. I want to know when would that loan be paid off? In what year would that loan be paid off for that? And I want to be very, very, clear, Mr. Chairman, that this loan arrangement for the Brian Lara Cricket Stadium—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, is this a question or a statement? Is this a speech?

Mr. Chairman: No, no, listen, every member has five minutes to speak.

Mr. Imbert: I did not know that. I am glad you told me.

Mr. Chairman: He has not exceeded his five minutes as yet. When he does that I will stop him. He can ask questions, he can make a statement. That is his right.

Hon. Member: “Ohh good.”

Mr. Chairman: Yes, yes, you can make a statement too.

Mr. Imbert: Thank you for clarifying.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, Member.

Dr. Moonilal: Mr. Chairman, this frequent interruption is making me lost my train of thought.

Mr. Chairman: Continue with the question, please.

Dr. Moonilal: I want to ask now—[*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: Please, please, please.

Dr. Moonilal: Let me get to the crux of the matter. I would like the Minister to confirm whether this is the Brian Lara Stadium in Tarouba. I would like him to tell us how much money in loans were taken for this? Because I was under the impression that funding came directly from the Consolidated Fund, they were taking the money directly from the Treasury for the Brian Lara. Now, I am seeing a massive loan here of \$67 million to pay every year. I want to know how much money—[*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: All right, Minister.

Dr. Moonilal: I am demanding from the Minister, when would the people of Trinidad and Tobago be paying off for a cricket stadium that is incomplete? [*Crosstalk*] And whether or not my 10-week-old child has to pay a loan for the Brian Lara Stadium.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister of Sport, please.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The loan was made in 2009. The principal sum was \$497,342,684 and—[*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Imbert: How convenient he remembers that.

Mr. Chairman: Member, Member for Diego Martin—Member for Port of Spain South, listen, listen, I am going to invoke the Standing Orders and ask Members to remove themselves from the Standing Finance Committee if we do not exercise discipline. Allow Members to speak in silence. I gave everybody protection. You may not like what is being asked, but each Member has a right to ask a question. You may not like the question. When you ask questions on the Opposition Benches, the Government does not like it. When the Government asks, the Opposition does not like it. This is what democracy is about. But I have to protect everyone. Everyone is entitled to ask their questions and I have to protect them, and the Minister is replying. Give the Minister a chance to reply.

The hon. Minister, could you reply.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. I do not think Members heard because of the noise so let me quickly repeat, Mr. Chairman. The loan was made in 2009. The principal, well, the loan amount was \$497,342,684 and it will be liquidated on September 30, 2019.

Dr. Moonilal: 2019?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: 2019.

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

Dr. Rowley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I trust that you will allow me to ask my question without being disturbed on either side.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, I agree.

2.45 p.m.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, I heard the Minister who just asked that question. Well, obviously he had no information, but he was not uninformed enough to prevent him from saying that it will cost \$200 million to finish this stadium on which we have already expended, among other moneys, the proceeds of this loan of \$497 million. So a loan was taken, expended on the stadium; the Minister has said publicly it will cost \$200 million to finish the stadium. Could the Minister of Sport tell us what are the outstanding works to be done and what will that \$200 million cover, and whether, in fact, any professional, technical assessment has been made with respect to bringing that stadium into utilization, and what is the exact figure, and what date that partially completed facility will be brought into use?

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister of Sport.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Thank you, Chairman. I would not deal with the speculative part of the question, but I will inform—

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, I made no speculation here.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: I will inform the Member—

Dr. Rowley: I put specific questions to the Minister.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: I will inform the Member that it is a UDeCOTT project—

Dr. Rowley: I did not ask you that.

Hon. Dr. Griffith:—and it can best be answered by the Minister responsible for UDeCOTT.

Dr. Rowley: I am asking—

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, but he is answering.

Dr. Rowley: But he is ascribing to me what I have not put to you, Mr. Chairman, so on that basis I crave your indulgence to place back what I put to you. It has been said by a spokesperson for the Government, especially the one who has just spoken, about the loan which was taken in 2009 for \$497 million, and we know that there is a partially completed facility there. Interestingly enough, the person who spoke about its completion is the Minister who just asked the question about the loan, and he said it will cost \$200 million to finish it. I am simply asking, without speculation, whether a technical, professional assessment was made on that facility to determine what has to be done so that moneys can be expended to get those works done so the facility can be completed and be put to use. And we want a list of what has to be done which comprises \$200 million outstanding expenditure. That is all. There is no speculation there.

Mr. Chairman: Can I call on the Member for Oropouche East to respond?

Dr. Moonilal: Thank you very much Minister of Sport, who indicated that this matter is the responsibility, of course, of UDeCOTT. I want to assure the Member for Diego Martin West that over the past three years or so, it is not the case that nothing has been done. When we came in and saw the condition of the Brian Lara facility, and the state that was in, in terms of the deficiencies at almost every level: design, construction, infrastructure and so on, we adopted the same course of action we adopted in terms of the Las Alturas project, for example, in that we got professional people—professional and internationally reputable companies and agencies to do an assessment of that Brian Lara facility, and what it would take to complete it.

It is the same principle like the Las Alturas, and it takes time. When you are dealing with international companies and so on, first to procure those companies is a process. They will take time to conduct their reports. The relevant Minister, myself, took a note to Cabinet with the technical report of an international agency, with local consultants and so on, and at that time—which I believe was almost a year ago—it was \$189 million. We expect that with miscellaneous and so on, it will climb to \$200 million.

It includes, for example, roofing work; it includes protective covers. For example, at that stadium, as you know, I think it would seat around 7,000 persons, but not one single person is protected from the rain or the sun. It involves massive infrastructural work. That stadium was built in the cane field, and in the cane field, it required extensive infrastructure work.

The same thing happened, Mr. Chairman, when they were building houses in Retrench and Wellington. They did not do the infrastructure work.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, is the five-minute period—

Mr. Chairman: No, no, he is responding. He has five minutes to respond, yes.

Dr. Moonilal: So at the Brian Lara stadium it requires extensive infrastructure work and drainage work. It requires roofing work; it requires seating work; it requires a redesign for VIP areas and hospitality areas, even media centre. But there is a report, and I am quite prepared to share that report with the Member for Diego Martin West because it is done by professional people, as I am prepared to give you the Las Alturas report.

Dr. Rowley: “I doh want dat.”

Dr. Moonilal: “You doh want dat one? Yeah, you doh want dat one, for obvious reasons.”

Mr. Chairman: All right. I go to Chaguanas West. [*Crosstalk*]

Dr. Moonilal: “He eh want dah one.”

Mr. Chairman: All right. The Member for Diego Martin West. [*Crosstalk*] The Member for Diego Martin West. [*Crosstalk*] No problem. Let us go. The Member for Diego Martin West, yes.

Dr. Rowley: They are disturbing my trend of thought! In dealing with this problem of the Brian Lara stadium and all that the Minister has said about how much time it took to get to this point from Tarouba to Las Alturas, has the Minister paid any attention to the liability of contractors who may be liable for the litany of shortcomings that the Minister has outlined, and whether they have kept their eyes on the matter being statute-barred? In other words, are they prepared to recover from contractors who are liable in that construction?

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister of—Oropouche East.

Dr. Moonilal: Mr. Chairman, I can assure you that our technical people at UDeCOTT have worked side by side with our legal people, in terms of contract administration—[*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: I recognize you, but not now.

Dr. Moonilal:—and liability. We also have the issue of arbitration and possibilities that we may have to arbitrate over some of those matters. At the Las Alturas, we have also done the same thing—

Miss Cox: “We eh talkin bout Las Alturas here, yuh know.”

Dr. Moonilal: But he raised the issue of Las Alturas. The Member raised it. At that site, there is a question on the four-year limit—[*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: No, no, the Member raised the question and he is responding to—[*Crosstalk*]

Dr. Rowley: And I am listening to the answer, Mr. Chairman!

Mr. Chairman: And the Member for Diego Martin North/East is interrupting us, “becor” he is saying that he is being irrelevant, and I am saying, you asked the question and he is responding to you.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman—

Dr. Moonilal: Let me make the answer brief.

Dr. Rowley: Would you need any assistance on any side?

Dr. Moonilal: What you said?

Dr. Rowley: I am asking the Chairman if he needs any assistance to deal with persons on either side.

Mr. Chairman: No. I think I am quite able and competent.

Dr. Rowley: So I have asked a very serious question on a very serious project, on a very serious problem.

Mr. Chairman: And he is responding to you.

Dr. Rowley: The Minister is giving me the answer, and the answer is very pertinent, so I would like the Minister to complete the answer because I am asking: Have you been keeping your eyes on the statute-barred situation? And, Minister, I would like to get that cleared up.

Dr. Moonilal: And I assure you that in both the Las Alturas and in the Brian Lara, we are keeping our eyes on the legal clock, so to speak. I think that is what you are focused on. It is a bit more complicated in the context of the Brian Lara, a stadium, because of the defects that have been picked up there, working along with the contractors in a project that is not complete—because it is incomplete. The Las Alturas, as you know, is a project, whether it “stand up or fall dong” it was complete. So we are working on that.

Now, I will not go further because some of these matters, of course, are very serious legal issues dealing with contract administration during, and post completion. But I can tell you that we have been keeping our eyes on the issues of liability—the legal clock—and working with the contractors in that Brian Lara case, to see how best we can come to a solution. But we could not come to a solution without a technical, independent evaluation of what is there because we simply cannot take, you know, a report from a contractor who himself, or herself, is involved there. And we had to do that work. It took some time, but it is highly complicated, as you could imagine, and I must indicate to you, there is a cost of that work and I will present you with the—I will share the report, so to speak.

Mr. Chairman: The Member for Chaguanas West.

Mr. Warner: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. 04, under 011. Can you name those nine regional recreation facilities?

Mr. Chairman: Under 04, the nine regional recreation grounds. You could name them now or you want to provide that in writing?

Mr. Warner: He just give out the money they owe by Brian Lara stadium.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: What he wants? The list of the nine—

Mr. Warner: The nine regional recreation facilities. Where are they? I know you have a very good memory because you gave some figures just now. So I am asking you if you could give me those nine regional facilities.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: You are so kind to let me know about my memory. Thank you, Member.

Mr. Warner: Yes, in kind.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: I will provide that information to you.

Mr. Chairman: All right. I recognize the Member for Caroni East—

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman—[*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: Yes, hold on, hold on. I recognize the Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Mr. Chairman, on the line item which preceded the Member for Chaguanas West, I would like to ask the Minister of Sport whether there were any other payments, aside from the loan payments, made on the Brian Lara Stadium—if you are aware. That is under the same line item, payments to the Brian Lara Stadium. Are you aware whether there are any other payments beside the loan payments on the Brian Lara Stadium?

Mr. Chairman: Are you aware, Minister?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: No, I am not aware, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: All right, you are not aware and so on. I recognize the Members for Diego Martin West, Fyzabad and then Laventille East/Morvant. After that I am moving on, please.

Dr. Rowley: With respect to 04, Mr. Chairman, these nine recreation grounds, I want a specific detailed listing of all the works done on the Northern Recreation Ground, Diego Martin, with respect to this purported expenditure of the nine regional grounds. In the event that Diego Martin recreation ground is one of those nine, I would like a detailed report as to what was expended during that period of 2013/2014; how much money was paid and to whom and also what is proposed for 2015 on that project.

Mr. Chairman: Minister, you have that?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: We will provide that, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Fyzabad, please.

Mr. Sharma: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the hon. Minister advise this committee on the said loan—[*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: Yes, Member? Member for Port of Spain South, I cannot hear. I am trying to hear the Member for Fyzabad.

Mr. Sharma: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the Minister advise this committee on the said loan, the total commissions paid on the same loan and to whom; the total interest over the period?

Mr. Chairman: Yes?

Mr. Sharma: Those three questions.

Mr. Chairman: Minister, you could provide that now, or you will provide it in writing?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Mr. Chairman, I do not have it with me right now but it can be provided.

Mr. Chairman: The last person is the Member for Laventille East/Morvant, then we move on.

Miss Cox: Mr. Chairman, 03, I have two—one for 03 and one 04.

Mr. Chairman: Right.

Miss Cox: 03, what is the total loan for LifeSport, and when do you intend to finish the repayment of this loan?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, the hon. Minister?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that that loan was paid off. It was a total of \$77 million. It was paid off.

Mr. Chairman: All right. We are going on to Head—

Miss Cox: Mr. Chairman, I said I have another one.

Miss Mc Donald: Mr. Chairman, I have a question.

Mr. Chairman: No, but I just said the last one. I will come back to you and we will wrap up. Yes, Member for Laventille East/Morvant?

Miss Cox: 04, concerning the nine regional recreation facilities, I want to know how these facilities were chosen and what is the policy of the Ministry re the development of recreation facilities.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Okay. When we provide the listing of the nine, we will also state that for you.

Miss Cox: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: All right, the hon. Member for Port of Spain South.

Miss Mc Donald: Yes, Mr. Chairman, a question to the hon. Minister.

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Miss Mc Donald: Minister, you said that the total of the loan was some \$70-something million paid off for the LifeSport, but just about two or three weeks ago in the newspapers, in the public domain, the Minister of Finance and the Economy said that \$150 million of loans taken by LifeSport, he had to pay it

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off. So how do you reconcile your \$70-something million and—“look it right here, Minister, 114”. And why you saying \$70-something million?

Mr. Chairman: All right. Okay. Okay. Yes, hon. Minister.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: For the LifeSport, there were two loans. Amounts were taken to cover LifeSport programme—two loans: one, \$77,233,000.05; the second was \$76,899,010.

Mr. Chairman: All right, two loans. Okay.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: These were taken from FCB and repaid by the Ministry of Sport for year 2014.

Mr. Chairman: All right. Head 09, Development Programme: Item 04, Social Infrastructure; Item 02, Multisectoral—[*Crosstalk*] “Which one you going on to now?”

Miss Cox: “I just want to open the book.”

Mr. Chairman: You want to open the book? Your book needs to be constantly open because I am not waiting on “nobody to open book”.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Development Programme—

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East. Development Programme, Item 04; Social Infrastructure.

Mr. Imbert: My question is on IDF.

Mr. Chairman: No, “we coming to IDF”.

Mr. Imbert: I just want to make sure, you know.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, I recognize that. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Imbert: “Before yuh rush.”

Mr. Chairman: Yes, the Members for Port of Spain South and then Laventille East/Morvant. Member for Port of Spain South, of course, I am recognizing you.

Miss Mc Donald: Under Sport, 117, Improvement to Indoor Sporting Arenas, that \$9 million—

Mr. Chairman: What page? Could you guide us?

Miss Mc Donald: I am on 186, Sub-Item 117.

Mr. Chairman: Right.

3.00 p.m.

Miss Mc Donald: I am looking at that \$9 million there, estimate for 2015. I want a list, because I want to know whether St. Paul Street Multipurpose Indoor Complex is inside of there. So I want a list of that \$9 million and how it is going to be allocated and the name of all the indoor sporting complex.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Right, again, Mr. Chairman, I am handed by my accounting officer here what we have for St. Paul Street. If you are interested, I could read it for you, but it is here.

Miss Mc Donald: “Leh meh hear how much we getting.”

Hon. Dr. Griffith: All right, you are getting \$1.3 million. Do you want the items?

Mr. Chairman: All right, so you are happy with that. Let us move on to Laventille East/Morvant.

Miss Cox: No, that was my question.

Mr. Chairman: All right, well, you are happy now. Okay we go on now to Item 005: Multi-sectoral and Other Services and we now go to the Infrastructure Development Fund. I recognize the Members for Diego Martin North/East, Laventille West, Laventille East/Morvant, Port of Spain South. No, your hand was not first. It was the Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Imbert: “Long time.”

Mr. Chairman: I recognized him very early. The Member for Arouca/Maloney is after.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: What Head are we on, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Chairman: We are on Infrastructure Development Fund.

Mr. Imbert: Page 296.

Mr. Chairman: Page 296.

Mr. Imbert: Head 004, Sub-Item 094. The Minister has the Item 094: Construction of Swimming Pools? Page 296.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Go ahead.

Mr. Imbert: Head 004 - 094: Construction of Swimming Pools. “Yuh have it?”

Hon. Dr. Griffith: “Yeah ah have it.”

Mr. Imbert: How many swimming pools were constructed in Diego Martin in 2014? That is question No. 1. Question No. 2, 115: Development of Regional and Sub-Regional Grounds. How much money was spent on the Diego Martin Recreation Ground, the only large recreation ground in the entire municipality of Diego Martin? How much of this money was spent on the Northern Recreation Ground, which has remained in a state of abandonment since this Government came into office? I am using my five minutes, Mr. Chairman.

Sub-Item 133: Construction of a National Cycle Track. Which constituency is that in? Sub-Item 137, of this \$40 million spent on upgrading recreational grounds, how much money was spent in the region of Diego Martin, specifically the constituency of Diego Martin North/East? Mr. Chairman, we have had no expenditure from this Ministry in our area in Diego Martin. I want the Minister to say how much was spent and why he is victimizing Diego Martin.

Mr. Chairman: But are you answering the question? You have the answer?

Mr. Imbert: No, no, I want him to answer.

Mr. Chairman: You have the answer. You said no. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Imbert: No, Mr. Chairman. For clarity, I want him to answer the question.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the hon. Minister of Sport. [*Crosstalk*] I have your name down. Do not believe that I am not seeing you in the corner of my eyes, eh. I am seeing you.

Dr. Griffith: Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member asked the question and he answered his question but I have—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Imbert: No, no, no.

Mr. Chairman: All right. No.

Mr. Imbert: He has to answer it.

Dr. Griffith: I am answering.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, you are answering.

Mr. Imbert: Do not say I answered it.

Mr. Chairman: Continue, please.

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Hon. Dr. Griffith: I have the detailed document here. What I can do, Mr. Chairman, for the three items the hon. Member raised—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Imbert: “You cyah answer?”

Hon. Dr. Griffith: 094, 015 and the other one was 137.

Mr. Imbert: 133.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: 133 and 137.

Mr. Imbert: And 137.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: I shall give you that information.

Mr. Imbert: “So yuh cyah give it to me? But yuh know how much the Brian Lara Stadium cost down to the last dollar, but yuh cyah give meh dis?”

Hon. Dr. Griffith: I could give you what I have now. This one is—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, this is a travesty.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: All right, the Member, among the questions he asked, northern recreation is one of them. Is that so?

Mr. Imbert: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: All right, it is included.

Mr. Imbert: No, how much was spent in 2014?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Well, I told you I would give you the information.

Mr. Imbert: But you said it was included.

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

Mr. Imbert: Not a cent, a red cent.

Mr. Chairman: He will provide it in writing to you. Member for Laventille West.

Mr. Hypolite: Mr. Chairman, with respect to Item 141: Upgrading of Corporation Grounds, can the Minister give a detailed list of the various recreation grounds?

Also, with respect to 094, I would also like to know how many swimming pools would have been built or constructed in the Laventille West constituency.

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Likewise, under 137, I would like to know how many recreation grounds in the Laventille West constituency, the names of those recreation grounds and how much was spent on those recreation grounds?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, would all Members like to have the same answers for all the—*[Interruption]*

Dr. Moonilal: Yes, yes.

Miss Mc Donald: No, I have another.

Miss Cox: I have a—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Chairman: No, no, I am saying rather than going through all, if all Members, the Member will take note of all the Members and they have requested you, you, you, the areas that they have identified. I recognize the Member for Port of Spain South.

Miss Cox: Mr. Chairman, you forgot me.

Mr. Chairman: No, I thought you were asking the same question.

Miss Cox: No.

Mr. Chairman: All right, the Member for Laventille East/Morvant, then the Member for Port of Spain South and then my colleague from Chaguanas West.

Miss Cox: I have a question, Mr. Chair, one is there is a new \$3 million for the Development of a Master Plan for Sport and Youth Facilities.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: What is the Item?

Miss Cox: Item 100. What is this about, please?

Mr. Chairman: Item 100?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Sport and Youth Facilities. I will get that information and I will submit it to you.

Miss Cox: Okay.

Mr. Chairman: All right, hon. Member for Port of Spain South.

Miss Cox: Mr. Chairman, I have another question.

Mr. Chairman: Sorry, sorry.

Miss Cox: My concerns are—*[Interruption]*

Dr. Moonilal: “Yuh open yuh book now eh?”

Miss Cox: Question 146, “long time”. I was just trying to find the page. I see under the revised estimate for 2014 and 2015 the National Excellence in Sport in Trinidad and Tobago. Does this mean that the Ministry will not be hosting this function anymore?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: You mean, the fact that there is no expenditure? Yes, more than likely. It is aborted, so more than likely it will not be held.

Miss Cox: So, what I wanted to know, as we are talking about awards here, concerning the gentleman who was supposed to get the National Award, was any apology forwarded to him?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Which gentleman is that?

Miss Cox: Mr. Hypolite in sport.

Mr. Chairman: All right. He could always respond to that. I recognize the Member for Port of Spain South.

Miss Mc Donald: Mr. Chairman, I want to go back to 049. Now, just to develop on the point from the Member for Diego Martin North/East, I would like to see a listing of the venues or where all the pools would be built.

But more so, in 2010 there was a comprehensive plan, which was submitted to the Ministry of Sport, with respect to the construction of a swimming pool in the east Port of Spain area, on Basilon Street and that contract was awarded and then it was pulled back when we demitted office in 2010. So I want to know if there is any plan whatsoever to construct that swimming pool, which would be the first, in east Port of Spain?

Second, second. One more question. With respect to the Development and Upgrading of Recreational Grounds, Parks and Spaces, 137, for the past four years I have been speaking and asking and begging the Minister of Sport—
[*Interruption*]

Hon. Dr. Griffith: The former Minister of Sport.

Miss Mc Donald:—the former Minister of Sport, my apologies, for refurbishment of the St. Paul Street grounds. That is the facility to the back of the multipurpose complex, nothing has been done and for four years I begged, I cajoled, I pleaded and nothing has happened. I want to know whether this \$40 million allocated for 2015, whether the St. Paul Street grounds could be included in that figure.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: I will look into that. The hon. Member is talking about 2010, since 2010. So I will have to look into that and I will so advise her. Fair enough?

Miss Mc Donald: Fair enough.

Miss Hospedales: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to find out from the Minister if any efforts would be made to retrieve moneys that were issued to contractors under the LifeSport Programme for the upgrade of recreational grounds that were never upgraded. I am asking this within a particular context. I remember, in the Auditor General's Report for 2013, it indicated that a contract was awarded for the upgrade of the Clayton Ince Recreational Ground to a contractor, and to date that ground has not been upgraded. So, I would like to find out from the Minister if any attempt whatsoever would be made to retrieve the money for those recreational grounds that were not done.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Mr. Chairman, my earlier submission with respect to the LifeSport, because of the intensive investigation that is going on now, applies here too as well.

Mr. Warner: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I see under 135—I have three questions, eh—we have—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Dr. Griffith: What page?

Mr. Warner: Page 296. You have Construction of Multi-purpose Sport and Indoor Facilities and you have Charlieville. I mean, that is news to me, but Charlieville is in my constituency. Where is this actually and how much of that money is for Charlieville?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: You want to find out about Charlieville?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, hon. Minister.

Mr. Warner: You have \$3 million.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that was a proposal and that has been abandoned.

Mr. Chairman: Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West.

Mr. Warner: I have two more questions, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Two more questions from the Member for Chaguanas West.

Mr. Warner: What was the answer?

Mr. Chairman: He said that has been abandoned. So go on to your next two questions, please.

Mr. Warner: Mr. Minister, under 141, can you give this committee the assurance that those corporation grounds are not the same grounds that NGC is upgrading and also the corporation themselves.

Dr. Rowley: And LifeSport.

Mr. Warner: And LifeSport, so there is no duplication or triplication.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: The same applies to the LifeSport.

Mr. Warner: What did he say?

Mr. Chairman: Next question. Last question, hon. Member for Chaguanas West.

Mr. Warner: Mr. Chairman, 145.

Mr. Chairman: Minister, could you listen to the Member for Chaguanas West, he is on 145, please?

Mr. Warner: Where are those multi-purpose stadiums?

Dr. Moonilal: The same applies to the LifeSport.

Mr. Chairman: The multi-purpose stadiums, where are they? The hon. Member for Chaguanas West would like to know.

Mr. Warner: Just tell me how many.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Mr. Chairman, where are the multi-purpose stadiums? I have a few of them here. Let me quickly list them out for you:

- Hasley Crawford, the boxing gym there is 100 per cent completed.
- The Elite Athlete physiotherapy facility, 100 per cent completed. That is in Port of Spain if the Member did not know.
- Jean Pierre Complex paving works completed. That is Port of Spain too.
- Dwight Yorke Stadium, installation of track surface, 100 per cent completed.
- Manny Ramjohn Stadium, installation of track surface, 100 per cent completed and all three fields, 100 per cent completed.
- Larry Gomes Stadium, the Member knows, it is in Arima, Larry Gomes. Stadium field refurbishment, 100 per cent completed. All stadia,

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consultants have completed the preliminary designs, work and budget on all five stadia.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Mr. Chairman, although you said the hon. Minister will take all the concerns in, so to speak, a blanket concern about grounds, I think it is necessary for each Member to identify the grounds that they are concerned about, or else he would not know which grounds we are talking about.

Having said that, Mr. Chairman, with respect to Sub-Item 137, I would like to ask the hon. Member what moneys have been allocated for the development and upgrading of the President's Grounds in St. Ann's, something that I have written about copiously and asked about since 2010, as the hon. Member for Port of Spain South said about her grounds. I am concerned about President's Ground.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Mr. Chairman, I agree with you to do it expeditiously. What I will do, all the grounds that we now have in plan or proposals for working on, we will do a comprehensive listing and submit it.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Members for La Brea and then Diego Martin Central.

Mr. Jeffrey: Mr. Chairman, 115. I have three questions: 115, 137 and 141.

Dr. Moonilal: All that deals with LifeSport, we cannot answer that.

Mr. Jeffrey: In 115, I want to refer to a question I had asked, Question for Oral Answers. The former Minister of Sport told this House of plans to develop the La Brea Community Recreation Ground in 2014. I would like to know of that \$6 million that is projected for 2014, whether or not the La Brea Community Recreation Ground is in that figure. That is my first question.

The second question with the Development and Upgrading of Recreation Grounds, Parks and Spaces—*[Interruption]*

Hon. Dr. Griffith: That is 137?

Mr. Jeffrey:—I would like to know—137—how much of that \$40 million is allocated for recreation grounds in the La Brea constituency, because so far, not one recreation ground in the La Brea constituency has been attended to by this Ministry for the past four years.

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The third question, Mr. Speaker, is 141. I would like to get a detailed breakdown of all the corporation grounds that this Ministry says are under their purview.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: The answers have been given already, Mr. Speaker. I said earlier when someone asked, I cannot recall who it was, about the upgrading of the corporation grounds, that we will provide a list of all of these grounds. If the Member wants something additional—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Moonilal: He would get it. “Doh worry.”

Mr. Jeffrey: He has two answers for me. It has to do with that La Brea Community Recreation Ground.

Mr. Chairman: The La Brea Community Recreation Ground?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: And also when we provide that comprehensive list, because all the Members are more or less asking the same question.

Mr. Jeffrey: No, no, no, no.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: That would also be—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Chairman: The La Brea Community Centre. He wants to know if you could give him an answer on that.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: The La Brea Community Centre?

Mr. Jeffrey: No, no, La Brea Community Recreation Ground.

Mr. Chairman: Recreation ground.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Okay, and the question was whether part of that \$40 million would be spent on it?

Mr. Jeffrey: No, no, the \$6 million.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: The \$6 million?

Mr. Chairman: Do you know?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: No, I do not know. I would have to look—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Chairman: 2014 is gone eh.

Dr. Griffith:—and provide that information.

Mr. Jeffrey: But Mr. Chairman, nothing has happened, eh.

Mr. Chairman: Well then you would communicate. Let us go to the Member for Diego Martin Central, please.

Dr. Browne: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want clarity on behalf of the committee, on the list that would be provided by the Ministry of Sport. Certainly, my interest would be with respect to 094: Swimming pools in the various constituencies, 137: Upgrading of Recreational Grounds, et cetera, and 141: Upgrading of Corporation Grounds. So I just want clarity from the Minister on it.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, do you have any clarity?

Dr. Browne: That would be those three lines that we would be getting comprehensive listing on?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Sure. With respect to 094, that is the National Swimming Pool.

Dr. Browne: Well, I am seeing plural here. That is just one pool?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: The Aquatic Centre Pool.

Dr. Browne: Well that leaves me—thank you for that clarification. [*Crosstalk and interruption*] Mr. Chairman, I am not through.

Miss Hospedales: We still have more questions.

Mr. Chairman: We?

Dr. Browne: I am not through.

Miss Hospedales: And I am not through.

Mr. Chairman: Listen, we have to move.

Dr. Browne: Chairman, I am not through.

Mr. Chairman: I am now recognizing the Member for Diego Martin West. After him, the Member for Arouca/Maloney, two.

Dr. Browne: Chairman, I am not through with my questions.

Mr. Chairman: Oh, I apologize, Member for Diego Martin Central. Apparently you were not through, so I would go back to the Member for Diego Martin Central. I will then recognize the Member for Diego Martin West and after that we close off.

Dr. Browne: Apology accepted. Mr. Chairman, given the Minister's clarification on 094, I would like a written report on the status of the controversial proposed swimming pool at Powder Magazine location. There are many questions in the Diego Martin area as to the status of that specific location.

And my final question—so that is a request for a written report—is with respect to 100: Development of a Master Plan for Sport and Youth Facilities. I would like the Minister to indicate the status completion of this particular plan and is there any interim report that can be shared?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister of Sport, one is a written statement and the other one.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: The first question is an HDC project and the hon. Minister would be happy to provide you with that information and answer your question.

Mr. Chairman: And the second one.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: The second one was what again, Mr. Chairman? Sorry.

Mr. Chairman: Item 100, the Master Plan status.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: What is the status of it? Right now that plan is with the consultant. Substantial work has been done but it is not yet final.

Mr. Chairman: Finally the hon. Member for—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Browne: Mr. Chairman, I just want to get a commitment from the Minister of Housing whether that status report would be provided.

Mr. Chairman: Member for Arouca/Maloney, you have spoken already. Finally is the Member for Diego Martin West. Hon. Member for Diego Martin West, unless you want to give way to the Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, I give way.

Mr. Chairman: You are on the floor now. The hon. Member has given way to you.

Dr. Browne: Mr. Chairman, the Minister just indicated he is not able to answer the question on the Powder Magazine but he would refer it to another Minister. I just want to get a response whether that Minister would provide that report.

Mr. Chairman: So when we come to housing you would just take a note so you would ask housing. Member for Arouca/Maloney, please.

Miss Hospedales: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I give thanks to the Opposition Leader for giving way to me. Mr. Chair, under the corporation grounds, I am interested in finding out who the contractors were and how much was actually

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paid for the work done on those grounds, the commencement date and the end date as well?

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Okay the list would be provided to the hon. Member.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 68 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, thank you very much and your officers.

We now call on the Ministry of the People and Social Development.

Hon. Dr. Griffith: Mr. Chairman, I just want to thank all of the officers in the Ministry of Sport who came here today and assisted me. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman: All right, thank you very much. We now call on the Ministry of the People and Social Development and the accounting officers. Thank you very much. Are you ready, hon. Minister?

Head 56.

Ministry of the People and Social Development, \$4,139,334,641. I will now invite the hon. Minister of State in the Ministry of the People and Social Development to make a brief opening statement for no more than five minutes. Hon. Minister.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I applaud our line Minister, Prime Minister and Member of Parliament for Siparia, for her direction and control of the Ministry of the People and Social Development. And allow me to introduce our hard-working staff here, beginning with our PS, Mr. Simeon Yearwood; DPS, Angela Edwards; DPS, Ethlyn John; CTO, Dennis Williams; Director Social Welfare, Vijay Gangapersad; Director People's Issues, Asaugh Ghany; Project Manager and Project Implementation Unit, Farida Ali; Senior Human Resource Officer, Lesanne Seberan; Director Human Resources, Melanie Noel; Design and Drafting Technician, Carlyle Jeanville; Research Officer, Terry Herera; Co-ordinator NGO Unit, Ann Marie Quamie-Alleyne, and I want to say congratulations. I want to also applaud the hard work of all our members of staff in the Ministry of the People and Social Development.

The Ministry of the People and Social Development is the core social sector Ministry with responsibility for coordinating the implementation of Government's social and human development objectives.

In 2010, the People's Partnership Government developed a framework which identified seven inter-connected pillars for sustainable development. The Ministry of the People and Social Development has identified four pillars which guide our work.

- Pillar one: People-Centred Development. MPSD, our key focus is human and social development, disability affairs, HIV/AIDS sensitization, aging initiatives, social displacement initiatives, citizens resolution.
- Pillar two: Poverty Eradication and Social Justice. MPSD's key focus is social safety networks, sustainable development, microenterprise development, social assistance, public welfare and workforce (URP Social), research.
- Pillar three: National and Personal Security through probation services.
- Pillar six: Good governance, people participation, outreaches, direct effect and direct impact, Main People Issues Resolution Coordinating Unit, Regional Human and Social Development Councils.

Our various initiatives are further informed by the Government's strategic approach to break the cycle of poverty, enable self-sufficiency and create opportunities for wealth generation as outlined in the Medium Term Policy Framework document. Within this framework, poverty reduction and human capital development have been identified as part of our five strategic priorities to be pursued over the period 2011—2014. This strategic priority serves as the impetus behind the activities of the MPSD.

In keeping with the aforementioned pillars, the Ministry is mandated with the responsibility of addressing the social challenges of poverty, social inequality and social exclusion. Particular emphasis is placed on developing and executing programmes and services that protect and assist vulnerable and marginalized groups in society such as persons with disabilities, the elderly, the poor and indigent, the socially displaced, ex-prisoners, deportees and persons living with HIV/AIDS.

Guided by the tenets 'Helping, Empowering and Transforming Lives', the Ministry seeks to empower its clientele through rehabilitative and skill enhancement initiatives, which promote human prosperity in the context of sustainable development. The MPSD is also responsible for developing, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating social sector policies and programmes to ensure sustainability, cultural relevance and economic viability.

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Moreover, the major functions of the Ministry of the People and Social Development are to:

1. serve as a central coordinating body for the social sector;
2. deliver social services;
3. facilitate networking;
4. make recommendations for the effective functioning of the social sector;
5. facilitate decentralization;
6. develop systems, strategies and programmes;
7. identify gaps;
8. foster good governance;
9. monitor regional and international conventions; and
10. serve as a coordinating body to address people's issues.

I thank you.

Question proposed: That Head 56 stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the sum of \$4,139,334,641 for Head 56: the Ministry of the People and Social 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. I recognize the hon. Member for Diego Martin Central.

Dr. Browne: Mr. Chairman, the name of this Ministry was changed to People and Social Development and my first line of question is with regard to the people aspect under Salaries and Cost of Living Allowances. Is there a specific division, desk or unit related to people's resolution in this Ministry? If so, what is the breakdown? I would like a breakdown of the staffing of such a division, unit or desk, with respect to establishment positions and with respect to contract positions specific to this People Unit.

Secondly, under 14: Remuneration of Cabinet-Appointed Committees, I would like a list of such committees under the Ministry at this time. I would like a specification of the membership of these committees, the date when they were appointed and the date of expiry of such committees.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Mr. Chairman, that is a very complex question. I think we will have to supply that data in writing after.

3.30 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: All right. Let us go on to the next Item. We go to Item 004 Probation Services, we go to item 005—

Dr. Browne: Hold on.

Mr. Chairman: Are you on Probation Services?

Dr. Browne: Mr. Chairman, yes, I am seeing Division of Ageing before Probation Services—I think you skipped that—at the bottom of page 271.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, you are correct. Division of Ageing, my apologies.

Dr. Browne: That is okay. We are learning as we go along.

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

Dr. Browne: Yes, Chairman. There is a saying—anyway. Under Division of Ageing, I would like a breakdown of the staff at the Division of Ageing at this time. I am not seeing any allocation here with respect to the Division of Ageing. I would like information with respect to the situational analysis on the accessibility of government buildings which this Division should be able to provide to the committee.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Please repeat the question.

Dr. Browne: Well, it was not that complex. The breakdown of the staffing at the Division of Ageing at this time, establishment and contract positions and a report on the situational analysis of accessibility of government buildings, if it could be provided.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, could you provide those things?

Hon. Mrs. Alleyne-Toppin: We could provide those things.

Mr. Chairman: All right. We go to Item 004, Probation Services, Item 005 Social Welfare. I recognize the hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Imbert: Item 005, Social Welfare, could the Minister tell us what is the total number on your establishment of social workers in this division; how many vacancies you have and what is being done to fill these vacancies?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, how many social workers do you have in this division?

Mr. Imbert: How many vacancies?

Mr. Chairman: How many vacancies there are?

Mr. Imbert: And what is being done to fill the vacancies?

Mr. Chairman: And what is being done to fill those vacancies?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We have 75 workers on the establishment and 25 on contract.

Mr. Imbert: How many social workers? It is a specific type of person.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Yes, I answered your question.

Mr. Imbert: How many social workers do you—

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We have 75 on the establishment.

Mr. Imbert: How many vacancies?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Twenty-five on contract.

Mr. Chairman: So we have 75 live bodies on the establishment and you have 25 on contract, so you have 100 in all. How many vacancies do we have?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Twenty vacancies.

Mr. Imbert: And what is being done to fill these vacancies?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We are awaiting Service Commissions' intervention again. We are ready to advertise but we are awaiting our instructions from Service Commissions.

Mr. Imbert: Okay. Could you not fill these vacancies through contract employment? You said you have 25 social workers on contract. Could you not fill them through contract employment?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We are filling these vacancies of contract workers. We are filling those. We are working on that.

Mr. Imbert: No, the 20 vacancies that you have, could you not—since Service Commissions is taking its time, dragging its feet, whatever, could you not fill those vacancies with contract employment?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Yes, but I do not want to throw that into Service Commissions. We are working on filling our contract workers and we are working with Service Commissions. We are waiting on that.

Mr. Imbert: All right, I see I will not get a proper answer but—

Mr. Chairman: No, no—hon. Minister—Vernella.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, apparently “like ah ha to call Vernella” to get your attention. [*Laughter*] I think what the hon. Member is asking is whether those 25 vacancies, can you tamper with those things in terms of doing it on contract or do you have to wait on the Public Service Commission? I think that is the question that you are asking.

Mr. Imbert: Excellent.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: The vacancies exist—I have to talk to my people—the Service Commissions will fill them. We cannot fill them.

Mr. Chairman: Right, that is the point.

Mr. Imbert: While you are waiting on them, can you not create contract positions and recruit people? Where did those 25 contract people come from?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Yes, we can create but we have not created any.

Mr. Imbert: Okay fine. Is the absence of this significant number of social workers, from what you are telling me, about 30 per cent of your establishment, about that, is vacant?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: The absence of these social workers, is it affecting your ability to deliver?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Necessarily yes, it is, but this is why we are working so diligently.

Mr. Imbert: Well I urge you to see if you could fill them on contract.

Mr. Chairman: All right. We go to Sub-Head 02: Goods and Services, we go to Item 001 General Administration. I recognize the Members for Arouca/Maloney, Diego Martin North/East, Diego Martin Central and then Laventille West.

Miss Hospedales: Thank you, Mr. Chair, Sub-Item 16, Contract Employment, could the Minister indicate to us the number of staff on contract and if she can provide a breakdown by unit or department; the number of vacancies by unit or department as well?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We will supply the details in writing.

Miss Hospedales: Okay.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Members for Diego Martin North/East, Diego Martin Central and Laventille West.

Dr. Browne: Mr. Chairman, I am seeing under Sub-Item 21, Repairs and Maintenance - Buildings has gone down by \$450,000. But the Government very recently made an announcement of a move of this Ministry to a building on Alexandra Street. I would want confirmation from the Minister as to the prospective date of that move, and looking at line Items 21, 37, 43 and several others, would the Ministry now have to make variation to these requests or do these allocations take into account that proposed move which was just recently announced to the public?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We expect to move on November 01 and just let me consult with my PS to give you that further information.

Mr. Chairman: You expect to move on November 01—

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We expect on November 01—

Dr. Browne: Well, that is the first part of the question.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Yes—and we have, of course, the allocation would go down because we are being assisted in this by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and we expect to spend much less than we have.

Dr. Browne: All right, let me just be clear on the question because I do not think you are clear on the answer. When these requests were made of the Ministry of Finance and the Economy, was the Ministry then aware of and planning for this specific move of headquarters or were these requests made in the absence of that knowledge?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: The requests were made after that.

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

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, did the Minister indicate that she would give a breakdown of Item 16, Contract Employment?

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: Okay. Could the Minister explain why—well, firstly, explain what is Short-Term Employment which is Item 22? What is that? What are the terms and conditions associated with this Short-Term Employment and could the Minister explain why you are spending such a huge sum of money, \$23 million, on short-term employment?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: To meet its social and human development objectives and to alleviate some of the social issues identified in our strategic plan, we have had to employ that number of persons on short-term employment in order to get our work done in the Ministry.

Mr. Imbert: What does short-term employment mean? Three months, six months, one month, what is it? Two days? What is it? What does short-term mean?

Dr. Moonilal: It means the same thing when you were in Government.

Mr. Imbert: I did not ask you. Mr. Chairman, could you control this meeting, please?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, I am controlling it. At the same time, I am controlling myself.

Mr. Imbert: I did not ask you. Minister Toppin.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Short-term for revolving employment is in specific government departments for each employee's term does not exceed six months.

Mr. Imbert: Six months, okay. What sort of duties do these people have? What are they doing?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: You could have that in writing. We have so many different ones.

Mr. Imbert: Okay, no problem.

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

Mr. Hypolite: Chair, under Item 16, the Minister made mention of a pillar called URP social pillar, can the Minister indicate whether or not the employees under that URP social pillar comes under this Item 16, Contract Employment?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: What heading are you on? Contract Employment? I identified URP social as a pillar? I did not.

Mr. Hypolite: Yes, in your five minutes.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: No, I did not identify—URP Social is not a pillar. Pillars, I told you: pillar one, people-centred development; pillar two, poverty eradication and social justice; pillar three, national and personal security; pillar six, good governance, people participation.

Mr. Chairman: So I think that you have misread that so let us go to Item 003, Division of Ageing, then we go to Item 004, Probation Services. The Member for Diego Martin Central, you would like to raise—

Dr. Browne: Yes, Division of Ageing, two questions. The current location of the Division of Ageing; the landlord associated with this rent and lease; the date and the date of rent and lease of such accommodation. That is question number one. That is a specific request that the Ministry can provide.

On line Item 16, Contract Employment—[*Crosstalk*] Mr. Chairman, I am receiving unwanted compliments from the Member for Couva South. In the revised estimates of 2014, I am seeing no allocation for contract employment under the Division of Ageing. For 2015, I am seeing a request for \$1.4 million. Can the Minister explain this?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: The Division of Ageing is at Ansa McAL Building—that is the first part of your question—on Independence Square. Let me get some clarification on that second part of the question.

Dr. Browne: Would you like me to repeat it?

Mr. Chairman: No, I could repeat that for you. He wants to know why there is no allocation under the particular for contract. [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: No, I am not confused at all.

Mr. Chairman: No, no, she needs no help from you.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: I just need to know exactly what he wants to know so I could tell him.

Mr. Chairman: Otherwise, we are going to ask her to come across here.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: I am not just talking to him, I am talking to the whole nation and everybody is watching, so I will have to make sure that people are clear. You asked a question that has many parts to it, maybe I should be

answering it accordingly. I do not want to give you any information that is not correct.

Dr. Browne: You are free to answer.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, yes.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Thank you for your patience. Item 16, Contract Employment—tell me the question again.

Mr. Chairman: No, no, no. [*Laughter*]

Dr. Browne: Okay, you want to hear it from me or the Chairman?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Tell me the question again because you are reading it, I am listening.

Dr. Browne: Well, I am not reading it but I hear you. Let us try again.

Mr. Chairman: Member for Diego Martin Central, could you repeat?

Dr. Browne: Yes. Under Sub-Item 16—hon. Minister—Contract Employment within the Division of Ageing, I am looking at the revised estimates for 2014, and there was no figure entered whatsoever so there is a blank for 2014.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: So there was no need then for us to ask for any more money because we had enough.

Dr. Browne: Hold on—for 2015, there is an estimate of \$1.4 million, I would like an explanation or what transpired within the Division of Ageing over the last year where there was no contract employment and now \$1.4 million is being requested.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We expect to hire inspectors and other board members who will be on board in 2015.

Dr. Browne: Do board members fall under contract employment, Minister?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We have inspectors who will be on board in 2015.

Mr. Chairman: No, on board, not a board of directors.

Dr. Browne: [*Inaudible*]—distinctly on board members?

Mr. Chairman: Well, employed then. All right, let us go to Item 004, Probation Services, we go to—no, I think I recognize the hon. Member for Chaguanas West.

Mr. Warner: Thank you, Sir, I have two questions. First of all, Security Services, under 43, has increased by 20 per cent to \$9.6 million—page 273, Item 43. It has been increased by 20 per cent to \$9.6 million, what caused this phenomenal increase?

Mr. Chairman: No, we are now in the Division of Ageing, you know, we have bypassed General Administration.

Mr. Warner: I had my hand up all the time, Sir.

3.45 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: So you are back to General Administration?

Mr. Warner: No, Sir. I am on page 273.

Dr. Moonilal: He is in the Division of Ageing. [*Laughter and crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: No, what page are you on, Sir?

Mr. Warner: 273, Sir. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: Oh, you have gone back to General Administration.

Mr. Warner: Sir, forget it. It is all right, forget it.

Mr. Chairman: Do you not want to answer the question on Security Services? The hon. Member is asking if you could explain that situation, from \$8.2 million to \$9.6 million. What is accountable for that increase?

Hon. Member: What page is that?

Mr. Chairman: That is on page 273, the Item is on Security Services. Can you answer that? Or you want to provide the information in writing?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We will provide the information in writing.

Mr. Warner: Right. Secondly, a former Minister told us that there are three URPs, one is social, one is—I cannot remember what the other one is, but one is URP Social. What is URP Social in the context of your Ministry?

Mr. Chairman: No, but where is that in terms of this item?

Mr. Warner: The whole Ministry, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: No, no, no, that is a general question. We have to deal with what is before us. We cannot deal with that overall. Let us go on to Item 004, Probation Services. I recognize the Member for Arouca/Maloney and the hon. Member for Diego Martin Central.

Miss Hospedales: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am going to Sub-Item 08, Rent/Lease - Office Accommodation and Storage. Could the Minister indicate what has accounted for such a large allocation for rent/lease of office accommodation in 2015, as compared to 2014, when \$588,430 was provided, but this year we have a \$2 million-plus allocation.

Hon. Member: What page?

Mr. Chairman: Page 274. We are looking on page 274, Sub-Item 08.

Miss Hospedales: Did the Minister hear the question?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, yes, we have the question here. Minister, could you answer?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We are moving to new head offices. We have to have more money.

Hon. Member: To do what?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: To outfit, to do the networking. We have to have more, that is—

Miss Hospedales: So, will Probation also be moving to One Alexandra Place?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: No.

Dr. Browne: Well, perfect segue. What divisions will be accommodated at No. 1 Alexandra Street? Could you provide a listing of the divisions that will be so accommodated? Secondly, with respect to line item 16, Contract Employment. Again, there was no provision in 2014, no drawdown from the figures in front of us for contract employment under probation, but there is a request. It seems for several of these divisions, there is going to be a surge of contract employment for the year 2015. With the ageing, you said it was to hire inspectors. What is the reason for this surge in the Probation Services Division?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We are moving to One Alexandra Place, but I will provide that in writing for you, what divisions will move to One Alexandra Place. The surge for probation, you have Community Service Officers, who are paid by the Ministry of Justice for fiscal 2014. In 2015, they would be paid by the Ministry of the People and Social Development, and that includes NIS payments.

Dr. Browne: Well, you know, I want the Minister to verify and maybe repeat that answer, because I am seeing an estimate made under this Ministry for 2014. So if she is saying it was being paid from another Ministry, I do not understand

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why this Ministry would have made the request. The fact is there was no revised estimate which suggests that there was no expenditure. So I am questioning the veracity of that response.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Well, the probation office was moved to the Ministry of the People and Social Development from the Ministry of Justice. At that time, the Ministry of Justice was paying salaries, the MPSD will now have to pay those salaries.

Dr. Browne: It does not explain why the Ministry of the People and Social Development made a request of \$1.4 million.

Mr. Chairman: All right, all right, the hon. Minister has explained to the best of her ability. . We continue Item 05, Social Welfare; Item 008, Disability Affairs Unit. I recognize the Member for Laventille West and the Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Mr. Hypolite: Social Welfare, Item 22, which is on page 276, Short-Term Employment. Mr. Chairman, again, I am asking, with respect to the URP Social. I would like to know, Mr. Chairman, if those employees are hired under this sub-heading? How many employees are under that particular programme? And exactly what that programme does within the Ministry of the People and Social Development?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: URP Social, we do direct construct, we do Project Runway 100. Do I explain what direct construct is?

Mr. Chairman: No, no, Minister, please. I think all the hon. Member is asking is, whether these workers are short-term employment, whether URP Social, whether persons are employed on short-term contract, are they engaged under URP Social? I think that is the question I get him to be asking.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Is that, he also asked—

Mr. Hypolite: In addition, too, exactly what that department is all about? What do they do?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Okay. That department is paid by the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development. It is paid by the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure and—let me get my advice clear. Labour comes from the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development, but the Ministry of the People and Social Development pays those workers.

Mr. Hypolite: Ministry of the—

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Ministry of the People and Social Development, our Ministry pays them.

Mr. Hypolite: Pays those workers?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Yes.

Mr. Hypolite: Under what? Under this same line 22?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Yes, under line 22.

Mr. Chairman: All right. Let us go to Item 008. We have the Member for La Brea and the Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Mr. Jeffrey: Fees, in 2013, \$8 million; in 2014, \$7 million. I am a bit curious, can you provide us with a breakdown of the fees that are being paid? What is that for? And could you tell us who the beneficiaries are?

Mr. Chairman: What are these fees about, the hon. Member is asking and if you could provide a breakdown? Do you want to tell us what these fees are about? Or you do not have the information now?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We will provide that information in writing, Sir.

Mr. Jeffrey: We also need to know who are the attorneys who will benefit from this thing.

Mr. Chairman: Whether attorneys are involved, and if you could provide a listing of the attorneys, okay? I recognize the hon. Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair, I am on item 008, Disability Affairs Unit; Sub-Item 66, Hosting of Conferences, Seminars and Other Functions. I would like to find out from the Minister whether or not \$5,000 is adequate for the Disability Affairs Unit, particularly since they have a heavy mandate with reference to sensitizing the general public about the need to provide access to the disabled, in terms of accessing public buildings, private buildings, the importance of employing them, and as well as providing equal access across the board for these individuals. Five thousand dollars is woefully inadequate.

Mr. Chairman: Sub-Item 66, under Disability Affairs Unit.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Mr. Chairman, this item caters for hosting of conferences and seminars in Trinidad and Tobago as agreed by Cabinet for visiting foreign heads and other dignitaries, programmes for excellent service, customer care and dependability and that—

Mr. Chairman: No, no, it is \$5,000 she—

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: I know. I know, I am—

Mr. Chairman: What the Member is asking is why \$5,000?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: I know, I know, \$5,000 is projected for expenses because we have agencies that support us in these.

Dr. Browne: Mr. Chairman, a short follow-up because I think the further question to my colleague would be then, with respect to conferences that are not for foreign guests or officials, but are targeting the local disabled population, where is the funding for those which would be the primary responsibility of the Disability Affairs Unit? We are not seeing such funding.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: I am advised that that comes under General Administration, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: All right, could we go on to Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases; Item 001, General Administration; Item 003, Division of Ageing; Item 004, Probation Services; Item 005, Social Welfare; Item 008, Disability Affairs Unit. We go to Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies. We go to Item 005, Non-Profit Institutions.

The hon. Members for Diego Martin North/East, Diego Martin Central, Arouca/Maloney and Port of Spain South. Did I miss you first? Were you first?

Miss Mc Donald: I do not know.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, well, you will come last. Continue, hon. Member.

Mr. Imbert: Could the Minister explain what has happened to the allocations for St. Vincent de Paul, Cheshire Foundation Home, Chest and Heart Association, Red Cross, Coterie of Social Workers, Legion of The Royal Commonwealth Ex-Services, Goodwill Industries, International Institute for Healthcare & Human Development, Family Planning, St. Vincent de Paul by two. And could the—there are a whole bunch of others, Lifetime Limited Disabled Persons, Rebirth House, Hope Centre, et cetera. And if all of these things are now subsumed in non-profit institutions? If? Could we get a breakdown of the expenditure in 2014, \$29 million in non-profit, a breakdown of the allocations for 2015 to make up the \$20 million, and an explanation. Why in a \$64 billion budget you have cut the allocations for places like the Red Cross, the Cheshire Foundation Home, the St. Vincent de Paul, the Rape Crisis Centre? Why you have cut their allocation by \$9 million in 2015 in a \$64 billion budget?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Yes, should I list all of the ones above? Autism Services of Trinidad and Tobago South Support Group, Cheshire Disability Services, Goodwill Industries of the West Indies, International Institute of Health Care and Human Development, National Centre for Persons with Disabilities, T&T Association for the Hearing Impaired, Trinidad and Tobago Blind Welfare Association, Trinidad and Tobago Chapter of Disabled Persons International, Visionary Learning Centre, St. Vincent de Paul—

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, are you repeating what we have before us? No, hon. Minister, I think what the hon. Member wanted was, if he could get a breakdown?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We have to give him that in writing.

Mr. Chairman: And then the second question he asked was, why did we reduce?

Mr. Imbert: Why are allocations being cut by \$9 million in a \$64 budget? What are you cutting Red Cross and all of “dem people for”? Sixty-four billion and you are cutting Red Cross, Rape Crisis Centre? Why?

Mr. Chairman: Could you put those things in writing as to what is the justification for this cut from \$29.6 million to \$20 million. I think that is what the hon. Member is asking.

Mr. Imbert: A \$9.5 million reduction.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We will put it in writing.

Mr. Imbert: Okay.

Mr. Chairman: All right. Let us go to Item 07—no, we have more persons.

Dr. Browne: Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, we go to the hon. Member for Diego Martin Central; then the Member for St. Joseph.

Mr. Deyalsingh: No, I said nothing.

Mr. Chairman: All right, the Member for Diego Martin Central, then the Member for Arouca/Maloney, then the Member for Port of Spain South.

Dr. Browne: Thank you, Chairman. Two specific questions, I concur with the request for a breakdown. During the budget debate, the issue of the Family Planning Association was raised, and I am asking if the Ministry is now minded to programme an increase in subvention for the Family Planning Association.

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4.00 p.m.

On line Item 38, Families in Action, this NGO, hon. Minister of State, has been identified as one of two partners in the National Parenting Programme. I am asking for details on the scope of works, budget and contract details on the arrangement between Families in Action and the Ministry of the People and Social Development. The same would apply to the other partner in the National Parenting Programme, which is the University of the Southern Caribbean—written details with respect to the scope of works, budget and details of the contract of those two non-profit institutions.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Yes, Mr. Chairman, we will provide all of that information in writing.

Mr. Chairman: Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Miss Hospedales: Thank you, Mr. Chair, I would like to find out from the Minister whether Transformed Life Ministries received a subvention from the Ministry of the People and Social Development and, if the answer to my question is yes, why was the subvention stopped?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: They do not receive a subvention from the Ministry of the People and Social Development.

Miss Hospedales: Why was the subvention stopped?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We do not give a subvention, so it could not be stopped. They do not receive a subvention.

Miss Hospedales: Or a grant.

Mr. Chairman: Port of Spain South. I recognize the Member for Port of Spain South.

Miss Mc Donald: Through you, Mr. Chair, Minister, are you aware that there is a centre called the Brother Bowen Centre, straight at the top of St. Paul Street—do a lot of community work? I am wondering why they are not listed here.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We are not aware of that centre. I am not aware of that centre.

Mr. Chairman: Well, you will put it in writing, hon. Member for Port of Spain South, okay? We are dealing with Item 07, Households, then we are dealing with Item 09, Other Transfers. Households, Members for Diego Martin Central and Arouca/Maloney.

Dr. Browne: Thank you, Chairman. Three questions: Assistance to National Heroes, very important area, has been decreased by almost half a million dollars. I would like an explanation for that. I do not know that we lost that many during the year.

Secondly, Urgent Temporary Assistance has been identified as a vital area of the Ministry to provide fairly swift relief in cases of desperation. That has also been slashed by more than half—decreased by \$25 million. I would like an explanation for that. I would like those two answered before my third and final question under this Head.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We will respond in writing to that one.

Mr. Chairman: What is your third and final question?

Dr. Browne: Line Item 22, Relief for Underprivileged Newborn. That is a new Sub-Item and I have some specific questions to the Ministry. How will this programme of Relief for Underprivileged Newborn be administered specifically? Is there an appeal process and could you provide the details of such an appeal process if a mother or parent is not provided with the so-called grant? Could you identify whether there is specific staffing identified to support this \$120 million programme? Could you provide the details of that staffing or are existing staff expected to manage this programme? Is there any specific training planned to enable the administration of this programme? If so, who is providing said training? What are the procedures and is there a procedural manual to support the implementation of this programme, which I believe is due to commence in six or so days' time?

There is also a question that I have with respect to the possibility of fathers, as well as mothers, accessing this particular grant. How will that be monitored to avoid overlap or duplication? What are the monitoring and evaluation parameters that have been outlined to ensure accountability and transparency in this process? If a mother has two babies in the same year, will she be accessing one grant for each baby?

Is there any decision by the Ministry—I had a recommendation in the budget debate with respect to drug and alcohol testing of proposed recipients for this grant. Is that being considered by the Ministry at this time for this \$120 million programme, or any other programme within the Ministry of the People and Social Development? Thank you, Chairman.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Let me give you an overview of that, so that if I miss out any of what you need to know, we will provide it in writing. Let me give you an overview of the relief for underprivileged newborns.

The Ministry will continue its goal of reducing the number of persons living below the poverty line. I am telling you all of that. The Baby Care Assistance Initiative will be introduced for one year in the first instance whereby parents and primary caregivers with an infant, zero to 12 months, born between the periods October 01, 2014 to September 30, 2015, earning a combined monthly income of \$3,000—

Dr. Browne: Mr. Chairman, the questions were very specific and I think we are getting a bit of a speech, which I appreciate, but it is not—

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: But, I am giving you—the content is in what I am telling you. You want me to say it: for households under \$3,000. Mr. Chairman, can he ask me the question and say how I must answer it?

Mr. Chairman: No.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: I am giving you the details.

Mr. Chairman: Member, the hon. Minister has five minutes to respond and she is entitled to her five minutes. So could you continue?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Households earning a combined monthly income of \$3,000 can qualify for assistance valued at \$500 per month. The grant will assist the parents or guardians to adequately provide for the nutritional requirements and care for the infant. Recipients of the grant are required to enter into a social contract with the Ministry of the People and Social Development to participate in the Ministry's development programme—Rights of Individuals to Social and Economic Security, Universal Prosperity, Rise Up.

The programme is a holistic approach to poverty alleviation which takes into consideration conditions that confine the family's efforts to move out of poverty. It provides families in extreme poverty with access to critical services, linking them and facilitating their access to benefits relevant to their needs. It seeks to empower the household to improve its quality of life in eight dimensions: health, education, family dynamics, housing, personal identification, safety and security, income, employment.

They are required to attend—the expectant mothers—postnatal visits at health facilities as prescribed by the attending medical practitioner. They are required to attend parenting outreach workshops conducted by SERVOL. They are expected to

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attend Family Planning sessions and to attend Financial Literacy sessions. The sum of \$120 million is allocated under the vote Relief for the Underprivileged Newborn, Head 56, 722, for this initiative.

We can give you the details in writing. I am speaking again, Mr. Chairman, to the whole nation. People want to know about this and I have provided the details as we have them now.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Miss Hospedales: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am going to Sub-Item 17, the Targeted Conditional Cash Transfer Programme. Based on the information provided by the Ministry, they are telling us that \$2 million is allocated for this programme for 2015. The Minister of Finance and the Economy, during the Standing Finance Committee, indicated to us that \$264 million was allocated to the Food Support Programme and this money is utilized by the Ministry of the People and Social Development. I would like to find out exactly how much of the \$264 million is utilized on a yearly basis and if they can tell us the total expenditure of the Food Card Programme for the year 2014.

I also want to ask about 21, the People's Card—

Mr. Chairman: Let her answer first and then you will come to 21 after.

Hon. Minister.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We will provide those details in writing.

Mr. Chairman: All right; 21, please.

Miss Hospedales: Sub-Item 21, The People's Card. What is the People's Card and what was \$21 million spent on in 2014 and what will \$12 million be spent on in 2015? And what is the difference between the People's Card and the Targeted Conditional Cash Transfer Programme?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: The Cash Transfer Programme, as it is in effect now, has a card that we use for the people who are on the two-year long-term and a temporary assistance card. We are introducing a biometric card we call the People's Card, which will facilitate all of the other—what do you call those?—cash transfers that we make to our clients, whether it be disability grant, pension grant; whether it be school books assistance; whether it be for the cerebral palsy, the mothers of children with cerebral palsy.

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We are using a card that gives you access to all of the areas in which you are accessing money from the Ministry of the People and Social Development. That card will carry data that will prevent fraud, we expect. It will carry data that will prevent double-dipping, of people coming for one or the other grant dipping in our coffers and also dipping in places like the Ministry of Health. It will really streamline how we do business.

Dr. Browne: Chairman, to clarify: the Minister is indicating that the People's Card under 21 is a proposed programme in design now. Is that right?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Well, it should be in place in a few days.

Dr. Browne: All right, in a few days; but I am seeing \$22 million expended in 2014 under that programme and under the Targeted Conditional Cash Transfer Programme, I am only seeing \$2 million expended and \$2 million allocated. So I just want to be clear as to which of these line items is providing that household nutritional support which persons refer to as the card or the TCard, at this time—if the latter is a proposed programme, the People's Card, under 21, and the former is the Targeted Conditional Cash Transfer Programme? That is not clear at all from her answer.

The follow-up question is: I would like itemized between the two-year card and the temporary card, what has been the expenditure for 2014 for each, segmented, and what is the proposed expenditure for each in 2015 fiscal between the two-year card and the temporary card?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: My advice here is that we will have to provide that in writing.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Member for Port of Spain South.

Miss Mc Donald: Just a clarification: Senior Citizens Grant of \$2.8 billion, I am seeing an increase of some \$535,584,000 over 2014. Is this Senior Citizens Grant of \$2.8 billion the same thing as the Senior Citizens Pension? Is it the same?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Yes, it is. You are seeing an increase. We have an increase in our ageing population. We also have an increase in the grant.

Miss Mc Donald: I know, but I just wanted clarification because I note that this Government took pains in saying that it is no longer a grant; it is a pension because a grant can be taken away at any time. So I was surprised to see the word "grant" here as opposed to "pension".

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: The word “pension” should be there; you can replace it. Just replace the word.

Miss Mc Donald: No problem. You clarified it.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, Sub-Head 06, Current Transfers to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies; Item 04, Statutory Boards. Member for Port of Spain South.

4.15 p.m.

Miss Mc Donald: Minister, could you explain to me?

Mr. Chairman: Are you on transfers?

Miss Mc Donald: Yeah, 009 to the bottom; to the bottom there, Sir.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: What page is that?

Miss Mc Donald: 02, National Social Development Programme.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: What page you are on?

Miss Mc Donald: Page 280, some \$33 million. What is that about?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: This programme is designed to improve the standard of living conditions of citizens in T&T and will provide basic infrastructure for essential services like house wiring, minor house repairs, water supply, electrification and lighting of community facilities and children’s play parks.

Miss Mc Donald: How do you access this?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We have a system where you can apply. We have application forms at our various offices. We also have a means test by which we decide who is indigent; who should receive such a grant, house repairs.

Miss Mc Donald: House repairs?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Yes.

Miss Mc Donald: Wiring of homes also?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Yes. We have officers who do the assessments and this is accessible to all of our citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. It is something that people should know about.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, the hon. Member.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, could we get a breakdown or any brochure or any information you have on this programme? What it is catered for? How does one access this facility? And also a breakdown of the expenditure in 2014; what it spent on and who were the beneficiaries of all of this money. Could there also be an explanation as to why you had an allocation of \$80 million but only spent \$32 million in 2014?

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: I am advised that we will give you that in writing.

Mr. Imbert: No problem.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Because it is extensive.

Mr. Imbert: No problem.

Mr. Chairman: We go to Sub-Head 06, Current Transfers to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies. Item 004, Statutory Boards. The Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Miss Hospedales: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Sub-Item 42, The Trinidad and Tobago Blind Welfare Association. I am just registering my concern that the Ministry has allocated an additional \$78,000 to the Blind Welfare Association, considering the fact that there are numerous problems at that association that need to be rectified by the Ministry, particularly, with issues of accountability, transparency, the concerns about hiring procedures and the fact that they have not submitted all their audited financial statements.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We are working with the Blind Welfare Association to ensure that best practices are exercised within the association, and that they satisfy all of our needs but, in the meantime we are supporting our blind and visually impaired people.

Dr. Browne: Follow up. When last have you received audited accounts with respect to the Blind Welfare Association?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We will supply that information.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we go to Sub-Head 09, Development Programme; Item 004, Social Infrastructure.

Miss Mc Donald: A question.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, the hon. Member for Port of Spain South.

Miss Mc Donald: Minister, through you, Mr. Chair. Minister, I do not know if I am asking this question under the right Sub-Head 004, which speaks to the establishment of social displacement centres, Queen Street and Duncan Street. Now, I ought not to deal with this one, but I want to talk to the one to the bottom of Piccadilly Street, just hanging over the East Dry River at the bottom there, that centre next to the multipurpose car park. What is happening with that centre? Because I am noticing there is no allocation for, you know, the removal of those persons, displacement—or should I say, “reallocation” is the word, of those persons from that awful place to elsewhere. Do you know what I am talking about, to the bottom of Piccadilly Street? Could you tell me what are your plans and where is the money allocated here for the reallocation of those persons from the bottom of Piccadilly Street?

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Yes, that is the Centre for Socially Displaced Persons at Riverside Plaza Car Park. The street dwellers, rehabilitation and reintegration project, we had requested \$2 million and we actually did get an allocation of \$4 million and we have been given the ownership, control and management of the building by a Cabinet Note, and we are removing street dwellers to that facility. It is a continuous process.

Miss Mc Donald: Minister, so I should be speaking to 096; that is the development centre for persons. Not that one. Which is the one should I talk to with respect to Riverside Plaza?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: C112.

Miss Mc Donald: C112? What is the problem there? Would you be relocating these persons?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We will be refurbishing that facility, and we continue to spend money, refurbishing it. We had a \$10 million allocated by Cabinet as at October 31, 2013, and we have been doing work on that. We continue to do that rehabilitation process, assessment and evaluation of residents, provisions of meals, medical health screening with referrals, needs assessment, counselling, training to address job skills and occupational therapy, spiritual and physical health programme and other rehabilitation programmes.

Miss Mc Donald: I hear you Minister, but just one further question. Do you think that \$2 million is sufficient in a budget of \$64 billion or whatever or \$64

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billion—do you think that \$2 million is sufficient to undertake this type of work you have to do?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Now, remember that I said we have a Cabinet Note which gave us \$10 million over a period of years, so we have been drawing down as the time goes by, and we continue to facilitate those drawdowns. This year coming, this fiscal year, we will use \$4 million on that.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Member for Diego Martin West and then—
[*Interruption*]

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Two is what was requested for this year, because we have ongoing works, we were allocated \$4 million.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Member for Diego Martin West and then the Member for Point Fortin and then the Member for St. Joseph.

Dr. Rowley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have a few questions under 09/004 and I would like to ask them one by one, so that I can get a clear answer from the Minister.

I notice, Mr. Chairman, that under 044 we spent under Establishment of Social Displacement Centres, Queen Street and Duncan Street, \$635,000 in 2013. In 2014, there was an estimate for \$2 million and one would have been led to believe that this meant that persons who were benefiting from this would have anticipated an enhanced service, but then when the revised estimate is reported to us, I see a “-”. My interpretation of that “-” is that none of the \$2 million that was allocated by the Parliament in 2014 was spent. Could I get an explanation for that from this Ministry, please?

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Let me tell you about the Queen Street development programme. We have the development project under user briefs and detail specifications. We engaged NIPDEC for consultancy services to prepare designs and tender documents. A letter of intent was signed between MPSD and NIPDEC to continue design services towards the completion of tender documents for refurbishment.

Construction of the building: this year we are moving on to the completion of designs, completion of the tendering documents and refurbishment and we are going on to our consultancy team to provide architectural and civil engineering.

Dr. Rowley: Is it, Mr. Chairman, that all of that which was supposed to have been done have been done for free in 2014 and that this Ministry found it fit or no payment claim was made on this Ministry for any or all of that work? How come there is no report of expenditure in 2014 on that work programme or is it that all of that is an intention?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: All of this work was done by the internal staff. We have our designers, we have our technical draftsmen.

Dr. Rowley: So the \$2 million that was budgeted was just a flight of fantasy which brings me to the other question. That being so, if there was no requirement to spend any of the \$2 million in 2014, because it is being done by in-house staff, what then is the basis for a provision of \$1 million in 2015 on the same item?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: I am advised that we are using this to pay NIPDEC to carry out the procurement process.

Dr. Rowley: But I was just told that it was all being done in-house, and so the \$2 million you had, you did not spend any of it.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: The procurement is different from the drawings and the designs and the planning.

Dr. Rowley: So you paid none of the \$2 million to do the work and you paid \$1 million to get the work done.

Mr. Chairman: When you say procurement, what items are you talking about?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: I am advised here procurement and project management would cost us \$1 million.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, I give up on that one. I go on to 048, Poverty Reduction Programme. Again, we spent \$832 million in 2013 on that, then in 2014, we provision \$2 million for it, and we spent \$200,000 of the \$2 million in 2014, and for 2015 we make no provision. Could I have an explanation for that please?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We will give you that explanation in writing, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Do you have any further question? She said she would provide it in writing.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, I just start. 050, the Food Support Programme Conditional Cash Transfer. For a start, what aspect of this food card programme falls under the Development Programme?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Mr. Chairman, please tell me where he is? I am not sure where he is. What page?

Miss Mc Donald: 141.

Dr. Rowley: Let me help you here.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: So he has gone back?

Dr. Rowley: I am on page 141 of the Development Programme under 09 sub-Item 050. If you go to the Development Programme on page 141, Head 09, Sub-Item 050.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Yes.

Dr. Rowley: Food Support Programme - Conditional-Cash Transfer, namely food card. How is that a part of the development programme? What is that money to be spent on? When we spent \$280,000 in 2013, we budgeted \$1 million in 2014 from which \$125,000 was spent, and we now have budgeted nothing in 2015. What exactly is that?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: I am advised that it was used to outfit the food card unit. So we already set that up, we do not need to spend any more money on that. [*Crosstalk*]

Dr. Rowley: I am asking, because I am being told it was to outfit the unit. So, we had over-budgeted by 10 times. I am asking a simple question. The estimate to do it was \$1 million and it was done for \$125,000. Is that what I am being told? It is good news, do not be afraid.

Mr. Chairman, finally, I want to ask a question on 099, Vision on Mission Development Programme. This I consider to be a very useful private sector initiative driven by good intentions. In 2013, there was a programme here which cost \$2 million and in 2014 we budgeted \$1.9 million towards continuing that programme, and in 2015 I see no allocation. Could I be told what happened with that programme? Is the programme there completed and what was it and why are we not assisting them in 2015?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We are closing off that project.

Dr. Rowley: What was the project?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: The Vision on Mission project what they did.

Dr. Rowley: What was the project? What did we spend the money on?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: My advice here is that the Vision on Mission designs programmes to provide adequate transitional housing, counselling, reintegration and rehabilitation with regard to returning national deportees. Vision on Mission assists in finding employment, travelling expenses, you know, and accommodation. Additionally, services that Vision on Mission provides in Trinidad and Tobago both inside the prison, to ex-prisoners and deportees continue to have significant positive impact on society in terms of the number of ex-prisoners and deportees whose lives have been transformed and who are now making a significant contribution to society.

4.30 p.m.

We are closing off the project and we have a facility at Wallerfield that has been refurbished and outfitted for its first intake of ex-prisoner and deportees. The formal opening is scheduled for later in October.

Dr. Rowley: So this money was spent on physical support, a physical structure?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Yes.

Dr. Rowley: And therefore there is no requirement for any further support from the structure?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Yes.

Dr. Rowley: But support from the State goes to the programme Vision on Mission?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Yes.

Dr. Rowley: And where is that money located?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Under recurrent.

Dr. Rowley: Okay.

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

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Thank you very much. I have interest in 036, 076 and 096; I will take 076 first, Establishment of Social Services Centre in Point Fortin, which you wanted to do in 2014 and you were not able to implement it, but in 2015 you have now projected to spend twice that amount. There is already a Ministry of the People and Social Development in Point Fortin; what is this social services centre about and where is it going to be?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Item 036, 096, and which other?

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: I am dealing with 076 to make it easy on you.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Item 076, Establishment of Social Services Centre in Point Fortin?

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: All right. I am advised here by our team, the property is at No. 4 Furlong Street. It is 10,000 square feet, approximately. It is an old structure in a state of disrepair and this structure is beyond refurbishment. It was proposed that we demolish and erect a multistorey building to be constructed at a cost of \$7 million, and this division proposes to accommodate this centre. At the centre, the divisions will be Social Welfare Unit, Family Services Centre, Community Telecentre, Targeted Conditional Cash Transfer Programme, Poverty Reduction Programme, People's Issues Resolution Unit—

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Okay. But you said \$7 million; I am seeing here provision for \$1 million.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Well, incrementally we will—

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: So you are building this over time?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Over time.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: You could not build this in a few months? [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We have to conduct some studies, some necessary feasibility studies, designs, you know, so we are taking it incrementally.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: All right. Okay. Item 036—I said I had an interest in three issues today—a Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Centre that is going to cost \$2 million; where is this?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Piparo.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: That is the Piparo one. Okay. And your interest in the development centre for persons with challenges; I realize in 2015 there is no estimate for this programme, so is that discontinued?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: That is the one at Carlsen Field—you are on 096, right?

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Yes.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We have built a rehabilitation centre for people with disabilities; that is completed. We are doing work on the—

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Where is that?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Carlsen Field, Chaguanas.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Okay.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We are doing work on the grounds, and we hope to get into that building soon enough, very soon.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: So what types of persons with challenges? What type of challenges you would be accommodating there?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Broadly, persons with disabilities, persons who are physically disabled—

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: To do what? To work? Children? What?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We have therapeutic services. We have life-skill programmes. We have socially interactive activities. We have a day-care centre—

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Okay.

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

Miss Cox: Mr. Chairman, I would like to—number 102, Toco Home for Senior Citizens, I see there was an allocation of \$1.5 million for 2014 and \$2 million estimated for 2015; is this some special arrangement with this home? But before I get the answer, I think that I want to know what the Ministry is doing about elderly homes. There have been some concerns concerning the dilapidated state of many homes for the elderly right across the country, and we feel that more money is needed. I saw elsewhere that there is some money allocated for elderly homes but that really is not enough for the amount of elderly homes in Trinidad and Tobago, and I think that we need to take more care of our elderly. Some of them are not even being treated properly at home. So I feel that the Ministry needs to look at this, but tell me about this 102, the home in Toco.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: The elderly home in Toco is about to be launched, I could say. We have finished the building, it is complete. We are now looking at outfitting and finalizing, you know, the space as we need to have it for older persons who will come in on a daily basis, remain active—you know, we have all the therapy, all the rehabilitative skills, training, and the medical assistance

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necessary here. What is happening is that we have legislation pending which should be proclaimed but we need to put amendments to our legislation. We are working with the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development through the legislation that governs older persons and the abuse of older persons.

We are working on those parts of the legislation which need to be amended so that we can enter into homes other than senior citizens' homes. We will be able to enter into private homes if we discern that there is abuse somewhere. This initiative is also going to come with a lot of new staff, a lot of inspectors who will be going out to examine homes, public and private homes, and all of this is tied in with the legislation that we are working on. When this is completed then we will be able to move into that—

Miss Cox: I just want to be clear on something—

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: I think you are right that we will need a whole lot of money, but we have already done—this money that we had was for the building and now we are doing the outfitting.

Miss Cox: Okay. This is a further from the same question, Mr. Chairman. I just want to be clear that—I wanted to know if there are any plans to assist other homes in the country because, really, most of them are in a bad state, and we feel that more money should be allocated to the senior citizens' homes.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Well we are actually doing assessments of homes, and this is one of the reasons why we have to bring in more inspectors. We are actually doing the assessments and we are putting in very stringent rules about physical structure, physical amenities, as well as the kind of care that people will be getting, and it will all be legislated. There are some very serious fines recommended, some very serious rewards and punishments, and we are going to do it. We welcome any ideas and any discussions—

Mr. Chairman: Diego Martin West, you want to come in now?

Dr. Rowley: Yes, please.

Mr. Chairman: Okay.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, two questions I want to put. I would like to put one through you to the Leader of Government Business. Given the specific nature of this problem and the good that it will do, could we go beyond the academic exercise of identifying shortcomings and ask the Leader of Government Business whether this committee could recommend and make an amendment to improve

the allocation to this particular Head? What is provisioned there is just not enough for the nature of the problem. So I will put that to the Leader of Government Business for an amendment to the number.

I move on to ask—I would just like to go back a bit to 094, Blind Welfare Association, and to ask the Ministry what was the anticipated work programme for which \$4 million was allocated in 2014 and why is it showing that none of that money was spent as per the revised estimate? What did we set out to do there?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: This money was requested to develop the user briefs and specification for the construction and refurbishment of an administration centre, academic cluster, dormitory cluster, and these works included the finalization of designs, to engage a contractor, to conduct preliminary studies and to stake out the boundaries.

Dr. Rowley: Was this project advanced in any way?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We have some issues with the Board, maybe we should give you that in writing. There were issues with the Board and there were issues with divisions, and which set off the, you know, they had some—the matter is in court because there are two different factions of that Board that we have to—

Dr. Rowley: But it resulted in—we had \$4 million to advance the project and we were not able to spend any of it because the project has moved. How are we addressing that problem?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: When the court decides the matter—

Dr. Rowley: Oh, the matter is in court?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: The matter is in court. When the court decides the matter we will take it from there.

Mr. Chairman: All right, the Member for Diego Martin Central and then the Member for St. Joseph, and the last is the Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Dr. Browne: Thank you, Chairman. I will try to keep the questions as simple as possible, maybe yes and no if when required. Line Item 036, Establishment of a Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Facility at Piparo, very important project; I am seeing \$2 million for 2015, can you clarify whether this is Phase II of that development project commencing? If so, when was Phase I completed? What is the reason for the delay between the completion of Phase I and commencement of Phase II? And I would like a breakdown of the proposed expenditure for 2015, that \$2 million. I have further questions, I would like her response—

Mr. Chairman: No, well ask your questions so she can take them down and then answer all.

Dr. Browne: Well, she gets a little confused sometimes, but fair enough, I will try. You will take it now?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: No, you are confusing. I am not getting confused. You are confusing.

Dr. Browne: I am sorry if I have confused you. Do you want all in a lump?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Your technique in questioning is very confusing.

Dr. Browne: Well, that is not my fault, but would you like all the questions?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, I am suggesting that you bring all the questions.

Dr. Browne: All right. Well, I am just bearing her in mind. Okay, the second question is with respect to the expansion of the community-based telecentres; again, another programme that was there before. What community-based telecentres were opened for 2014 and what are the locations of the proposed telecentres for the upcoming fiscal year? A very straightforward question. The third one is with regard to 092, HIV/AIDS Co-ordinating Programme; what expansion or expenditure occurred under development programme for \$1 million in 2014 and why is there nothing for 2015 under the HIV/AIDS Co-ordinating Programme?

And then 106, Adult Daycare Model; what is this Adult Daycare Model? Where is it being proposed? I see \$500,000 was requested prior, none was expended, none is requested now; could we just get an update on this Adult Daycare Model? Finally, 107, Governance Service Centres; what is this Governance Service Centres? Where is it located? Are there any staff associated with it? And a breakdown of the \$1 million requested. I am not familiar with that particular heading.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We requested for Piparo, for the rehabilitation facility at Piparo, to commence refurbishment works as follows: for the clinical staff building, retaining wall at the Kiosk Building, a workshop building, toilets and closets, dormitories and outfitting of a gym. And our main areas we are targeting to begin: toilets and closets, dormitories and the gym. A Note is being drafted and finalized to upgrade the facility in Cabinet. The second one is the telecentres project; we requested \$.5 million, we got \$.5 million, and we are finalizing Cabinet approval to establish satellite telecentres in Couva, Tabaquite, Talparo and Princes Town. Yes?

Dr. Browne: “Um humm.”

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: The cost estimates are to procure equipment also for telecentres and—

Dr. Browne: Nice list. And which were opened in 2014?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Which will open—

Dr. Browne: Which were opened? Which telecentres? Locations.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: None were opened in 2014.

Dr. Browne: Ahh!

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: None was—

Dr. Browne: Okay, and the Member for La Horquetta/Talparo is asking when his will be opened, but he will have to ask that question directly.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: 2014 is not finished yet.

Dr. Browne: No—well, the fiscal year is.

4.45 p.m.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Next one, HIV/AIDS Co-ordinating Programme.

Dr. Browne: A million dollars.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Requested the money for sensitization of the staff. It includes the awareness of HIV-related issues; will assist participants to understand and address the stigma and discrimination associated with AIDS and provide clients with HIV-related information which would impact their interactions with other persons. [*Interruption*] In 2015.

Dr. Browne: None in 2015?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: The funds were transferred to recurrent.

Dr. Browne: Then the Adult Daycare Model update and the Governance Service Centres.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Cabinet by Minute No. 2580 of September 16, 2004 agreed, inter alia, to approve in principle the proposal for the design and development of a continuum of health and social support services for older persons. The components of the continuum include: senior centres; meals on wheels; transport escort services; companion care; adult care; day-care centres and assisted living facilities. In 2015, we propose to complete our designs and obtain outline approval, finalize our designs, engage contractors, conduct preliminaries and stake out our boundaries.

Dr. Browne: That would be free because there is no allocation in 2015?

Mr. Chairman: We go to the Member for St. Joseph, and then the Member for Arouca/Maloney is the final one.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Thank you, Chair. This Ministry is a quite important Ministry, and I concur with the Member for Diego Martin West that the allocation should be varied. However, in an answer to line Item, Sub-Head 09, Sub-Item 099, to the hon. Member for Diego Martin West, under Vision on Mission, unfortunately the Minister's answers raised a number of other questions pertinent to St. Joseph, because this is located in the constituency of St. Joseph. I will ask one question and depending on the answer I may have no further questions, or vice versa.

In 2013 there was a \$2 million allocation, 2014 \$1.9 million, roughly the same. The Minister said, if I am correct, this was for some sort of support. Was it technical support, or institutional strengthening?

Dr. Moonilal: "Ask de question nuh, man."

Mr. Deyalsingh: What type of support was this \$2 million grant and the same amount in two consecutive years meant for? Was it meant for technical support, for instance, institutional strengthening, corporate governance or was it for operational expenses, example food, training, rent? Was it to help with their physical location? Because, Chairman, I want to ask the question: Did the management of Vision on Mission know that this grant, subvention—whatever you want to call it—was going to be stopped in 2015? Further question: If it is going to be stopped in 2015, did they know it was going to be stopped?

Then you further went on to state that your Ministry will be conducting a similar programme in some other part of the country. Is it that you are taking over Vision on Mission by doing your own programme?—which I have no problem with. If that is the case, where does that leave Vision on Mission?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: I am advised that we will give you that in writing.

Mr. Chairman: I go now to the Member for Arouca/Maloney and then we close off.

Mr. Deyalsingh: In other words, they do not know. [*Laughter*]

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair, there are two items that I would like to look at.

Mr. Chairman: Member for Arouca/Maloney, where are we?

Miss Hospedales: Two items, page 142, I am looking at Sub-Item 112, the Street Dwellers Rehabilitation and Reintegration Project. I would like to know

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what percentage of this \$2 million allocation is going to Transform Life Ministries; whether or not the Ministry contracted with Transform Life Ministries to house street dwellers on its behalf; the number of street dwellers that the Ministry has there; the cost of housing each street dweller; the total number of clients sent to the facility to date?

I would also like to know how much money has been spent on renovating Transform Life Ministries to accommodate the street dwellers for reintegration and rehabilitation; and the overall amount of money paid to Transform Life Ministries to date by the Ministry. I would also like the Minister to indicate why those street dwellers were not sent to New Horizons, a facility that is owned by the Ministry that can house 200 persons.

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: My advice here is that we will give you that answer in writing.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the hon. Member for Diego Martin West and your good self, and we close off.

Dr. Rowley: Closing off?

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Dr. Rowley: I have a question with respect to page 143, 032 under 005, Establishment of an Integrated Social Enterprise Management System. This is an item which has been on the budget for 2013, \$4.3 million; 2014, \$5 million; revised downwards to \$1.4 million. I would like to ask the Ministry, since this expenditure was taking place on what, in effect, is a management system, what accounted for the downward revision of the allocation and why is the allocation now spiked up to \$10 million, what is that for?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We will also provide that information in writing.

Mr. Chairman: Next question.

Dr. Rowley: Chairman, let me ask you another question? Is the Minister saying that they are asking for \$10 million and nobody knows what it is for?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: No I am not saying that. I did not say nobody knows what it is for. I am saying that I am advised by the team here, by the PS and his team, that we will give you that information in writing.

Dr. Rowley: With respect to what happened in 2014, nobody could say what happened in 2014?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: We can write and tell you what happened. We will put it in writing. We will give you an account.

Mr. Chairman: Do you have a second question?

Dr. Rowley: I am stunned. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Chairman: I know, but do you have a second question?

Dr. Rowley: “Ah done.” [*Laughter*]

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Page 142, No. 108, Survey of Living Conditions, where you are projected to spend \$500,000, half a million in 2014, and that ballooned to \$7 million—quite a big amount. Is that survey completed? Has it been completed and what was that survey about?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: Cabinet by Minute 982 of December 05, 2013, agreed to approve a revised budget of up to \$8.2 million to facilitate the conduct of the Survey of Living Conditions.

The survey is proposed to be completed—was proposed to be completed in 12 months. The survey would assess the living conditions in Trinidad and Tobago according to socio-economic indicators, including but not limited to, health, housing, education, food security, recreation and leisure, poverty levels measured in terms of the line gap ratio and level.

The survey itself has been completed. We conducted the field work; we processed the data. We are now advertising for a consultancy that will analyze the data and then we will drive our programmes by what comes out of those analyses.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Further, could that data be made public at this stage? Can it be circulated to us?

Hon. Alleyne-Toppin: It cannot be made public yet, because our officers have to—our consultants will have to extrapolate on the data and present it properly to us, and we have to wait on that.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: And do the analysis, thank you.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 56 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Chair, procedurally please. The variation that the Member for Diego Martin West had asked for, how do we deal with that?

Mr. Chairman: What variation?

Mr. Deyalsingh: It is okay, Chair, thank you.

Mr. Chairman: I want to thank the hon. Minister and her team for being here.

May I advise, hon. Members, before we take a 20-minute break for tea, that when we return the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service is next. We have made some revision, based on consultation with the hon. Leader of the Opposition, to facilitate some smaller entities.

In so doing, I wish to advise hon. Members of this Standing Finance Committee, after the TTPS we shall then go to the Ministry of Tobago Development; then to the Ministry of the Arts and Multiculturalism. We will then proceed to the Judiciary. We will then go to the Industrial Court and then the Tobago House of Assembly. We will then revert to the Ministry of Education and then come down to the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development; Public Administration; Transport; Public Utilities; the Ministry of Community Development and the Ministry of Legal Affairs and the Ministry of National Diversity and Social Integration.

Dr. Moonilal: Chairman, I just want to make a quick point. I say with great respect to all involved, when these matters are fixed, the Leader of the Opposition quite rightly and properly indicated his order of priority for all. It is not the first time I am hearing that the Leader of the Opposition has changed his—

Mr. Chairman: No, no, no—

Dr. Moonilal: I am not finished.

Mr. Chairman: This request came from the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy, and that is why we approached him in order to agree to this.

Dr. Moonilal: But, Chairman, please; there is a certain order that we would like to have before us. We also have further requests to make of the Leader of the Opposition. Is the Leader of the Opposition prepared to consider further changes for the evening?

Mr. Chairman: I would suggest that when we break—

Dr. Moonilal: I did not know they were open to changes like this. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: No, no, no. What I am suggesting is that the only reason we approached the Leader of the Opposition, I received a text message from the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy, and it is based on that, to accommodate the smaller Ministries, I went to the hon. Leader of the Opposition and he has agreed to accommodate the smaller entities so we can proceed.

Dr. Moonilal: We will be sending some more text messages.

Mr. Chairman: That is the reason why we made the request in order to facilitate these. If we need further adjustments, I will ask the Leader of Government Business to meet with the Chief Whip and they can discuss and see what further changes, if we so want, to bring to the attention of the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

The proceedings of this Standing Finance Committee is suspended until 5.20 p.m.

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

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

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the meeting of the Standing Finance Committee is resumed, and we are now going to Head 64, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

Head 64.

Question proposed: That Head 64 stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: I would like to take this opportunity to invite the hon. Minister of National Security, if he so desires, to make a brief statement for no more than five minutes, as I take this opportunity to welcome the Commissioner of Police and his team. The hon. Minister.

Hon. Griffith: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wish to state that this started with the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service having their budgetary allocation just about two or three years now, and it has proven to be very effective. One of the problems that we have seen in dealing with law enforcement, apart from the concerns of lack of training and acquisition of assets, has to do with management. And through this system that we have now with the budget allocation being dealt with by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, they have the better knowledge to ascertain exactly what is required, and how soon it is required.

The previous system, it was very difficult for them to acquire specific things. It was affecting the performance of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. And through this system, with the Commissioner of Police being the accounting officer, it allows him now to be involved in good accountability, having that proper management, and to be able to acquire the assets that the police service needs on an immediate basis. So it has proven to be very effective. I think the

management—along this—has assisted greatly towards law enforcement, and with that, Mr. Chairman, I look forward for us to deal with this matter.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Members, the sum \$2,431,926,800 for Head 64 the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service 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*. I go immediately to Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure; Item 001, Police Service. I recognize the hon. Member for Laventille East/Morvant. [*Crosstalk*]

Miss Cox: Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman: Oh, I am sorry. I recognize the hon. Member for Laventille East/Morvant and then the Member for Port of Spain South.

Miss Cox: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I have a few questions, but I will start with Sub-Head 03, Overtime.

Mr. Chairman: Sub-Head 03, Overtime.

Miss Cox: I see that the 2015 estimates \$275 million—

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Miss Cox:—and what accounts for that high figure?

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister of National Security.

Hon. Griffith: Yes, Mr. Chairman, we are aware that the police service they work a 40-hour work week, and because of the shortage of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, remember the manpower strength is just about 1,000 less than what is required. So because of this, unfortunately, and because of the high demand of policing, we have been forced to go along this line. However, with the upcoming fiscal year, we intend to have the increase of the police manpower strength of at least 1,000, and by doing this, with more police officers being on strength, there will be less need for that on a continuous basis. But this has really been because of the shortage of the police manpower strength and the police service working the 40-hour work week.

Miss Cox: Just a similar question. I just want to know how soon—

Mr. Imbert: I would like to speak on this item.

Mr. Chairman: Of course. Of course.

Mr. Imbert: I just want to make—

Mr. Chairman: Of course. Of course. Yes, hon. Member.

Miss Cox: There has been a lot of talk about reducing overtime, you know—what is being put in place, and how soon could that be done with the police service?

Hon. Griffith: Well again, the reduction of the overtime would come with the increase of the manpower strength—if the police service gets to the manpower strength that is required, the 8,000-odd.

Miss Cox: Do you have a time frame?

Hon. Griffith: There are two batches that we are looking at. They are doing it in batches of just 400 to 500. By doing this, hopefully by July of next year, we would start reaching that position where the police would be, for the first time, close to or equal to the establishment.

Mr. Chairman: All right. I recognize the Member for Port of Spain South.

Miss Mc Donald: Mr. Chair, it is a follow-on to what the Member for Laventille East/Morvant would have asked. For 08, Vacant Posts, they have allocated \$150 million for this item. What is happening here? What steps are you taking to fill these posts?

Hon. Griffith: That, Mr. Chairman, again goes with the vacancies. What we have had is a revolving door where the police recruiting process would be in batches of just about 100 every six months, and within that six-month period you will have the attrition rate based on resignation, retirement and so forth, and because of that we were always playing catch up. Now, because we are doing batches of 400 to 500, it means that within a year we will now have an increase of 1,000, but a loss of probably a couple hundred. So that means they will actually have that increase of about 800 by the end of the fiscal year—end of the calendar year.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. I recognize the hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East and then the Member for Diego Martin Central.

Mr. Imbert: Yes. Mr. Chairman, first let me apologize if I ask a question that was asked when I was not in the Chamber. Could the Minister tell us what is the approved establishment of the police service?

Hon. Griffith: It is 7,715.

Mr. Imbert: And how many of those positions are filled?

Hon. Griffith: Six thousand two hundred.

Mr. Imbert: So, we are short 1,500?

Hon. Griffith: About 1,500, yes.

Mr. Imbert: Okay.

Hon. Griffith: So with the two batches of 500 each—

Mr. Imbert: Okay.

Hon. Griffith:—we will be getting close.

Mr. Imbert: How does this shortage affect the ability of the police service to conduct its operations?

Hon. Griffith: Well, and again, that is where the problem lies when we go right back to Sub-Item 03 with the overtime. Because of this, the 6,000 serving officers now have to do the work of 7,700; hence the reason for the overtime because of the 40-hour work week.

Mr. Imbert: Okay. The other point on that same Item 001, these 1,500 vacancies, are they across the ranks or are they at the intake level, the constable level?

Hon. Griffith: Well, the bulk will be at the rank of constable, but remember there is that pyramid. So as more persons leave there will be vacancies, but the bulk of that 1,500-odd would be the recruits, that recruiting level for the rank of constable.

Mr. Imbert: So are you saying therefore, that most of the senior ranks are filled, the positions are filled? That is what you are saying?

Hon. Griffith: Well we also have persons holding the acting rank and the acting positions as well.

Mr. Imbert: I want to ask about that as well. How many acting, how many persons do you have in acting positions?

Hon. Griffith: All the ranks, acting commissioner, senior superintendent—sorry—assistant commissioner, senior superintendent, superintendent, those have been filled.

Mr. Imbert: No. The total of the—you say you have 6,200 police officers at this time.

Hon. Griffith: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: How many of those are in acting positions, approximately?

Hon. Griffith: Yeah. I will have to assess that and get that information for you.

Mr. Imbert: No problem. And since the Commissioner of Police was given the responsibility for hiring, discipline, promotion, et cetera, of all ranks I think below Deputy Commissioner, if I am right, has there been any improvement in the filling of positions and dealing with grievances with respect to acting positions?

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister.

Hon. Griffith: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: I am just trying to find out if the police reform exercise is working in terms of delegating responsibility to the commissioner.

Hon. Griffith: All right. The acting, it is not just by the substantive vacancies. At times there will be situations where persons will go on courses, sick leave, vacation, so at times it will vary.

Mr. Imbert: No. I understand that. Let me explain what I am driving at. In the past there was always this complaint that the Police Service Commission took very long to fill positions and promote police officers and so on. We made some changes some years ago giving the Commissioner of Police now the authority to hire, promote, et cetera. Has there been any significant improvement in the filling of vacancies and promotions and so on?

Hon. Griffith: Yes. More so in the Second Division.

Mr. Imbert: Well could we get some details on this?

Hon. Griffith: Sure.

Mr. Imbert: You can provide it in writing. Okay. Could I go now to 03 and 04? Those two together are \$700 million, more or less, \$703 million actually—sorry, \$603 million. The total salary bill for the police service is \$850 million. So overtime and allowances now are getting close to the basic salary of police officers. Is this a healthy situation to be in? Should we not be paying the officers more? Why do we have to do this, pay them overtime and allowances and so on?

Hon. Griffith: Well as I have said, the reason for the overtime is because—

Mr. Imbert: The sum of it.

Hon. Griffith: Oh, the sum itself. No. You are talking about the rationale for the overtime.

Mr. Imbert: In my opinion, one of the reasons for overtime would be the fact that you are short.

Hon. Griffith: Correct.

Mr. Imbert: You are short staffed, but surely that cannot explain a \$600 million expenditure for overtime and allowances in the context of a wage bill of \$850 million. It is a huge amount. Does it not point to the fact that the basic salary should be higher?

Hon. Griffith: The basic salary of the police officers?

Mr. Imbert: Yeah. Because you are spending \$600 million on allowances and overtime, should you not be paying them more?

Hon. Griffith: Well that will be decided on when we have the audit, which is pending, and the audit would verify if we need to improve the salaries.

Mr. Imbert: Are you doing a job evaluation exercise? You know, it is not being done for Members of Parliament, judges and people like that, under the SRC, the Speaker and so on. They are not doing it for us. They do not really care about us too much. But is a job evaluation exercise being done for police officers?

Hon. Griffith: But again, my focus is on the audit itself. The audit itself is—

Mr. Imbert: It is a serious question.

Hon. Griffith:—it is going to ensure all aspects. You see, sometimes you look at the audit and you are just thinking about finance. This audit is going to ascertain not just how to improve the police service, but also you are looking at—there are certain—for the last few decades, you have the police service in a structured manner, and things have changed in law enforcement, and there might be need for new units. There might be a need to reassign persons who will be in one unit. What might have been important 20 years, to what is here now.

Mr. Imbert: No. I am talking about compensation. You see, the job evaluation exercise for Members of Parliament and judges and so on determines our hours of work, our responsibilities, what we do. We stay here for 12 hours a day, two weeks in a row, we get paid part time. I am just wondering if, while they do not care about us, [*Laughter*] whether somebody in the Government is doing a

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job evaluation exercise on the duties, responsibilities, working conditions of police officers to see whether their pay package is commensurate with their duties, responsibilities and working conditions, even though it is not being done for parliamentarians and judges.

Hon. Griffith: You are stressing on that.

5.35 p.m.

Mr. Imbert: No, I am serious. They do not care about us or judges or other people like that, but is someone caring about the police officers and doing a job evaluation exercise to see if their compensation package matches their duties and responsibilities?

Hon. Griffith: Yes, and the audit. With the audit from the present Commissioner of Police, Bill Bratton when he was here, he actually said it and I emphasized the point that the officers need to be compensated so that they will be able to perform better especially based on their duties. So the audit would also be part of that process to show that the status right now, may very well show that the salary that the police officers receive it is not in keeping with what is required especially, best practice.

Mr. Imbert: So as we get along later in the Estimates, we will find an allocation for that then, for the job evaluation exercise you spoke about?

Hon. Griffith: Possible.

Mr. Imbert: You have to pay for it, so it has to be in here somewhere.

Hon. Griffith: Well, remember with the audit—well, then the recommendations in the audit and then we will have to move from there after we get—

Mr. Imbert: As we go along, I will look for it and see if I can find it, because I could not find it.

Hon. Griffith: Please.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the hon. Member for Diego Martin West, Leader of the Opposition.

Dr. Rowley: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am very pleased to see the Minister here this evening, because the last time I had the opportunity to speak to him face to face like this was about the police, he was the advisor to the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago on matters of national

security. And in that discussion, which was a visit by the Opposition to the Prime Minister's Office, the question of a manpower audit of the police service featured very prominently. And I got the impression—I came away from that meeting that the advisor, who is now the Minister, was in agreement that that was an urgent requirement. And I am not here talking about a manpower audit against the background of emoluments, I am talking about deployment.

We have an establishment of 6,000 people or we have 6,000 persons in charge—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Griffith: Six thousand, yeah, out of 7,000.

Dr. Rowley: Sixty-three hundred, okay. The manpower audit is really meant to answer a question. What do we have and where are they deployed? What are they doing? To answer another question, are we getting the best use of what we have, and also, do we have enough of the right people in the right places? That is what a manpower audit answers. And when you answer those questions then you come to the other answer about how you pay them and if you are paying them properly. But I would like to hear, from the Minister, whether the manpower audit as conceded in that meeting, I think it was August sometime last year or about, which is—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Griffith: Four years.

Dr. Rowley:—to deal with the deployment of bodies in the police service and whether we have the right mix of skills in the right places, if that is being done now?

Hon. Griffith: Yes, and that audit is being conducted by the—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Rowley: Who is doing it?

Hon. Griffith: Hartnett, I will have to get the date exactly, Hartnett and Company, but that is the company that was under the present Commissioner of Police, Bill Bratton, when he was here.

So they are aware of what is required. We are just waiting now for it to commence. It has already been approved at Cabinet level. And that is exactly what you said, I am in agreement with you 100 per cent. That manpower audit is very critical before we even move to deal with salary increase, and the audit will dictate the whole structure of the police service. Because right now where we had a situation years ago where police officers would spend more time in the

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buildings, it has changed now. Now it is more customer service, where you need to have the police officers out in the streets much more than in the police buildings.

So now you see less police buildings in other cities and more police officers out in the streets. There is also, because of the situations now with law enforcement, there may be need for other types of agencies that we never had before, more focused on crime scene investigation to deal with detection rate. Do we need a forensic centre of department assigned to the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service? Do we need to have more undercover police officers?

New York, for example, one-third of their police department, they are undercover officers. Do we have the proper training facilities for the police service? Are there certain agencies in the police service that we need to disband because there may not be a need for it based on the threat assessment? So that manpower audit will do exactly that.

Dr. Rowley: And that is being done. Do you have any idea when we can look to that being commenced and completed?

Hon. Griffith: We hope for it to commence by late October early November.

Dr. Rowley: You do not know yet what kind of completion date.

Hon. Griffith: I think it will take a few months to complete. We are looking at about February.

Dr. Rowley: Given what the Minister has just said, Mr. Chairman, I crave your indulgence to follow-on to what he said before we go back to the numbers. And that is to try and get an understanding of what problem we are trying to solve.

Mr. Chairman, in looking at the police service and what exactly the police service understands as its mandate, I found out that the police service understands that its mandate is to maintain law and order, public safety and defence against aggression, manage disaster preparedness and response, monitor and control the flow of persons into and out of the country.

Now, that is my understanding from what I have researched. Maintain law and order and public safety, I would not argue with that. But defence against aggression, is that something that is carried on from colonial times? Because I do know that since we have got a defence force that the police service still has that as its main focus, then manage disaster preparedness and response. We have created a very expensive ODPM body. So is the police still seeing that part of its role? And

monitor and control the flow of persons into and out of the country, is that not Immigration Department's role? So really, if what I have discovered here existed from colonial days, the real function in the police service which is relevant today, is maintain law and order and public safety.

And then I come down to the Mission. What does the police understand as its Mission? And I discovered the Mission is:

“In partnership with the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, we provide for safe and secure communities and other places through professional policing, focused leadership and consistent, high quality service.”

And the Vision is:

“To make every place in Trinidad and Tobago safe.”

Against that background of those components, I would like to ask the Minister, how are we succeeding or failing against that Mission Statement and that Vision for the police service?

Hon. Griffith: Yes, Chairman, and again, that is why we are trying to—we do not want to have the audit done internally. What we are trying to look at is what we have seen as best practice, and exactly what you have said. It is quite possible that a lot of—many of the—you will see the roles and functions of the police service is something that was 40 years ago. And because the times have changed in law enforcement, there is a different need, there is a different threat assessment and there will be different roles and functions. So the things that we will see here, may not be what is required now, and that is exactly what the audit will do. Some of the things however, from a secondary perspective, the police would have a part to play. For example, to deal with—one of the things you spoke about, in a case of natural or manmade disaster—*[Interruption]*

Dr. Rowley: Control flow of people into and out of Trinidad and Tobago—

Hon. Griffith: Yes.

Dr. Rowley:—and defence against aggression.

Hon. Griffith: Defence against aggression and to deal with any natural or manmade disaster, there would be some aspects of policing that we could have seen in the attempted coup in 1990. That was a situation where there was a clear and present danger, but there was a need for the police presence, and even though the defence force became the front line, because of the state of emergency and it was based on insurgents trying to destroy our democracy as we know it, the police

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still had a part to play. But that was really secondary, that was not their primary role and function.

Likewise, in any natural or manmade disaster, there would be need for police to assist in traffic control, in movement of the crowds to avoid riots or anything like that. So there would be situations where the police would be involved in those aspects but from a secondary perspective. But what I am just speaking about, is again, it is all based on perception. The audit will verify, based on what is best practice worldwide, how the police service should be established, especially, and this is not to have a template, because different police units worldwide will have different roles and functions based on the threat assessment. What our Trinidad and Tobago Police Service will be required to do here will be totally different, to probably, what they will want in Costa Rica, because they do not have a defence force, or Colombia or even in New York. However, there would be a general concept, but I think there are certain things that I have seen that require changes.

Dr. Rowley: But would you agree that if the manpower audit is to be used as a tool for refocusing the police, that one has to have the mission clarified—

Hon. Griffith: Yeah.

Dr. Rowley:—so as to determine what the requirements are against the background of any findings of the audit.

Hon. Griffith: Agreed, yes.

Dr. Rowley: And from what I just read there and from what you have said, it appears as though there is going to be the need for a serious restructuring in the police service. Are you seeing that?

Hon. Griffith: Agreed, and I think that is where the audit would verify exactly the direction that we need to go, and also looking at the mission, but more importantly looking at their role and function, both primary and secondary, agreed.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, I recognize Diego Martin Central.

Dr. Browne: Thank you, Chairman. Listening to the explanation about the upcoming audit, and I am sure there are police officers in my constituency saying, “while the grass is growing, the cow is starving or the cows are starving”. My question is with respect to a system of incentives for police officers in various branches. I am particularly concerned about the Anti-Corruption Investigations Bureau and other officers—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Chairman: If you could point to us where that is located.

Dr. Browne: 02.

Mr. Chairman: 02?

Dr. Browne: Yes, Wages and Cost of Living Allowance. So is there any system of financial incentives in place for officers in specific branches? And secondly, my question on Wages and Cost of Living Allowances has to do with other paymasters for officers within the police service, whether they are on or off duty, and the legality, Mr. Minister—

Hon. Griffith: Sorry.

Dr. Browne: The legality of the existence of other paymasters for specific police officers, whether they are on duty or off duty. And I am speaking with respect to engagement at fetes, bars, parties, escort service for heavy vehicles and a range of other services that police officers provide from time to time, on occasion with remuneration involved, and as I am saying paymasters other than the Treasury of Trinidad and Tobago. I am asking about whether this is legal, is the Commissioner or Minister aware of any such practice, and if so, what steps are being taken or proposed to deal with such?

Mr. Chairman: Before you answer, I just want to remind hon. Members, there is a committee that we will be populating next week on national security, and that committee's mandate is broad. Those matters that you are raising I feel could best be discussed at that level. Right now we are dealing with line Items. The hon. Leader of the Opposition sought my indulgence, which I facilitated, but I do not want that to become a practice or a habit. We are dealing with line Items and the Minister of National Security and the team headed by the Commissioner of Police, they have come prepared to deal with these line Items. So let us deal with the line Items. And these extra matters that you are talking about, whether people are paid legally or illegally, that is not before us. What is before us is Salaries and Cost Of Living Allowance, we have a sum. You believe it is small—

Dr. Browne: Mr. Chairman, I was guided by precedent set a little earlier—in the form of questions.

Mr. Chairman: No, no, the precedent was only for the Leader.

Dr. Browne: I was not referring to the Leader of the Opposition—when there were questions about the Brian Lara Stadium, et cetera. But I hear you and I actually agree with your guidance. If the Minister is not able to respond now—

Hon. Griffith: Chair.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, go ahead.

Hon. Griffith: Shall I?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, go ahead, please.

Hon. Griffith: Now, there is a provision in the police service for police officers who are off duty. I just want to clarify the point here, Mr. Chairman, because there are two aspects here. If a police officer is off duty, there is a provision that is made that allows persons to then go to the police service to make the request, so if it is a duty outside of the role and function they can then—the payment is then made to the police service and they then pay the police officer for that duty when he is off duty.

Now, I do not know if that is what you are speaking about or police officers who are off duty and they are just paid directly by individuals such as Carnival fetes and so forth. That has nothing to do with the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. That is not within the authorization of the police service. That is a private venture that is done between a police officer on its own time—*[Interruption]*

Hon. Member: Legal.

Hon. Griffith: No, illegal, but what makes it worse is especially if the police officer will use his firearm in the performance of that duty.

Hon. Member: Illegal

Hon. Griffith: Very illegal, yes.

5.50 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: Let us go to Laventille East/Morvant.

Miss Cox: I just want to go back to 03—02. I know that I heard the Minister say that 6,200 persons are active. Could I get the figure on how many persons would be on sick leave, suspension or vacation or so?

Hon. Griffith: I could get that exact amount for you, but it would vary.

Miss Cox: I know it is a high figure, so I want to know how much—

Mr. Chairman: Yes, and we would not want you to mislead us.

Hon. Griffith: Yes, that is right.

Mr. Chairman: So give us the proper—

Hon. Griffith: Yes, Chairman, I will give you the proper—

Mr. Chairman: Yes, by providing to us in writing.

Hon. Griffith: Yes, please.

Mr. Chairman: All right? We go to 02, Goods and Services, and we go to Item 001, Police Service (Trinidad). I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Dr. Rowley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. 02/03, Uniforms. Is it that we buy new uniforms every year? Or we stock up on a purchase and then draw down on the stores? Because, Mr. Chairman, I am seeing here, under Police Uniforms—and this is just police uniforms: 2013, \$20 million; 2014, \$35 million; 2015, \$40 million. Now, that seems to be a very generous allocation for uniforms, so I would like an explanation as to how we proceed to spend that money.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister of National Security.

Hon. Griffith: Yes, Mr. Chairman. The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service will purchase uniforms for all police officers in accordance with the Police Service Regulations and the Standing Orders. Now, what we have seen, again, because of the increase in the manpower strength, the numbers would increase. So when we are looking at the allocation, as mentioned, whereas before we would just bring a batch of 100 and 80 persons would leave, we are always at that number, but because of the anticipation that we will get very close to the establishment of 7,000, it is going to be an increase, whereas before, like last year, there may have only been about 6,000 police officers. If next year we will have 1,000 more, there would be an increase in the uniform, and with the increase in the uniform there would be an increase in the budget allocation for the uniform.

Dr. Rowley: No, well, I am saying that you spent \$35 million in 2014 on your current establishment.

Hon. Griffith: Yes.

Dr. Rowley: You are telling me there would be some more next year so you will go up. But I am starting from the base level of \$35 million.

Hon. Griffith: Yes.

Dr. Rowley: And I am saying, is it that every year we will have an—look at 2013. In 2013 it was \$28 million, and if I go backwards in time, I am sure I am going to see—so is it that every year we buy a few 10 of millions of dollars in uniforms?

Hon. Griffith: Yes. And it is not just—remember, we have the task force, the mounted branch, the Guard and Emergency Branch, and every police officer, they have about four or five, I think, uniforms, for ceremonial, for a parade.

Dr. Rowley: So you do not think that this is an exorbitant figure? It is a required figure.

Hon. Griffith: Well, again, if we do the maths—

Dr. Rowley: I am just asking. I am just asking. I have no predisposed position. I am just asking, looking at the numbers because \$40 million is not a small amount of money.

Hon. Griffith: Yes.

Dr. Rowley: So I am asking, is that \$40 million going to be repeated every year when your establishment is established in 18 months or thereabouts, or in 12 months? Can we look forward every year to be spending that on uniforms? Is that what is required?

Hon. Griffith: I think at this time the—again, with the Commissioner of Police being the accounting officer, I do trust the—

Dr. Rowley: He is there, ask him.

Hon. Griffith: I asked him. He said yes. [*Laughter*]

Dr. Rowley: That is what I am asking. That is the answer I am looking for. Does the Commissioner feel that in making his budget, as we go forward, that this is the kind of outlay they have to look for with respect to uniforms? So, if he says yes, well, we will be examining it later on as we go forward.

Mr. Chairman, telephone—

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, on this same item—

Dr. Rowley: On telephone?

Mr. Imbert: Should I come back to that when I am speaking, or can we deal with this same item now?

Mr. Chairman: Well, you could deal with it.

Hon. Griffith: Mr. Chairman, if I could, I could just do the maths roughly here: \$40 million, when you divide that by 7,000 officers—I am just ballparking—you are looking at just about \$6,000 per officer, and with five

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different types of uniform, you are looking at just about \$1,000, and that includes from boots, belt and so forth. So ballpark—and then including the SRPs, you are looking at just about for every uniform it is between \$800.

Dr. Rowley: So the figure is reasonable.

Hon. Griffith: Yes.

Dr. Rowley: That is what I am getting at.

Miss Cox: Chair—

Mr. Chairman: No, I will ask the Member for Diego Martin North/East on the same matter, and then you after—

Mr. Imbert: On this same matter—

Mr. Chairman:—and then we come back to the hon. Member.

Mr. Imbert:—is the Minister saying, or implying, that these six uniforms that each officer has, more or less, are changed every year? In other words, they last for 12 months only? Is that what you are saying? I have another question on this same item.

Hon. Griffith: Again, Mr. Chairman, as I said, there are four or five different types of uniforms, but—

Mr. Imbert: Minister, focus on my question.

Hon. Griffith: I know. I am coming to it. That is what I am saying.

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, yeah, yeah, “he coming”.

Hon. Griffith: I am on the question. So with those, there will be certain uniforms that they use on a daily basis and those, based on the wear and tear, they would be the ones that you will have to change on an annual basis. There may be others, such as for ceremonial parades and so forth, it may not be required. So it is really difficult to say that all the uniforms would be changed on an annual basis. It is based, really, on the duty of the individual.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, may I assist—the reason why this matter has gotten my attention is because in 2011 the figure was \$10 million, and I am sure police were properly provisioned or almost properly provisioned. So we got by in

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2011 with \$10 million. We are now saying that three years down the road, or two years down the road, the satisfying figure is \$40 million. So what caused this drastic change?

Hon. Griffith: Okay. What I would like—I see what you are speaking about. You are talking about a 400 per cent increase. But I know at that time, the police second division were very upset because the uniforms were not being purchased on an annual basis. It does not mean that to just—what I will do, I will just look at the difference and verify—

Dr. Rowley: Check it out.

Hon. Griffith: Check it out, yes.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, so could we get a breakdown of how many uniforms you buy per officer, what type and so on, on an annual basis? And what procurement procedure do you use, and who designs these uniforms? Because, Mr. Chairman, the former Commissioner of Police, Mr. Gibbs—

Mr. Cadiz: What does that have to do with the line item; who designed the uniforms?

Mr. Imbert: Come on! This is a purchase of—

Mr. Chairman: Please, please, please.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, could you control them?

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: I mean, clearly, the design of the uniform must have some effect on its cost. So the former Commissioner of Police had said that the uniforms that the police officers are using were unsuitable, something to do with the type of material, and the material was not suited for a tropical climate. I distinctly remember a public statement made by Mr. Gibbs to this effect, and that he was going to change out all the uniforms and so on. So could this expenditure have anything to do with that, that the old styled uniforms is now being changed out and new uniforms are being designed? Could you tell us who designs these uniforms and the procurement procedure for them, please?

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister?

Hon. Griffith: No, the uniform has not changed. It is the same uniform we had from the colonial-type uniform.

Mr. Imbert: Okay. So what is the procurement procedure?

Dr. Rowley: They had short pants. You used the short pants at one stage.
[Laughter and crosstalk]

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, could you control that side for me, please? I am trying to get an answer here and I am being disturbed by this side here.

Hon. Griffith: You are talking about the colonial grey.

Mr. Imbert: Procurement procedure.

Hon. Griffith: There is a set procurement procedure. If you require, I can actually give the breakdown and show how it is done, for uniforms.

Mr. Imbert: It is a lot of money. I would like to know how you go about—do you get three quotes? Do you have a bonded supplier? How are you doing this? I would like to know. Is it competitive bidding? Or you just have a preferred contractor? I would like to know.

Mr. Chairman: Could you supply that in writing?

Hon. Griffith: Yes, Chairman. And, Chairman, I could also speak—the police second division, in fact, they have actually written to me and we had meetings on several occasions where they have voiced their concern and request to have the whole uniform changed.

Dr. Rowley: So the uniform is an issue.

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

Miss Cox: I just wanted to ask if there was a policy with regard to the distribution of uniforms and the use of uniforms—a written policy on that.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister?

Hon. Griffith: Yes, there is an established practice with the distribution where there are certain items—it is like an issue—and each police officer will have his issue. There will be times where, based on an item being unserviceable, it would be returned to the quartermaster and then they would get a new issue. So there may be a specific period for wear and tear based on certain situations where the boots, or whatever, may take place, there would be that change.

Miss Cox: I just have a follow-up question. What measures are being put in place—because now there seem to be a lot of persons with police uniforms—authentic uniforms. So what measures are being put in place to prevent that from

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happening? What security measures with regard to uniforms and accountability, where police officers are issued uniforms and they turn up in the hands of bandits—what is being put in place to deal with that?

Hon. Griffith: Well, in the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service they do have lists of Standing Orders where internal audits will be done on a regular basis. It does not mean that it is going to automatically prevent all aspects of police officers either misplacing, or even deliberately being handed over to the wrong side. But through the Standing Orders and the regular audits—and there may be a need to have more audits and regular checks done to ensure that police officers—they have the equipment and the equipment that they have—I know you are speaking about, even like a bulletproof vest and it has “Police” on it, if it gets in the wrong hands, what can happen. I know, well, from the side of the Customs, there is a lock to ensure that those items do not enter from ports of entry, but police officers who presently have their uniforms—to ensure that it stays there with the police officer and it is used in the right manner. Through the Standing Orders we have that.

Mr. Chairman: Member for Arouca/Maloney?

Miss Mc Donald: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chairman—

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, “ah coming to you in a short while.”

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair, what I wanted to ask was, with reference to the purchase of uniforms that were printed in the media in 2012, whether or not those uniforms would be utilized, and if not, where are they?

Mr. Chairman: What is that? You want to know about uniforms where? Listen, let us try to stick—

Miss Hospedales: No, I am speaking under the item.

Mr. Chairman: So you are going to where, in 2010?

Miss Hospedales: Sub-Item 03.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, go ahead.

Hon. Griffith: Chairman, what is being discussed here is exactly what I just spoke about. With the police second division, they had a recommendation to change the uniform of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. It was a totally different brand, a different feel; it will look different. It was to just transform the

whole image of the police service and they stated—similar to what the previous Commissioner of Police said about the type of uniform. But that was just based on a recommendation. Those are just samples. So that has absolutely nothing to do with the actual allocation of the uniform in the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service in the quartermaster department. Those were just samples that you saw. There is absolutely no decision that has been made as yet, to confirm if it will go in that direction. That really will be the call of the Commissioner of Police.

Mr. Chairman: The Member for Port of Spain South.

Miss Mc Donald: Sorry, Mr. Chair, but the Member for Diego Martin North/East asked my question.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. The Member for St. Ann's East and then the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mrs. Thomas: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I was just looking at Item number 51, Relocation of Overseas Staff and I just wanted to enquire from the Minister—

Mr. Chairman: Item what?

Mrs. Thomas: Number 51, page 330, under Goods and Services.

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Mrs. Thomas: Relocation of Overseas Staff, I just wanted to know what exactly that increase related to; what type of staff.

Hon. Griffith: Those are Special Branch officers assigned to the embassies, Mr. Chairman. So we are looking at Miami, New York, and we now have approval for another to be stationed in London.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, if I may come back to 05, Telephones. We are very well off as a country, but we do have some challenges, and I am wondering whether there are any specific efforts within the police service to keep the telephone bill cost within a reasonable, or—how should I put it? You need to use the phone as much as you have to for the job, but to prevent abuse or minimize abuse. Because, Mr. Chairman, given the priorities we have for expenditure in the country of other items, 2013, \$38 million in telephone; 2014, we budgeted \$40 million, estimated down to be \$39 million, and we are looking now to add \$6 million more to that, so we are budgeting \$45 million, which would mean that over a three-year period, we would have spent well over \$100 million in

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telephone service within the police service. I am wondering if this is properly managed within the service. And what are the control systems in place to make sure that this line item expenditure is in keeping with what is required and no excesses?

6.05 p.m.

Hon. Griffith: Yes, Mr. Chairman, the point is taken but I just want to add, however, with that Item we see Telephones, whereas in other Ministries, you will just see it as telephones, this here also includes IT, Internet, the Broadband to be used between the IATF and other arms of the law enforcement agencies. So, yes, it is utilized to pay for landlines but also the official mobile units, the cellular phones that are given to numerous police officers, and then you have the wide area networks, the data lines and Internet to over 102 locations at 77 police stations. I do understand your point, however, I do see where you are coming from, for us to just ensure that the system and the process is not abused. I think the abuse can only be really based on the individuals who may have the mobile phones and the landlines.

Dr. Rowley: What controls are in place? Are there limits to personal use? What do you have in place or is it just wide open?

Hon. Griffith: Yes, I know, not with the landline but the mobile phone, there is a limit, but, again, the limit could be based on the officer in his line of duty. So some may have a limit different to others, \$300.

Dr. Rowley: But it is an area that you would look at to make sure that it can be controlled?

Hon. Griffith: What we will do is we will look at, especially the landlines and look at the different police stations and then we could verify if it is being abused in a specific area or if there is justification for it.

Dr. Rowley: How are you charged for Internet services? Your charge is station by station or you have a package from the supplier because that is an area where cost can run away if you do not have a proper arrangement in place. Have you tried to get a package service that services—

Hon. Griffith: For all 77 stations.

Dr. Rowley: Yeah, what do you have in place now?

Hon. Griffith: I think it is packaged—there are three centralized locations and they are all based on a package itself. So it is not that the more you use it, the more it will cost.

Dr. Rowley: But within there, we do have more than one supplier in the country. Is competition taken into account when you seek the service?

Hon. Griffith: Yes, some, I know, have been used through Flow based on cost. So the competition is there but I mean, it is limited and there would be some fly-by-night companies that obviously you would not even consider.

Mr. Chairman: All right, we go on to Item 002, Police Service (Tobago).

Hon. Members: No, no, no, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: So we are still under Goods and Services?

Hon. Members: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. I recognize the Member for Laventille East/Morvant, the Member for Diego Martin North/East, the Member for La Brea and then the Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Miss Cox: I have a few questions, please. Under 09 Rent/Lease - Vehicles and Equipment, I see it moved from 2013 \$5 million to \$9 million in 2015. I just would like to know what is the cause of this increase? Also, what are the procurement systems used?

Hon. Griffith: Sorry, this is under—

Miss Cox: Item 09, what is the procurement process used for the rental and lease of vehicles? Did you find it?

Hon. Griffith: Yes.

Miss Cox: From \$5 million to \$9 million in 2015.

Hon. Griffith: There is a selective tender process but there are several companies that the options are made—

Miss Cox: You use one company or you use several?

Hon. Griffith: No, several different companies, but there will be for different purpose. There will be some that will be used by some of the intelligence agencies in the police service, some operation undercover and they are obviously unmarked.

Miss Cox: So what is the reason for this big increase in expenditure from \$5 million to \$9 million?

Hon. Griffith: Because of the units that we have now: the organized crime unit, the criminal gangs and intelligence unit, special branch.

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Miss Cox: Okay, I go to 16. There is an increase from 2014 to 2015, \$15 million under Contract Employment. What accounts for this? I would like to get a list of the contract employees in the police service and their positions.

Hon. Griffith: You would like to get the list?

Miss Cox: A list of all the contract persons and their positions, and what accounts for this \$15 million increase from one year to the other.

Mr. Chairman: Let me just ask a question: are these contract employees police officers or are they civilians?

Hon. Griffith: No, no, civilian employees. But when I give the list, the list will actually show the difference as to what has caused the increase of the \$15 million.

Miss Cox: Okay, no problem. I want to find out about the police service concerning police officers.

Mr. Chairman: Which item?

Miss Cox: How many ex-police officers are on contract in the police service? I am still under 16.

Hon. Griffith: I will have that provided in the list as well.

Miss Cox: Okay. Under Training, I know that there was a vacancy for a provost, has that vacancy been filled and by who?

Mr. Chairman: Which one is that, Member for Laventille East/Morvant?

Miss Cox: Item 17, Training.

Mr. Chairman: What are you asking there? The increase?

Miss Cox: No, I am asking about a provost in the Police Training Academy. I know that there was a vacancy. Was that vacancy filled? And I would like to know by whom.

Hon. Griffith: That vacancy was filled just a week or so ago by a retired police officer.

Miss Cox: What is his name?

Hon. Griffith: Simon Alexis.

Dr. Rowley: A retired person?

Hon. Griffith: He was an Assistant Commissioner, police.

Miss Cox: Is he qualified for the post?

Hon. Griffith: Yes, definitely.

Miss Cox: Could you send us his qualifications and so on?

Mr. Chairman: Could we go to the—yes, one more.

Miss Cox: I have a question concerning the buying out of leave of police officers. Minister, could you tell us from 2013 to 2014, how many police officers' leave was bought out and who are they?

Hon. Griffith: No, we would not have that list.

Miss Cox: Yes, you could provide it.

Hon. Griffith: But what I can say, it is very—we try to avoid this as much as possible.

Miss Cox: Buying out leave?

Hon. Griffith: Buying out leave. The only time that it could be done is if there is a specific need based on an assessment and a reason to have the individual remain for that extra period in time.

Miss Cox: Okay, but could we be furnished with information?

Hon. Griffith: Sure. For what period? What time frame?

Miss Cox: From 2013 to 2014, and the list of the officers' leave bought out.

Hon. Griffith: Yes, and I could also provide you with the amount of leave that was bought out as well.

Miss Cox: Item 36, Extraordinary Expenditure, could you tell me what accounted for the expenditure of \$10 million and what constitutes Extraordinary Expenditure?

Mr. Chairman: Do you want to provide that or you could deal with that?

Hon. Griffith: No, actually I could get that now. We have it here so I can have it provided.

Mr. Chairman: Well, whilst they are waiting to supply that—

Miss Cox: I have another question, while they are waiting. Food at Institutions, there is a \$16 million—*[Crosstalk]* Why I asked this is because we observed that in all the institutions, the food bill is very high. Now, I know that the regiment and the coast guard provide food for their—

Hon. Griffith: Because of overnight duty and—yes.

Miss Cox: Right, but police officers do not provide food on that basis unless they are the recruits and so on.

Hon. Griffith: Yes, they get a meal allowance.

Miss Cox: So how come this expenditure is so high, \$16 million? Where did this come from?

Hon. Griffith: Mr. Chairman, the bulk of that really will be those persons who are actually held for over a week in the—prisoners. Persons who would be in the cells for a few days until they move to where they belong.

Miss Cox: You all provide them with food to the tune \$16 million? Minister, I am listening.

Hon. Griffith: “They eating.” [*Laughter*]

Miss Cox: Okay, I have one question concerning—

Hon. Griffith: I understand your point, we will look at the list and get a breakdown.

Mr. Chairman: Final question before we go on.

Miss Cox: Medical Expenses, there is a \$5 million increase in the medical expenses, what accounted for that? Item 58.

Hon. Griffith: Again, because of the increase in manpower strength, the increase in staff would also cause the increase in the allocation for medical expenses.

Miss Cox: What was that increase over the year that will account for \$5 million?

Hon. Griffith: The increase would have been about 1,200 SRPs and 400 from the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and with the plan to have another 1,000 added, that would cause the increase by the \$5 million.

Miss Cox: Or so you are paying the medical upfront or something?

Hon. Griffith: No, this is in anticipation of.

Miss Cox: Okay, all right.

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

Mr. Imbert: Let us go back to 08, Rent/Lease - Office Accommodation and Storage. What is storage? On page 329, 02, 001, 08, Rent/Lease - Office Accommodation and Storage. Please, explain what “Storage” means and could you give us a list of all the properties that the police service is renting, who their owners are and what the rent is? Hold on, that is just question one.

Question two: Item 09, Rent/Lease, Vehicles and Equipment, again, could we get a list of all vehicles being rented and from whom and at what cost? Could I ask on this one, a related question: could I be told how many vehicles the police service is renting and why—this is just a deduction I have come to—is the police service purchasing vehicles as opposed to renting vehicles? Because the allocation for rental is \$9 million but on another Head, which we will come to in due course, I saw an allocation of \$50 million for acquisition of vehicles. Could I get the general philosophy behind purchase of vehicles?

Which then leads to my next question: 013, \$75 million on Maintenance of Vehicles, is this being done in-house or is it being farmed out to private contractors? If it is being farmed out to private contractors, the maintenance of vehicles, could I get a list of the names of these contractors and the amounts paid to them in 2014 and what you expect for 2015?

With respect to 16, Contract Employment, could we get the positions, a description of the positions of all these people who are hired on contract—

Miss Cox: I asked that already.

Mr. Imbert: No. Did you ask for the positions? And the actual persons who were hired in 2014 and who do you expect to hire in 2015.

Could you explain on Item 22 what is Short Term Employment and what caused short-term employment to go from its 2014 estimate of \$5 million to its revised estimate of \$23,500,000 which is an increase of about 600 per cent or 500 per cent. And what is Item 23 for, Fees? Is that legal fees or consultancy fees? If it is, could we get a list of everybody paid under Fees in 2014 and a breakdown of what you expect to spend \$15 million on, on fees in 2015?

6.20 p.m.

Could you explain in Item 28, what is Other Contracted Services—*[Interruption]* no, these are questions. I want answers. What is Other Contracted Services? How did you spend this \$10 million in 2014? How do you expect to spend \$12 million in 2015? You have already answered Extraordinary Expenditure, I think. Did you get an answer for Extraordinary Expenditure?

Miss Cox: No, he said he would provide it.

Mr. Chairman: No, he would provide us.

Mr. Imbert: Did he say what it was?

Mr. Chairman: Yeah.

Dr. Moonilal: What is that?

Mr. Imbert: Extraordinary Expenditure, did he explain what it was? Could we even get a brief explanation?

Hon. Griffith: Sure, sure.

Mr. Imbert: Before you get to the list, tell us what is this? And then with respect to Food and Institutions, could we find out if this is done in-house or you buy from caterers, or KFC or whatever it is you do? And could we get a breakdown of the major persons who you acquired food from in 2014 and who you intend to buy food from in 2015, for Food and Institutions, we are talking about \$16 million here.

With respect to Housing Accommodation, who are you housing at a cost of \$1.5 million? And with respect to Medical Expenses, could you clarify whether police officers get complete coverage, not just for injuries in the line of duty, but for lifestyle problems, cardiac problems, problems with high blood pressure, and so on? That is it. Just on this item alone, that is it. [*Laughter*]

Hon. Griffith: Chairman, I do not know where to start.

Mr. Imbert: Well, start at the beginning, [*Laughter*] which was Office Accommodation, which was 08.

Hon. Griffith: Okay, Chairman, the housing accommodation that is for the overseas special branch.

Hon. Member: Which item?

Mr. Imbert: Is that the last one I just said there?

Hon. Griffith: The last shall by first.

Mr. Imbert: 50, okay, right, yeah.

Hon. Griffith: So the housing accommodation those are for the individuals who are stationed abroad. The Extraordinary Expenditure, that would involve funeral expenses, removal of dead bodies, and paying for informants and other aspects, along those lines.

Pertaining to the rental of vehicles, there are 50 vehicles being rented, those vehicles would be used for covert operations. Unfortunately, I do not think we would be able to provide you with the—what you wanted to get, the numbers?

Mr. Imbert: Types, the numbers, who you are renting them from?

Hon. Griffith: No, no, we cannot give you the vehicle numbers.

Mr. Imbert: No, no—*[Interruption]*

Hon. Griffith: Right, right, sure.

Mr. Imbert: Mazda, five Nissans, two Toyotas.

Hon. Griffith: Yes, yes, sure, sure, that I could provide you with.

Mr. Imbert: Right, and who you are renting them from? And I had a much more fundamental question.

Hon. Griffith: Yeah, Mr. Chairman, again, it would be difficult for us to state with those 50 vehicles, exactly the companies that they will be rented from.

Mr. Imbert: You cannot tell that? *[Crosstalk]*

Hon. Griffith: Well, that could obviously—if you are getting them from Rudy's Car Rental, all you need now to go to—

Mr. Indarsingh: I do not like that example, but anyway—*[Laughter]*

Mr. Imbert: So you do not want to compromise the covert operations?

Hon. Griffith: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: All right, okay, okay. Could you then explain—because I had a related question on this—why are you focusing on the purchase of vehicles, which carries with it a maintenance responsibility, as opposed to rental of vehicles?

Hon. Griffith: Well, most of the vehicles—*[Interruption]* yes, that is the standard approach in the public service, and with the maintenance of all of these vehicles, they are sent to Toyota, Massy and Lifestyle, and then there would be some that would go to—with the Omega, VMCOTT, because through the—there were some vehicles such as the Omega vehicles that were purchased, so VMCOTT would deal with the maintenance of those vehicles.

Mr. Imbert: No, but you are not answering my question. Have you done a cost benefit analysis and efficiency audit to determine whether it would be more

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efficient and more beneficial in terms of cost to rent or lease vehicles on a long-term basis, other than having to have this huge infrastructure and bureaucracy to maintain all these vehicles?

Hon. Griffith: No, no, no, we have not done that.

Mr. Imbert: Do you intend to do that?

Hon. Griffith: No.

Dr. Rowley: Will you consider to do that?

Hon. Griffith: Well, what I would do again, liaising with the Commissioner of Police, this is an ongoing basis for us to improve the police service, and if at any time we can see something that can improve it, I would liaise with the Commissioner of Police to look into it.

Mr. Imbert: Rather than buying a vehicle and then sending it by Toyota for Toyota to fix, why do you not just lease it from Toyota or Mazda as the case may be? *[Interruption]* Mr. Chairman, I am being disturbed by non-security personnel. So I would really—since you are saying this—you met it so, this is the practice in the public service, you should really bring in an expert, because look at the money you are spending \$75 million on maintenance, \$50 million on acquisition of vehicles, that is \$125 million. You really should consider bringing in an expert to advise you on whether you should go into long-term leases with maintenance included, or whether you should continue this practice of purchase and maintenance.

Hon. Griffith: Yes, we would consider that.

Mr. Chairman: Let us go again.

Hon. Griffith: Yes, Chairman.

Mr. Jeffrey: Mr. Chairman, I have a number of questions.

Mr. Chairman: I hope you are not repeating.

Mr. Jeffrey: No, no, no, I am not repeating at all. Rent and Lease of Office or Office Accommodation and Storage, in 2013, \$30 million; 2014, \$36 million; 2015, \$40 million. I will like to find out, Mr. Chairman, the total number of buildings under a lease arrangement, and the total cost? And also the total number of buildings under rental arrangement and total cost? I would also like to find out as well, in terms of the congested La Brea Police Station—

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Mr. Chairman: Yeah, we can all hear you.

Mr. Jeffrey:—is that building—

Mr. Chairman: We can all hear you. [*Laughter*] No, you do not have to shout. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Jeffrey: I am not shouting.

Mr. Chairman: Well, I mean, I thought so. [*Crosstalk*] Okay, go on.

Mr. Jeffrey: In terms of the La Brea Police Station, because this is La Brea Police Station, is that building under lease arrangement or rental? And if so, what is the cost, the annual cost? That is the first question.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, can you respond?

Hon. Griffith: Mr. Chairman, I think that question was already asked. We are going to provide that information. However, with the La Brea Police Station, that is a UDeCOTT project; that is a new building.

Mr. Jeffrey: No, no, no, no, where the—right now, where the La Brea Police officers are stationed, that building there.

Hon. Griffith: Oh, oh.

Mr. Chairman: All right, Minister, then you will provide that in writing? What is your next question, hon. Member?

Mr. Jeffrey: The second question has to do with—

Hon. Griffith: It is a Government building, by the way. It is a Government building, where the police are stationed now; the old one?

Mr. Jeffrey: The old police station, that is where Republic Bank—

Hon. Griffith: Yes, where the bank was. It is a rental, sorry, Mr. Chairman. It is a rental, that one there.

Mr. Jeffrey: And if so, what is the rental cost?

Hon. Griffith: Okay, I will get that for you. I will provide it for you.

Mr. Chairman: What is the next question?

Mr. Jeffrey: 21, Repairs and Maintenance - Buildings. I will like to know how many buildings are under this Repair and Maintenance Programme, because that is a huge figure of 16 x 20 x 25.

Hon. Griffith: It is 102.

Mr. Jeffrey: 102?

Hon. Griffith: Yes, plus there will be eight new buildings that will be coming on board shortly.

Mr. Chairman: Next question.

Mr. Jeffrey: No, no, Mr. Chairman. Coming back to that same La Brea Police Station where the officers “an dem” now occupy, that building is in a state of disrepair. Who maintains—who is seeing about the maintenance of that building?

Hon. Griffith: That is why it is they have, we have the new building, Mr. Chairman, and they are moving into that new station shortly.

Mr. Chairman: You have an old building and a new is there, and they are moving in shortly.

Mr. Jeffrey: I am asking this question against the backdrop that even though you have a new building that they are going to occupy shortly, all right, to have those officers occupy the premises that they have right now, in that condition, it worries me.

Mr. Chairman: All right, what is the next question?

Hon. Griffith: Chairman, I think they could wait a week. Within a week or so they will be moving.

Mr. Chairman: Member for La Brea, next question. Are you through?

Mr. Jeffrey: No, that is it.

Mr. Chairman: The Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, could I just get an assurance that all the questions I asked—

Miss Hospedales: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Based on—

Mr. Chairman: Yes, yes, we will ensure that.

Hon. Griffith: You have my assurance.

Miss Hospedales:—Sub-Item 13, page 330, Maintenance of Vehicles and Repair. I am just asking whether or not this particular allocation of \$75 million,

which is a \$10 million increase from last year, will be utilized to repair the vehicles or all the police vehicles that are at the St. James Barracks that are in dire need of being repaired.

Hon. Griffith: Well, within the last two years, Mr. Chairman, we acquired 550 new vehicles, but what is the question that—the St. James—

Miss Hospedales: There are a lot of vehicles at the St. James Barracks that are in dire need of being repaired, those vehicles are basically packed up at one side of the compound.

Hon. Griffith: Yes, there is a Board of Survey, some will be disposed and some to be repaired, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Rowley: Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, I would like to go to Item 23, Fees.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, I think that was raised already.

Dr. Rowley: While I was out of the room?

Mr. Imbert: Yes, I raised that.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, somebody raised that, the Member for Diego Martin North/East, and they promised to provide a breakdown.

Mr. Imbert: They did not promise, they alleged that they will.

Mr. Chairman: I do not know if you want to ask this—

Dr. Rowley: Okay, since I was not there, my apologies, but was it legal fees?

Hon. Member: No.

Dr. Rowley: Other fees? Other fees?

Hon. Griffith: Licences, the Internet and—

Dr. Rowley: Other fees? Okay, but—

Hon. Griffith: Software.

Dr. Rowley: No problem.

Mr. Chairman: We will now proceed to Sub-Item 03, Minor Equipment Purchases. Before we move on—

Dr. Rowley: Just one before I move on to that, and I would like to move on to that one too. But I just want to ask the Minister, what is it under Hosting of

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Conferences, Seminars and Other Functions, what is it that we are going to be doing for \$9 million in 2015, having spent \$10 million in 2014 on that? What is that?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister?

Hon. Griffith: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Rowley: Pretty generous there. We would have spent \$10 million in 2014, and we are budgeting \$9 million in 2015 for conferences and seminars.

Hon. Griffith: Right, yes. We do have the breakdown for that, Mr. Chairman, so I could have that provided for you.

Dr. Rowley: Thank you. I would move on then, Mr. Chairman, on to Minor Equipment.

Mr. Chairman: Right, so we go to Minor Equipment, Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment; Item 147, Trinidad, Police Service (Tobago), Item 02. I recognise the hon. Member for Diego Martin West.

Dr. Rowley: No, no, not Tobago. I was going to advance past Tobago to 03. We have 03.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, we are at 03.

Dr. Rowley: So it is Trinidad.

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, you could deal with Tobago too.

Dr. Rowley: So 03, 001, and I am here dealing with 01 and 04, Vehicles and Other Minor Equipment. Mr. Chairman, over and above the other expenses for vehicles that are found elsewhere in their arrangements, what exactly are these vehicles covered under minor equipment here for \$42 million in 2015? And what did we buy for \$20 million in 2014, because we have some other provisions here for vehicles. So could we get a clarification there, please? While I am at it then, we have other minor equipment for another \$65 million. So could we get some clarification there just to tell us what exactly we are buying there?

I crave your indulgence, Mr. Chairman, to mention under 99, Employee Assistance Programme, was that raised in my absence?

Mr. Chairman: No.

Dr. Rowley: Could you answer that question, Mr. Chairman? I am asking why is the allocation so low for the employee assistance programme? One expects

that the police service is one area in the public service where employees, because of the nature of their duty, would require significant intervention under employee assistance programmes. Why then is the allocation so low and constantly low, from \$137,000 to \$500,000? Should that not be a more substantial allocation to treat with known problems?

Mr. Chairman: That is under Goods and Services. We are going to accommodate the hon. Leader, and we will come back.

Hon. Griffith: Yes, Mr. Chairman, okay. There is internal EAP, so they deal with most of those other issues. So because of the—

Dr. Rowley: And they are not budgeted for?

Hon. Griffith: Well, no, that will be part under salaries.

Dr. Rowley: So what is this then?

Hon. Griffith: Well, this will be external.

Dr. Rowley: This is to hire external support?

Hon. Griffith: Yes. Even if somebody—

Dr. Rowley: So this does not represent the total amount of effort?

Hon. Griffith: No it is an internal. Just now, let me—pertaining to the 2014, 101 vehicles were purchased and that is the cost of the bulk of the \$20 million. In 2015, the anticipation would be—it is anticipated for 226 vehicles and that will be vehicles being replaced through the—because of the Board of Survey at a cost of \$42 million, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: All right, we go to Sub-Head 03.

Miss Cox: Mr. Chair, my hand is up.

Mr. Chairman: No, no, I am saying we are back to Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment and Purchases. I recognize—

6.35 p.m.

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, you asked about 04.

Dr. Rowley: And he answered both, I thought.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, so we will now go to the Member for Laventille East/Morvant.

Dr. Rowley: You answered vehicles, but you did not tell me about the other minor equipment, the \$65 million, what is that for?

Hon. Griffith: Yes, that is the firearms, ammunition, bulletproof vests. If you want, I can get the breakdown for you.

Dr. Rowley: No, no, no. I do not think so.

Mr. Chairman: No, no, no; we do not want that.

Could we go to the Member for Laventille East/Morvant? *[Interruption]* Your name is here. You are coming up. You cannot jump the queue. You were a teacher. *[Laughter]*

Miss Cox: I just would like to know—“he talkin with yuh, man”—*[Interruption]*—are you all listening to me now?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, continue.

Miss Cox: I just would like to know what is being put in place to ensure—because the expenditure is really a lot, \$22 million here, 01—what is being put in place to ensure proper use and maintenance of the vehicles. Concerning the GPS, how many vehicles are outfitted with the GPS system?

Hon. Griffith: It is four.

Miss Cox: Also, I would like to know about the procurement process concerning the vehicles. Who are the suppliers and are these vehicles customized police vehicles?

Hon. Griffith: All the new vehicles have GPS on them, the total being 970.

Miss Cox: All the new vehicles?

Hon. Griffith: Yes, over the last three years.

Miss Cox: Are allowances being made for the older ones?

Hon. Griffith: Yes, and it is continuing. We are covering all.

Miss Cox: Procurement process, who are the suppliers?

Hon. Griffith: Central Tenders Board.

Mr. Chairman: Central Tenders Board. We recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Miss Cox: Hold on. They did not answer all.

Mr. Chairman: Which one again you want?

Miss Cox: What is being put in place to ensure proper maintenance and is it up to date, please? Because we are still seeing police vehicles in places that they should not be seen. What is being put in place?

Hon. Griffith: Chairman, I just want to clarify: the maintenance of the vehicles, where they are being maintained or—

Dr. Rowley: Track them with the GPS.

Hon. Griffith:—to be tracked.

Dr. Rowley: So that they are where they are supposed to be and not elsewhere.

Hon. Griffith: Well, no, they are being monitored at the police headquarters, their Command Centre, and they can be monitored through the National Operations Centre.

Miss Cox: What accounting procedure is in place concerning drivers of the vehicles, the police officers themselves, to make sure that they take care of the vehicles?

Hon. Griffith: You mean preventative maintenance. There is a preventative maintenance scheme similar to what you have with your private vehicle where, over a specific period or miles, the vehicles will then go into either Toyota, LifeStar, Neal & Massy or VMCOTT.

Mr. Chairman: Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Imbert: A few years ago, there was a move by the police service and the national security to have customized police vehicles, purpose-designed police vehicles. However, I have observed that the vehicles that were purchased in 2014—and I assume from what you are saying, the vehicles that will be purchased in 2015—are all standard typical sedans, pick-ups, SUVs. Has a decision been taken by the Ministry of National Security and/or the police service not to bother with acquisition of specialized vehicles and you are now buying ordinary, run-of-the-mill sedans, SUVs and pick-ups?

Hon. Griffith: There is no decision to have the custom-built vehicles, in the short term. It will continue the process—

Mr. Imbert: You are buying what is available on the market in terms of sedans, SUVs, pick-ups, et cetera. In that context, therefore, since I know what the

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reason was that the ordinary vehicles do not last—they do not stand up to the rigours of police work and so on—what is the average lifespan of one of these vehicles?

Hon. Griffith: Mr. Chairman, because of the preventative maintenance now and the system that is being used to ensure that over a specific period or miles the vehicles go in for maintenance, I think—what is the attrition rate now? All the vehicles are roadworthy at this time.

Mr. Imbert: You are not answering my question. Do the vehicles last for one year, two years, four years, five years? What is the lifespan?

Hon. Griffith: Three years.

Mr. Imbert: Three years so you change out a vehicle after three years? That is what is happening?

Hon. Griffith: Sorry, my apologies. It would be more like six years. Because of how it is being run now with the preventative maintenance, we are looking at six years.

Mr. Imbert: You are keeping a police vehicle for six years, then changing it because you are doing better maintenance. That is what you are saying. That is what you are telling me? Are you saying that you are now keeping police vehicles for six years because you have improved the maintenance of police vehicles?

Hon. Griffith: They are all staying on the road; they are roadworthy.

Mr. Chairman: All right.

Mr. Imbert: Wait, wait, wait, wait. No, no, no, no.

Mr. Chairman: Go ahead, hon. Member.

Mr. Imbert: I do not want to know whom you are buying firearms and bulletproof vests and all these sort of things from, but could you give us some kind of global breakdown?

Hon. Griffith: Of?

Mr. Imbert: Well, you have \$65 million here. Is it all for firearms, or—?

[*Minister confers with advisor*] You will come back to us on that or you have the information?

Hon. Griffith: We have it.

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Mr. Chairman: Just the numbers, you know, like what proportion goes for that.

Mr. Imbert: So much more firearms; so much for bulletproof vests.

Mr. Chairman: And the last one. After you is the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West.

Mr. Imbert: I am really concerned about the procurement procedures for firearms. Is that a national security thing?

Hon. Griffith: What? The breakdown?

Mr. Imbert: When you give me the breakdown—I am concerned about the procurement procedures for firearms. How do you go about doing this?

Hon. Griffith: Forty-one million dollars—just over \$41 million for firearms.

Mr. Imbert: Okay, so say \$40 million for firearms.

Hon. Griffith: Twelve million dollars for rifles.

Mr. Imbert: How do you decide what type of firearm to buy, whom you buy it from?

Hon. Griffith: Well, the type of weapons to buy will be based on the threat assessment and based on the needs of the specific agencies in the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. So the IATF may have something totally different from undercover officers or to officers who will be on patrol.

Mr. Imbert: But we do not make guns in Trinidad—at least not as far as I know. So you import them from somewhere. How do you decide whether you are bringing guns from Israel, United States or from the Czech Republic, which is a big manufacturer? How do you go about doing this? Is there a science to all of this?

Hon. Griffith: There are different types of weapons, Mr. Chairman. Let us say with the sidearms, there will be an assessment that will be made because there will be different things you need to look at—the maintenance, the wear and tear of the weapon, the range of fire.

Mr. Imbert: Let me tell you what I am driving at. I assume you have to change out firearms as well. You keep a car for five/six years and then you change it. I assume you keep firearms for a certain period and then you have to change them out; otherwise you would not keep buying guns all the time. Have you ever done any sort of value for money audit? Have you looked at this?

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Because this is a huge expenditure item. It is \$40 million a year. That is the question I am asking.

Hon. Griffith: The plan is to standardize, at least with the firearms, to have one set of the pistols across the board.

Mr. Imbert: Based on advice?

Hon. Griffith: Based on assessment, consultation. You want to try to acquire to ensure the procurement process—

Mr. Imbert: You are spending \$40 million a year acquiring firearms, such a large sum of money. I assume next year you may spend another \$30 million/\$40 million.

Hon. Griffith: Not every year we are going at this \$40 million because we are changing to one specific firearm.

Mr. Imbert: I am just wondering how you go about doing this. I am not asking you National Security—

Hon. Griffith: I understand, yeah.

Mr. Imbert: Do you have a policy?

Hon. Griffith: Yes, we do.

Mr. Imbert: All right. Okay. I will talk to you off record.

Mr. Chairman: Can I recognize the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West?

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Thank you, Chair. I want to ask a question about the EAP.

Mr. Chairman: Just press your—right. Good.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: How many employees, on an average, you would say, utilize the external EAP service annually?

Hon. Griffith: The external?

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Yes, the external. You say you have an internal service and an external service. How many employees you will say?

Hon. Griffith: The social workers, they will have a record with that, Mr. Chairman, so I can have that provided for you.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: I would just like to ask: when did the service actually commence? Was it in 2013?

Hon. Griffith: The external?

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Yes. And who is the provider?

Hon. Griffith: It is ongoing.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: And who is the provider of this service?

Mr. Chairman: When was it started and who is the provider? Could you provide that in writing?

Hon. Griffith: I will have it provided for you, Mr. Chairman.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: And last thing: has there been an increase in usage recently to warrant the increase in expenditure, small as it is? Have more officers been using the external service recently?

Hon. Griffith: Chairman, the answer is yes, but remember we also have an increase in the strength of the police service. So with the increase in the strength of the police service, there would be a need for more persons to use the external EAP.

Mr. Chairman: Final question, Member for Laventille West and we go on to Current Transfers and Subsidies after.

Mr. Hypolite: Thank you, Chair. I am looking at 04, Other Minor Equipment. Can the Minister indicate whether or not this figure includes the purchase of body cameras, radar guns and the bulletproof vests?

Miss Mc Donald: And the body bag?

Hon. Griffith: That is ODPM.

Mr. Hypolite: If so, who are the suppliers specifically towards the body cameras and the cost of those? And with respect to the bulletproof vests, are those vests presently in use?

Mr. Chairman: The Minister of National Security.

Hon. Griffith: This is bulletproof vest.

Mr. Chairman: Vests, cameras—

Hon. Griffith: This would not include the body cameras. It will not include the body cameras.

Mr. Chairman: What about the vests?

Hon. Griffith: Yes.

Mr. Hypolite: The bulletproof vests from China and India.

Mr. Chairman: Yes. He said yes. Yes. I recognize the Member for Diego Martin Central and that is the last one before we go to the next item.

Dr. Browne: More than a year ago, your Government made an announcement of a bicycle squad, bicycled officers. Some have been seen on the roads. I do not know if it will be found under Vehicles or Equipment. But I am asking, at this point—I see your officers are smiling—how many bicycles have been purchased by the police service? Who is the supplier? Are any further to be purchased in 2015 or has this idea perished? And I would like an idea of the deployment by division of these bicycles.

Mr. Chairman: What about the bicycles? Are they on stream?

Hon. Griffith: Mr. Chairman, the bicycle patrol is only in Tobago and not purchased by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. They were donated by National Gas Company.

Mr. Chairman: All right, so we are going on to, Sub 04, Current Transfer and Subsidies: Item 001, Regional Bodies; Item 004, International Bodies; Item 005, Non-Profit Institutions. I recognize the Member for Laventille West.

Mr. Hypolite: Police Youth Clubs, can the Minister indicate how many police youth clubs there are presently?

Hon. Griffith: Ninety-one.

Mr. Chairman: There are 91. Member for Laventille East/Morvant.

Miss Cox: Mr. Chairman, Police Youth Clubs and also Non-Profit Institutions: concerning Police Youth Clubs, my concern is: has any evaluation been done of these Police Youth Clubs? I know they have been in existence for a while, but is there any evaluation process? Have they been meeting their objective?

Hon. Griffith: The Citizens Security Programme, they actually did an assessment with the youth clubs. There were recommendations made to improve the youth clubs. You want a report on it?

Miss Cox: Yes, I would like it.

Hon. Griffith: It is not a confidential document.

Miss Cox: There is some information that I have concerning the youth clubs. I just want to know if you all are doing an evaluation to see if they are meeting the objective.

Concerning non-profit institutions, I just would like to get a list of these institutions. I see here that there is an allocation for \$5 million. What are these institutions?

Mr. Griffith: The youth clubs.

Mr. Chairman: That is the total, you know.

Miss Cox: Oh, this is just the total—the same youth clubs; only the youth clubs? No other organization? Okay, thanks.

6.50 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Port of Spain South.

Miss Mc Donald: I have a complaint—now that we are on the Police Youth Club—on the one that is operating at the George Street Soup Centre. Yes. I would have to talk to the Minister and the Commissioner of Police.

Mr. Chairman: Behind the Chair.

Miss Mc Donald: Behind the Chair, it is serious.

Mr. Chairman: No problem. Let us go to Item 007, Households. We are going to Item 009, Other Transfers.

Dr. Rowley: No, no, Mr. Chairman, I was on households.

Mr. Chairman: Oh you are on household, right.

Dr. Rowley: 007, 01, Ex Gratia Awards. The first question is, what exactly is that? Who gets it and under what circumstances? What explains the significant increase in the allocation where in 2013 we used up \$2 million for that; the following year 2014, we budgeted \$8 million and, apparently, we spent \$4 million of that \$8 million, and now we are budgeting \$14 million in 2015, could we get an explanation for those movements, please?

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister.

Hon. Griffith: Yes, Mr. Chairman. This has to do with persons who were killed or injured in the line of duty and compensation is given to the family.

Dr. Rowley: From \$2 million to \$14 million? Half the police service dead!
[Laughter]

Hon. Griffith: No, well it depends on what it is you are giving them. Remember there was this decision that was made for \$1 million to be given out to the spouse of persons who were killed in the line of duty.

Dr. Rowley: So the \$14 million anticipates that?

Hon. Griffith: We are anticipating that all the money will come back to us and it will not be spent.

Dr. Rowley: In 2014, before this \$1 million thing kicked in, it appears here that you have budgeted—well not appears, you had budgeted \$8 million for that issue. It turns out, under revised estimates 2014, we only spent \$4 million. That is what the number says here. Right? So we had over-budgeted by 100 per cent. Now, we are budgeting \$14 million for what we had actually spent \$4 million on, and you are saying this is in anticipation of the new arrangements.

Hon. Griffith: Well, Mr. Chairman, it is good we have the budget. What we do not want to do is to not have it budgeted and then we have a situation where the spouse now, we are scrambling looking for something. It is hoped that this would not be spent in any way at all.

Dr. Rowley: I just want to understand what is the justification for what you asked for.

Hon. Griffith: Again, because of the \$1 million, we just want to make sure that it is there, so if at any time it is required, hopefully not, there would not be any concern for us to try to find funds. If we put \$2 million and three persons are killed in the line of duty.

Mr. Chairman: I think your point is taken. Minister, I think you have explained yourself. Let us go to Item 009, Other Transfers. Then we go to Sub-Head 09, Development Programme; Item 004, Social Infrastructure. Member for Diego Martin North/East and hon. Member for Laventille East/Morvant.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, I notice there is an Item here 001—002 sorry, Purchase of Vehicles and Equipment for the Police Service. This is on page 164. Could you please explain why you have the purchase of vehicles in two different locations? You have purchase of vehicles under Goods and Services in recurrent expenditure and you have purchase of vehicles in your IDF, and when you are explaining that to me, I heard a comment from the Commissioner of Police saying that the Central Tenders Board was the one who was acquiring these vehicles for you. I am shocked to hear that. I thought we had given the police some autonomy. We really need to look into that. But is it that the procurement procedures under the IDF are different to the procurement procedures for vehicles under Goods and Services? And, could you also explain what refurbishment of Riverside Plaza means. Is it that the police have taken over that building or part of it?

Could you tell me what is the procurement procedure for purchase of furniture and furnishings, that is 003, Riverside Plaza is 029. Is it that the police have to go through the CTB for all non—I do not know what word to use—non secret, non-military hardware? Is it that everything else you have to go through the Central Tenders Board? Are you humbug with that? Could you explain all of this to me, please?

Hon. Griffith: The first thing, the vehicles, one has to do with the expansion of the number of vehicles and the other has to do with the replacement of the vehicles—the recurrent, dealing with the replacement.

Mr. Imbert: I understand that, but I heard a comment from the Commissioner saying the Central Tenders Board procured these vehicles. Is that true?

Hon. Griffith: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: Is that for both replacement and new vehicles?

Hon. Griffith: Yes, that is right.

Mr. Imbert: Does the CTB also procure furniture for the police service?

Hon. Griffith: No, no, Chairman.

Mr. Imbert: Could you then explain how come you are stock with the CTB for the acquisition of vehicles, but you have flexibility with respect to the acquisition of furniture?

Hon. Griffith: It has to do with the authorization the Commissioner of Police will have at the time.

Mr. Imbert: From who?

Hon. Griffith: Well, the \$1 million—remember the Commissioner of Police, with this, he has his budget allocation. Anything more than \$1 million, it then has to go to the Central Tenders Board. So when you have to purchase 40 vehicles.

Mr. Imbert: I understand.

Mr. Chairman: Could I now go to the Member for Laventille East/Morvant.

Mr. Imbert: I empathize with the police service.

Miss Cox: I go back to Riverside Plaza. This is a new project. What is the plan for Riverside Plaza? I see \$10 million allocated.

Mr. Chairman: Riverside Plaza, what is the plan?

Hon. Griffith: That was initially to house several units of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service: the Anti-Corruption Investigation Bureau, the Financial Investigation Bureau, the Homicide Bureau of Investigation; Finance Branch and several different units in the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

Miss Cox: But then I see you said Homicide Prevention Unit too?

Hon. Griffith: Yes.

Miss Cox: Well, then there is a separate allocation here for the Homicide Prevention Unit.

Mr. Chairman: Which sub-item?

Miss Cox: Sub-Item 18?

Mr. Chairman: 18?

Hon. Griffith: Remember there are several different arms in that location for that bureau.

Miss Cox: Well, I am seeing Homicide Prevention Unit, and then you are saying that part of Riverside Plaza is the Homicide Prevention Unit, so are you saying there are different branches?

Hon. Griffith: Yes, there are different regions. So that is for that region.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, I did not get an answer. Have the police taken over the whole of Riverside Plaza? Is the Ministry of Labour—*[Interruption]*

Hon. Griffith: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: So only police inside Riverside Plaza.

Hon. Griffith: Yes, that is right.

Mr. Chairman: All right. We go to the Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Miss Hospedales: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I looked under all of the sub-items here specifically for two things: one the expansion of the Arouca Police Station. Could the Minister indicate exactly when that will be done? Two, the refurbishment of the SRP headquarters in Arouca. I am not sure—the Minister had the fortunate pleasure or displeasure to visit that facility. It is in a dilapidated condition and it is in dire need of refurbishment.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister and then the Member for Port of Spain South.

Hon. Griffith: Yes, Mr. Chairman, that is accurate. I looked at the conditions there for the SRPs. It is not anything even remotely close to being acceptable. I have spoken to the Commissioner of Police and we are trying to find somewhere to accommodate them.

Pertaining to the Arouca Police Station: do you want me to get the date? There is another question you asked.

Mr. Chairman: Member for Port of Spain South.

Miss Mc Donald: Yes, like my colleague from Arouca/Maloney I, too, am looking at the various organizations here, but I am not seeing the police post on Duncan Street, because there need to be an upgrade there. You were there when it was opened last year, Minister, and the public or the constituents there were assured that a community facility would have been placed there. Not one computer; absolutely nothing for the neighbourhood was placed there! It is just a police post, always closed up and does not even respond to the constituents in the area.

But, more so, the Prime Minister had promised that that would be a community facility at the time; a homework centre. That was the thing. We have actually seen the space for the community centre—sorry homework centre on the ground floor of that building; absolutely nothing has happened. So I expected to see some form of allocation here for the upgrading of the police post on Duncan Street.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister.

Hon. Griffith: Yes, Mr. Chairman, there are some computers that are being provided. I would liaise with the Commissioner of Police to see how fast we can—*[Interruption]*

Miss Mc Donald: Who is using them, the police? Not the community.

Hon. Griffith: They would be provided.

Miss Mc Donald: Were?

Hon. Griffith: Would.

Mr. Chairman: Would be provided.

Dr. Browne: Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, I recognize the Member for Diego Martin Central and then we are going on.

Dr. Browne: 013, Refurbishment of Police Commissioner's Residence.

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Dr. Browne: I see \$1 million was expended in 2014 and \$2 million is requested in 2015 for the refurbishment of the Commissioner's residence. When will this project come to an end? What is the overall estimated cost of this refurbishment? Is this residence owned by the State or a leased property?

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister.

Hon. Griffith: Because of the historical nature, Mr. Chairman, the \$1 million, that was not expended.

Mr. Chairman: So it was not expended last year?

Hon. Griffith: The request to refurbish it is \$7 million. We cannot just spend and just reach—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Browne: Hold on.

Mr. Chairman: He just want to know the time frame.

Dr. Browne: The refurbishment estimate is \$7 million?

Hon. Griffith: Yes.

Dr. Browne: When will that project come to an end?

Hon. Griffith: We have not started.

Dr. Browne: I am asking, when will it come to an end? The completion date.

Mr. Chairman: What is the duration of the project?

Hon. Griffith: Well, when we get the allocation then they will be able to comment and then I will be able to give you a timeline.

Dr. Browne: So, \$2 million is allocated for this fiscal year, and you are suggesting that \$5 million more will be requested. Does the State own this building or is it a leased building?

Hon. Griffith: It is owned. It is a historical site.

Mr. Chairman: Let us move on. Item 005, Multi-sectorial and Other Services, Infrastructure Development Fund. The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, under 001, we had provision \$3.6 million in 2013.

Mr. Chairman: Just advise us what page you are on again?

Dr. Rowley: I am on page 166, Development Programme. I am saying in 2013, we had provision \$3.6 million and I presume it was spent, because it is recorded as actual and then, subsequently, we provision \$10 million and I see the revised estimates point to \$10 million being spent. I see also another \$10 million set aside for the same thing in 2015. So what I would like to ask the Minister—this was to develop a computer system for the police service, what exactly is this paying for? Do we have a computer system in the police service? Are we building one? Are we buying one? Why is this regular serious allocation for the last three or four years?

Hon. Griffith: Mr. Chairman, what we are trying to do is to upgrade all the different police stations. We are talking about 77 police stations, so it is an ongoing project to upgrade the police stations with IT.

Dr. Rowley: I have been into a few police stations and I cannot recall getting the feeling that I am in an IT environment. But if we are spending this kind of money, how is it changing the average police station?

Hon. Griffith: The allocation required, they did not receive it.

Dr. Rowley: But they received fourteen and a half million in the last year and a half, and we are now putting down another \$10 million.

Hon. Griffith: So you would like to find out what—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Rowley: What have we done with the \$14 million? You see, Minister, \$64 billion is a lot of money and these figures like \$10 million, \$15 million and \$20 million are beginning to sound in this country like chick feed. There are some territories in the Caribbean for which \$20 million is their national budget. So I am trying to get our finger here on the pulse that these are not minor expenditures.

7.05 p.m.

Hon. Griffith: What I can do, Mr. Chairman, is give a breakdown of everything that was utilized and where it is located at this time.

Dr. Rowley: What has happened with the computer system that we have set out to establish in the police service for which we already spent \$13 million, and we are down to spend another \$10 million in the next 12 months? I would like to know what we have spent it on and where we are in that programme.

Hon. Griffith: Sure.

Mr. Chairman: You could provide that for the—

Hon. Griffith: Yes, we have it here—

Dr. Rowley: I will move on from there, Mr. Chairman, on to 003, something called Transformation of the Police Service, for which we have spent \$3,573,374, a very precise number in 2013, and then we provisioned \$11 million in 2014, and we are now asking for another \$10 million. While we accept that we are on a mission to transform the police service, I would like to ask the Minister, what did we do with the \$14 million that was spent in the last 24 months and what are we going to be doing with the \$10 million that we are asking for, specific to an assignment to transform the police service?

Hon. Griffith: Yes, Mr. Chairman, and that goes into all the breakdown for the introduction of the body cameras, national survey to deal with the anatomy of the fear of crime, community relations involving facilities, minor equipment, community caravans, the K-9 Unit, the Police Band and training, which is an integral plan to the transformation of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. I do have the breakdown I could give to you and you could take a look at.

Dr. Rowley: Minister, some of those Sub-Heads you called there are old police Sub-Heads you know. Ever since I know the police they have a band, so how is the Police Band being budgeted as transformation of the police service? I was expecting to hear something exciting and something new, like you go into something new, not the Police Band and the K-9 Unit. Because I saw somewhere else in these documents a K-9 Unit in Chaguaramas for a few millions. So something is not right here.

Hon. Griffith: Well it is expansion. The K-9 Unit, to acquire 30 dogs will cost \$3.5 million. For the Police Band with new equipment, that alone would be over \$4 million—

Dr. Rowley: But why does budgeting for the K-9 Unit have anything to do with transformation? That is maintenance. We have always had a K-Unit. I mean, I love it. I mean, I look forward to seeing the dogs out there and being put to work, so do not tell us that under Transformation of the Police Service is the K-9 Unit. It cannot be that. So it must be something else.

Hon. Griffith: But with the K-9 Unit though, Mr. Chairman, there is going to be a total change in the approach. They have the passive, the tactical dogs, cadaver dogs, explosives, dogs that would be at the airports, dogs that would be on road blocks, so there is going to be a whole revamp of the K-9 Unit.

Dr. Rowley: A sort of expansion of the K-9 Unit?

Hon. Griffith: Yes.

Dr. Rowley: Okay. That is what I am saying, I want to hear new things. You will have tracker dogs, you will have dogs that smell—

Hon. Griffith: In the airport and roadblocks—

Dr. Rowley: Yeah. Good dogs. Yeah. Well, okay, fine.

Miss Cox: Infrastructure Development Fund.

Mr. Imbert: Chair, this is an important matter. There is an item that—just one—

Mr. Chairman: And then after the Member for Laventille East/Morvant and then we close off. The hon. Members for Diego Martin North/East and Laventille East/Morvant, and then we close off.

Mr. Imbert: There is an item that I omitted to speak about in the Development Programme, page 164, 001, Improvement Works to Police Stations. Unless my eyes are tricking me, the allocation has been cut from \$29 million to \$5 million; \$29 million in 2014 to \$5 million in 2015—I cannot ask the Commissioner this, I have to ask the Minister—are our police stations in such good shape that you no longer need to improve them? Why would anybody cut the allocation for improvement work to police stations from \$29 million to \$5 million in a \$64 billion budget? Could you explain that to me, and it is not anywhere else before you tell me that. I looked all about, it is nowhere else. Explain that to me, please.

Hon. Griffith: It was based on the budget allocation.

Mr. Imbert: So you are telling me the Minister of Finance and the Economy decided this was low priority? Improvement Works to Police Stations is low priority.

Hon. Griffith: No. If there is a need for it to increase—

Mr. Imbert: They put \$17 million for food, \$40 million for car and \$5 million for Improvement Works for Police Stations? What is going on? Why are you treating the police service like this?

Mr. Chairman: All right, your point is taken, we go to the Member for Laventille East/Morvant and then the Member for Laventille West.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, just give me half of your time, and I will make it up, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Okay.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, I crave your indulgence outside of a line Item, since I have the Minister and the Commissioner here, just to ask—

Mr. Chairman: Could we have one meeting, please.

Dr. Rowley:—a question on the Development Programme, and maybe the Commissioner might be able to assist the Minister. What is the story with respect to the Carenage Police Station? What is on the cards for the Carenage Police Station under the Development Programme?

Hon. Griffith: Those are one of the—I actually met with UDeCOTT dealing with that same matter and I am aware of the concern on where the police station is at present, and we have had meetings with UDeCOTT to deal with this matter to see how fast we can move forward with it. I am aware of the situation.

Dr. Rowley: Well, is it on the front burner? Is that what you are telling me?

Hon. Griffith: It is definitely. There is a draft. We are actually doing a draft Note on it, yes.

Dr. Rowley: That is not just a Carenage Police Station, it is the western peninsula, which does not really have a proper police presence.

Hon. Griffith: And where it is at present is not really the ideal place. I am aware.

Dr. Rowley: So could we give it some priority.

Hon. Griffith: Definitely. It is, yes.

Dr. Rowley: Okay, thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Member for Laventille East/Morvant.

Miss Cox: I just want to ask about the Besson Street Police Station; what is the status of the Besson Street Police Station?

Mr. Chairman: It is under the IDF, you know.

Miss Cox: Well, we move before you close off.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, yeah. [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Griffith: The tender is being evaluated at this time by UDeCOTT.

Miss Cox: What did you say?

Hon. Griffith: It is being evaluated by UDeCOTT, the tender.

Miss Cox: All right. So how soon do you think this—I mean, given the area the police station is, I think—

Hon. Griffith: By the first quarter of the year.

Miss Cox:—it is an urgent station.

Hon. Griffith: The first quarter, yes.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 64 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister of National Security, thank you very much; Commissioner of Police, thank you very much; and the team, thank you very much. We now invite the Judiciary.

Hon. Members, Head 03, the Judiciary, \$353,073,800. Hon. Members, this Head of Expenditure for the Judiciary is now up for your consideration. The Minister of Finance and the Economy has kindly agreed to assist the committee in its consideration of this Head, which is an independent arm of the State. I wish to emphasize that point. He will assist in obtaining clarification from the accounting officer in relation to expenditure proposed by the Judiciary, and will answer those questions that directly relate to his portfolio as the Minister of Finance and the Economy.

Head 03.

Question proposed: That Head 03 stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the sum of \$353,073,800 for Head 03, the Judiciary, is comprised of moneys proposed for expenditure under the following Sub-Heads and Items to be found from the *Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure* and the *Draft Estimates of the Development Programme*. Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure, Item 001, Judiciary Trinidad. I recognize the hon. Member for Diego Martin West.

Dr. Rowley: Recognizing, Mr. Speaker, and I want to confirm that we examine these numbers in the context that this House does not interfere in the independence of the dispensing of justice, but we do have an interest in ensuring that the Judiciary has what it requires, against the background that we do have, as a national problem, some issues at the Judiciary mentioned in great wordings by the Chief Justice in recent days.

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Mr. Chairman, if you permit me to put my question again because I am trying to find out where the reductions have come from to end up in the summary on page 11, because I have been trying to add them up and maybe I was not doing a good job, except that I am seeing in the summary under Personnel Expenditure on page 11, I just want to make sure that—I am not seeing the decreases that reflect themselves in the overall reduction in Personnel Expenditure that is showing up on page 11. So if I could be assisted in that by somebody. [*Crosstalk*] Contract employment; is that what it is? So if I may ask, Mr. Chairman, the global question of the Minister of Finance and the Economy or through the executive officer; what exactly are we reducing under Personnel Expenditure to result in a reduction of \$22 million under Head 03? Because that surprised me. I did not expect to see any reduction in the Judiciary because I thought that was one area where we would have been expending more resources.

While the Minister is thinking, I would like to ask this question, which we had not put to any other department, which I would now put to this department; what exactly did the Judiciary request of the Ministry of Finance and the Economy? Because we need to know what you asked for, what you wanted, to be able to judge what the Minister of Finance and the Economy gave you as against to what you said you needed.

Hon. Howai: If I could, while Ms. Austin is looking for the figure of the request, the largest reduction would have been on—if you look at page 12 there is a \$19 million reduction in salaries, and that big reduction really reflected the back pay that we paid last year—well, this year, 2014. So you would see a figure of \$64 million here. That \$64 million includes about \$20 million of back pay, roughly, and, therefore, when that was not repeated this year it came down, so that accounted for the largest change.

Dr. Rowley: Okay. And the second question, in terms of going forward, given what has been put to the public, which requires some serious restructuring of public accounting for an independent management of the Judiciary's budget, what did the Judiciary ask for in 2015? So we can see what was asked for and what was given.

7.20 p.m.

Hon. Howai: The big difference is really in the Development Programme.

Dr. Rowley: In which case we can leave it until we come to that.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, we could leave it until we come to that.

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So we could go to Item 002, Judiciary Tobago. [*Interruption*] We are still on Judiciary, Trinidad?

Mr. Imbert: Of course. I noticed that in the allocation for Salaries and Cost of Living Allowances, you have an increase of \$3.5 million for 2015 over 2014. Does that \$3.5 million simply reflect the increase in emoluments for judges arising out of the last Salaries Review Commission Report, or does that indicate an intention to engage additional judges in 2015? It would seem to me it is not sufficient to allow the Judiciary to engage additional judges.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy, what does that \$3.5 million—

Hon. Howai: This is the increases which were approved by the SRC. These are their increments.

Mr. Imbert: So there is no anticipation that any new judges would be hired in 2015?

Hon. Howai: Except as approved by the SRC, it was just for the public officers I am told.

Mr. Imbert: Then 23 will be the judges?

Hon. Howai: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: Well okay, that \$19 million is all as you implied earlier on associated with back pay?

Hon. Howai: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: And does it mean that there are not going to be any new judges hired in 2015?

Hon. Howai: I cannot speak for the Chief Justice on that.

Mr. Imbert: I am talking about allocation. I am not talking about the policy of the Chief Justice.

Hon. Howai: I do not think that we included anything for increases. You see, what we do too, if you look in the line down below you would see where we have vacant posts at \$2 million.

Mr. Imbert: I saw that; I am coming to that.

Hon. Howai: So what we normally do is we vire from that into the other areas.

Mr. Imbert: I saw that; I am coming to that. I am just saying with respect to 23, Direct Charges, does that only cover the existing complement of justices of the High Court and the Court of Appeal?

Hon. Howai: This is what I am told, yes.

Mr. Imbert: Okay, so there is no provision other than what is in 26?

Hon. Howai: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: But that is about three judges? That is equivalent to about three judges at their present terms, probably less than—only two and a half judges. Could I find out what is the establishment in terms of High Court judges—let me see if I get the pronunciation right—*puisne* judges—and Court of Appeal judges? [*Crosstalk*] I always mispronounce the word. How many High Court judges are on the establishment? How many Court of Appeal judges are on the establishment? How many vacancies are there in each post?

Hon. Howai: We have 41 judges in the High Court, and 11 in the Court of Appeal. We have two vacancies—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman—

Mr. Chairman: Yes, could we have your complete attention.

Mr. Imbert: This is an important topic, Mr. Chairman. They do not think so, but I do.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, of course.

Hon. Howai: So we have two vacancies in the Court of Appeal.

Mr. Imbert: How many in the High Court?

Hon. Howai: Nine in the High Court; nine masters; two *puisne* judges.

Mr. Imbert: Nine masters are vacant. How many High Court judges vacant?

Hon. Howai: Two.

Mr. Imbert: Two, and two Court of Appeal judges vacant?

Hon. Howai: Yes, two Court of Appeal judges.

Mr. Imbert: So that the allocations are insufficient to fill the vacancies?

Hon. Howai: That is if they do identify all the people.

Mr. Imbert: I am just asking a question.

Hon. Howai: It takes time, and in any event you will not fill the position on the first day of the new fiscal year. It takes time. By the time you get around to doing it some months would have gone. So you make a judgment about what kind of allocation you would put in in order to ensure that you can meet the requirements.

Mr. Imbert: Minister of Finance and the Economy, could I ask you: Did the Judiciary, when they asked you for funds, indicate they intended or they were going to attempt to fill all vacant positions in 2015? That is a straight yes or no?

Hon. Howai: We need to come back to you on that.

Mr. Imbert: I mean, I would really like to know. And if so, why did you not put funds for that?

Dr. Rowley: Given what has been said by the Chief Justice, to what extent will the provision of sufficient resources from day one be a motivating and driving factor to have those positions filled as quickly as possible?—
[*Interruption*]

Mr. Chairman: Somebody's phone nearby.

Dr. Rowley:—so as to get more man-hours on the Bench? Because if the money is there, there might be an incentive to have them filled immediately. On the other hand, if the attitude is that, “We do not have the allocation we need so we cannot speed up the filling”, that in itself might be the problem.

Hon. Howai: We take the point that if perhaps one puts all of the funding in, it might help to speed up the process.

Dr. Rowley: Or most of it.

Hon. Howai: What I am being told is that there are issues apart from just the human resource too. There are issues of accommodation and other issues which need to be addressed as part of the process. Even if you do make the allocation, it does not mean necessarily that it will get done immediately, so that you can fill the posts immediately.

Dr. Rowley: In other words the vacancies are chronic?

Hon. Howai: There are some logistical issues that will need to be addressed if you are to fill the position and, therefore, it takes some time.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, once we raise that as a major factor, what we are saying is that the vacancies in the system are chronic and they will happen from

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year to year. We are talking here about breaking that cycle, given where we are at and what is being said.

Mr. Imbert: Is the Minister saying that in addition to there not being adequate funds to fill all the vacancies in the Judiciary in terms of judges, masters, you also do not have sufficient funds for judicial support officers and all the other support staff that go with a judge? Is that one of the logistical problems that you have, that in addition to not having enough money to hire all of them one time, you also do not have funds for JSOs and so on? I notice one of the technocrats is saying yes, so I hope you would say yes too.

Hon. Howai: No, no, no, do not put words in their mouths, please.

Mr. Imbert: I am talking to you, Sir.

Hon. Howai: I know, but you are suggesting that they are saying yes already.

Mr. Imbert: I am just talking to you, I am not speaking to them.

Hon. Howai: Sorry, just repeat the question?

Mr. Imbert: I am getting an impression, in your statement you just made to the Leader of the Opposition that there are logistical problems in filling the vacancies of nine masters, two High Court judges and two Court of Appeal judges, and included among these logistical problems are all the things that accompany the appointment and the functioning of a judge. I happen to know one of these things would be the provision of judicial support officers. So I am asking, in addition to the funding not being sufficient to hire everybody one time, fill all the vacancies in 2015, do you also have a shortfall in terms of the support staff that judges require in order to function effectively?

Hon. Howai: I do not think the issue is so much the support staff. As I said, I think it is more the issue of technology, accommodation, those kinds of things.

Mr. Imbert: So there are sufficient judicial support officers for all of the vacancies?

Hon. Howai: I do not think the Chief Justice would bring on persons unless he is in a position to bring the judge on.

Mr. Imbert: I am talking about allocations.

Hon. Howai: There is allocation that would allow us to support the increases that we have budgeted for in this year.

Mr. Imbert: So you have allocations for JSOs in here?

Hon. Howai: Inside of here, I think there are other areas of vacancies where we have made allowances, which would allow us to bring those.

Mr. Imbert: You think.

Hon. Howai: For example, if you look on page 13 you would see where there are vacant posts also, which also would allow us to bring some additional staff on.

Mr. Chairman: Let us go to Goods and Services, Item 001, Judiciary Trinidad; Item 002, Judiciary Tobago. We go to Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, you are going too fast; 02, Goods and Services. You are going too fast.

Mr. Chairman: Well I have to go.

Mr. Imbert: I know you have to, but you are going too fast. In terms of Office Accommodation and Storage, and Vehicles and Equipment, is this only for the public service element of the Judiciary or is this for the judges?

Hon. Howai: Yes it is for everybody; it is not just for the—

Miss Cox: Public service.

Mr. Imbert: As I see that the increase is nominal, just \$1.4 million over—because you only have a nominal increase here for office accommodation, et cetera, is this one of the logistical problems you are talking about with respect to filling the vacancies?

Hon. Howai: No, no; in terms of accommodation, this is the rent of those buildings that we already have, with the exception—I think the one increase is this one here, which is the storage space in Lot 29 in Trincity. So this increase represents that particular one.

Mr. Imbert: All I am asking is: Does each judge have an office?

Hon. Howai: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: And if you bring on the additional nine masters and four judges, 13 people, would you have 13 offices for them?

Hon. Howai: No, we do not have enough. If you were to bring additional on we would need to make some additional arrangements for accommodation.

Mr. Imbert: So you need to assist the Judiciary in the provision of this accommodation? That is what I am driving at.

Hon. Howai: Yes, I hear you.

Mr. Chairman: We go to what is called Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases; Item 001, Judiciary Trinidad; Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies; Item 002, Commonwealth Bodies; Item 009, Other Transfers. We go to the Development Programme; Sub-Head 09, Development Programme; Item 005, Multi-sectoral and Other Services; Infrastructure Development Fund.

Mr. Imbert: You are going very fast.

Miss Mc Donald: Just now, no, no, no.

Dr. Rowley: You are going very fast. By the time I turn the page with the Development Programme you were gone.

Miss Mc Donald: We are now on Development Programme.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, I take you to page 4,03, please.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, yes.

Dr. Rowley: Page 4 of the Development Programme, Head 03. Again, Mr. Chairman, I might have left the room, but I did not leave the country. I would like to ask, and the Minister of Finance and the Economy may want to whisper to his staff, because I do not want to ask the staff directly: What exactly is the Ministry of Finance and the Economy provisioning here for under 012, which is Implementation of the Administration of Justice (Indictable Proceedings) Act No. 20 of 2011.

I seem to recall that that is the omnibus legislation of the infamous section 34 which, as far as I am aware, has been repealed. If that is so, who is making a provision for \$1 million for a repealed Act, and what did we spend \$1 million on in 2014 under this Act? Maybe the Minister of Finance and the Economy could help us here, because I do not know what this is or if it is just Finance doing nominal rotational provision, because I see a number of provisions like that across the Judiciary of nominal numbers, where in this case nominal is \$1 million. In fact, why are we maintaining Head 012, if the law has been repealed?

7.35 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy.

Hon. Howai: I am advised that—there is really a provision for certain kinds of expenditures that they were anticipating might have occurred. And no such expenditure, I think very nominal expenditure, \$232,000, occurred in 2014. The

amount that was provisioned, the \$1 million estimate, just remains that way as an estimate for the time being. They have only used that \$232,000 out of it. And in doing this year's budget they had asked that the provision be maintained in the event that there were any expenses to be incurred. So this really is just a provision.

Dr. Rowley: So, could I ask a question? We have a number of laws in this country, why is this particular law being provisioned as a line item and no other? What exactly are we spending money on here? It said that you spent a million in 2014, and before that you spent \$2.8 million in 2013, what did you spend that money on?

Hon. Howai: Mr. Chairman, what it was is that there were some expenses that were expected to be incurred in terms of things like courts and so on, courtrooms and so on—

Dr. Rowley: Things like what?

Hon. Howai:—and initially—some courtrooms and so on—

Dr. Rowley: Okay.

Hon. Howai:—infrastructure works. That had started in anticipation of the law coming into effect. Subsequent to that, after 2012, well I think what happened is that we then—[*Minister confers with advisor*] yeah—so there were some minor expenses incurred in sort of bringing the work that had originally started to some kind of a conclusion, and that was the purpose of that spending at that time. And it was identified in this way simply because of the fact that they needed to make provision to bring this particular one into effect.

Dr. Rowley: But we had already spent \$3.8 million.

Hon. Howai: We had already spent \$2.8 million.

Dr. Rowley: \$3.8 million.

Hon. Howai: Including the one—

Dr. Rowley: We spent \$2.8 million in 2013—

Hon. Howai: Yeah.

Dr. Rowley:—and one in 2014.

Hon. Howai: No. No. No. Out of this one we have only spent \$232,000.

Dr. Rowley: So you spent \$3 million.

Hon. Howai: Yeah, about \$3 million—\$3.1 million.

Dr. Rowley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Where are we at with Item 001 the Information Systems, where we have spent \$11 million in the last three years, and we are provisioning another \$4 million in 2015? How is that programme going?

Mr. Chairman: Yes. The Minister of Finance and the Economy.

Hon. Howai: Perhaps, Mr. Chairman—I have a list of it here. So, perhaps it would be better if we just share the list.

Dr. Rowley: Yes.

Hon. Howai: So, I have a list of what has been done.

Dr. Rowley: I have one other question and I am under 03, 09, and that is 015, Construction of an Official Residence for the hon. Chief Justice. They had provisioned \$2 million for that. Where is this residence to be constructed, and how far advanced is that project?

Hon. Howai: Yeah. It is supposed to be in St. Clair. Cabinet has agreed—

Dr. Rowley: A site has been identified?

Hon. Howai:—a site has been identified.

Dr. Rowley: Do you know where that site is?

Hon. Howai: Hayes Street.

Dr. Rowley: Okay. And how far along are we with the project?

Hon. Howai: The MOU is now being drafted with UDeCOTT, and then from there they will start doing the design work, and getting the designs approved, and then they will proceed from there.

Mr. Chairman: I think, the Member for St. Joseph and the Member for Diego Martin North/East, and then the Member for Port of Spain South.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy, you just stated that about \$2 million has been spent on construction of buildings for the courts. When the Member for Diego Martin West asked you about the section 34 and that Act, I want to remind you, hon. Minister, that when we examined the Ministry of Justice, \$12 million had already been spent on what was called preconstruction

work for four judicial centres. Is it that we are spending moneys on these judicial centres under two Heads—the Judiciary and the Ministry of Justice? Could you clarify, please?

Hon. Howai: The Ministry of Justice will deal with some of the new buildings. This was dealing with existing buildings, trying to reconfigure and refurbish in order to create additional room to accommodate the additional judges.

Mr. Deyalsingh: And has that been accomplished?

Hon. Howai: [*Minister confers with advisor*] How far have we reached with it. I think we started the work. Yes. The legislation has changed. So it has not been completed. No, it has not been completed. They had started to do it for this purpose, and I suppose what you will do is use it for something else. So they will use it for something else.

Mr. Chairman: Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, I heard a complaint from the Chief Justice that the Judiciary is not in control of its construction programme. Could you tell me who is responsible for the implementation of all these works here? For example, rehabilitation of the Hall of Justice, et cetera? That is a general question. It is the Judiciary that is in control or not?

And secondly, what does the Ministry of Finance and the Economy expect the Judiciary to do with an allocation of \$4 million for the rehabilitation of the Hall of Justice? Because as far as I am concerned that might change the carpet on the second floor. So, why would the Ministry of Finance and the Economy only allocate \$4 million to rehabilitate the Hall of Justice?

And similarly, I am looking at the allocations here for all of the courts and so on, the sum seems to be exceedingly small. So could you give us some idea of the request that came from the Judiciary, and the reasons why the Ministry of Finance and the Economy has decided not to accede to the request from the Judiciary for refurbishment and rehabilitation of buildings? And following on that last point, why are there two separate agencies responsible for the construction of judicial buildings?

Hon. Howai: Construction of what? Sorry.

Mr. Imbert: Judicial buildings.

Hon. Howai: Yeah. In terms of the existing buildings, the refurbishment and restoration work is conducted by the Judiciary. For new buildings and new courts and so on, that is dealt with by the Ministry of Justice.

Mr. Imbert: I know. So why?

Hon. Howai: Well that is a policy decision.

Mr. Imbert: So the Government has decided that the Ministry of Justice will construct new buildings, the Judiciary will maintain and repair old buildings. Is that what you are saying?

Hon. Howai: Existing buildings. Yeah.

Mr. Imbert: Well, old buildings.

Hon. Howai: Yeah.

Mr. Imbert: But why? Could you tell me why?

Hon. Howai: Well it is a policy decision in terms of how they would—

Mr. Imbert: But come on. I will like to know why.

Hon. Howai: Certainly it would have predated even my position here, so I will need to get some—I cannot say exactly when.

Mr. Imbert: No, but it is a perennial complaint from the Judiciary that they are not in control of construction of facilities. So, okay, you do not want to tell me why.

Hon. Howai: No. I think that the point that the Chief Justice was making was really that this here, in a sense, the amount he got for what he wanted to do, was not sufficient.

Mr. Imbert: Well that is my second question.

Hon. Howai: And therefore, in that sense he is not in control.

Dr. Rowley: Since that has gone on record, I do not think that is the point that was being made—which has attracted my attention. The point I read from it is that there are other people in charge on the Chief Justice's portfolio, and that "other people" are state enterprises that are executing agencies on behalf of the Minister of Finance and the Economy.

For example, I asked you just now about the residence. You told me it is UDeCOTT. And I am sure if I ask you about every single building, it will be UDeCOTT or "COTTedU". And then, they now take their own sweet time, in their own priorities, with their own accounting or other systems, and the Chief Justice is an innocent bystander. That is what I read from what he said. It was not just the allocation of money, it was the allocation of authority and urgency.

Hon. Howai: No. Because the Judiciary is responsible for getting these done and they can choose whichever executing agency they wish to use. It is not that, you know, we would say, well look, you should use this particular agency to do something. They would use the executing agency that they choose to use.

Dr. Rowley: But the very fact that the Judiciary has been confined to old buildings and repainting, and somebody else is responsible for building the building that the Chief Justice desperately wants to expand the Judiciary in, that I think is the problem. That the money is somewhere else, the authority is somewhere else, and they are looking on at other people's pace.

Dr. Moonilal: Chairman, if I could just join—

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Dr. Moonilal:—this interesting line of questioning. The hon. Prime Minister in the period after the last statement from the hon. Chief Justice did indicate in the Parliament that the Government would welcome proposals from the Judiciary on new arrangements and reform to the entire process of managing the Judiciary.

Dr. Rowley: Which is over and above the size of the allocation.

Dr. Moonilal: Which is over and above, which has to do with creation of a new institutional relationship, very much as what the Parliament is doing.

Dr. Rowley: That is my understanding.

Dr. Moonilal: So that the Prime Minister has already invited the Judiciary to submit proposals that would bring about fundamental change, so that the door is open there. But might I add that the Judiciary has had the responsibility, for a long time now, of maintaining the existing infrastructure and so on, but the building, the construction programme for new infrastructure and new assets of the Judiciary, has been undertaken by the Ministry of Justice.

Now, it is akin to saying that the police service should build police stations. Now, that does not happen. The police service will have police stations built by an executing Ministry of National Security, and by UDeCOTT or NIPDEC or whoever you want. So that one has to also reflect—and I am not making a judgment—on the capacity and the institutional capacity of a particular agency that may not have the full ambit of the capacity of a Ministry or a construction Ministry to undertake significant construction of major assets.

So that is why, for example, the court, the buildings of the courts, were entrusted through the Ministry of Justice. Now, this is done on a collaborative

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basis. There is a particular committee that meets that includes the Judiciary, Minister of Justice and others that will discuss and build consensus as to policy, as to buildings required, as to whether it is a courthouse here, there, what type of courthouse, all those things are cleared with the Judiciary as well. It is just that the driving force of that would be a Ministry, and through a Ministry a project-managing executing agency. But all of that may be subject to change given new policy proposals that may come.

Dr. Rowley: So, we await the proposals to see what—

Dr. Moonilal: Well, we will look at that. While proposal is coming, the police service “doh build police station”. You know, there is a Ministry and a project manager that will do that. So that has been happening in this area. But it is not done in a way that is out of sync or delinked from the Judiciary itself.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, I am listening to what the Minister with responsibility for public buildings—is that one of your portfolios?—public buildings? It is all right. I know where it is. I am listening to what the UDeCOTT Minister is saying. It is easy to say that the Judiciary does not have the capacity, but the Ministry of Justice has had the responsibility to construct four new judicial centres for the last four years, and has failed to do so. So it is easy to get stuck in this cycle and say the Judiciary does not have the manpower, the institutional knowledge, the expertise to construct the judicial centres, but the current arrangements are not working. Four years have elapsed and not a blade of grass has been cut—

Dr. Moonilal: This is why we are looking at new proposals. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Imbert:—for the centres. All right.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, the hon. Member for Port of Spain South.

Miss Mc Donald: I am looking at 002, Acquisition of Property. Could you tell me where this property is being bought, and for what purpose?

Mr. Ali: Which property?

Miss Mc Donald: Page 4.

Dr. Rowley: F 002.

Miss Mc Donald: F, under Public Buildings, Acquisition of Property.

Mr. Chairman: Acquisition of Property. Minister of Finance and the Economy.

7.50 p.m.

Hon. Howai: Okay. It is really to deal with the acquisition of a property to serve as a car park for the San Fernando Magistrates' Court. They are also looking at two other properties to be acquired in Port of Spain, again for administrative offices. The thing is that the Ministry did not approve all of the allocations, so they are going to have to do it on a phased basis.

Miss Mc Donald: So this \$2 million is really just for the car park, the acquisition for the land in San Fernando, for the car park.

Hon. Howai: That is right.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. Hon. Members, the sum of \$353,073,800 for Head 03: the Judiciary now stands part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 03 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: I want to thank you very much, Madam Court Executive Administrator and your team and of course the hon. Minister who helped just to bring to our attention how he allocated moneys for the Judiciary. Thank you very much.

Hon. Howai: I want to say thank you very much as well.

Dr. Moonilal: Mr. Chairman, at this point while we await the next entity, I just wanted to raise a matter that we are, Chairman, unless I am mistaken, we are at the fourth, going to the fifth item for the day. On a day when it was projected that we would have accomplished examination of 16 entities, we are now entering our fifth, at ten minutes to eight.

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Dr. Moonilal: Now, what I am saying, Chairman, is that maybe Members will like to reflect and get a realistic projection for the rest of the evening's work because I am not inclined and I am not that comfortable having senior public servants and others here in the building waiting to whatever time and then only to be told later in the night that they will not be needed for this evening, but tomorrow. Now, Mr. Chairman, in no way am I suggesting that the Committee rush its important work because we are permitted to come back on Monday, next week. It may well be that we will have to look at the full five days, to Monday, and do not rush our business in this way. I do not know if the Committee is minded to shave off some ministries immediately or you believe that we can

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continue. Some will not take a long time but I just wanted to flag that because I really do not want public officers to be, all hour of the night, at the building—not only all hours of the night but staying here all night and not being called upon. [Interruption] You are okay, you can stall all night.

Dr. Rowley: We will make every effort.

Mr. Imbert: Some of the Items would be done quickly, you know.

Mr. Chairman: To finish all.

Dr. Rowley: I think we can stay on the programme, Mr. Chairman. We will try to speed it up.

Mr. Chairman: Okay?

Dr. Moonilal: Sure.

Mr. Chairman: So we will now invite the Industrial Court.

Mrs. Thomas: Mr. Chairman, we on this side down here just wanted to know if you could arrange with the air condition to go down a bit. It is real cold.

Mr. Chairman: Oh, it is a bit cold.

Dr. Rambachan: Very cold.

Mr. Chairman: Oh, I see. Marshall, could you adjust it?

Mrs. Thomas: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: We will adjust it. Okay?

Head 04.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we are now dealing with Head 04: Industrial Court. The Minister of Finance and the Economy has kindly agreed to assist the Committee in its consideration of this Head, which is an independent body. He would assist in obtaining clarification from the accounting officer in relation to expenditure proposed by the Industrial Court and will answer those questions that directly relate to his portfolio as Minister of Finance and the Economy.

Question proposed: That Head 04 stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the sum of \$30,680,080 for Head 04, the Industrial Court 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.

I go immediately to Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure; Item 001, General Administration; Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services; Item 001, General Administration; Item 002, South Office. Hon. Members, we will now refer to the Development Programme. Sub-Head 09, Development Programme; Item 005, Multi-Sectoral and Other Services.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 04 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, Registrar of the Industrial Court. Thank you very much. Could we invite the THA at this time? [*Interruption*] Well, seeing that he is here and we are moving rapidly. Or, do you want to go to the Ministry of Education?

Head 15.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, Head 15: Tobago House of Assembly. Hon. Members, the next Head of Expenditure up for consideration is the Tobago House of Assembly. The Minister of Finance and the Economy has kindly agreed to assist the Committee in its consideration of this Head. He will assist in obtaining clarification from the accounting officer in relation to expenditure proposed by the Tobago House of Assembly and will answer those questions that directly relate to his portfolio as Minister of Finance and the Economy.

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

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the sum of \$2,586,207,000 for Head 15, the Tobago House of Assembly, is comprised of moneys proposed for expenditure under the following Sub-Heads and Items to be found in the Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure and the Draft Estimates of Development Programme. You wanted to raise a question?

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, I just want to raise it with you to clear our minds. The last Head that we examined, there was a specific question that was put. We had asked the Judiciary to tell this House what they had requested from the Minister of Finance and the Economy, for us to gauge what was requested and what was allocated. Was that question answered?

Hon. Howai: No. It was not.

Dr. Rowley: Is there an offer to come later?

Hon. Howai: I could send that subsequently, yeah.

Dr. Rowley: So, it would be answered?

Hon. Howai: Yeah, it will be answered. What had happened is at the time we said for Recurrent there was no problem, so we went straight to Recurrent.

Mr. Chairman: And then we said we would have raised it under Development.

Hon. Howai: We said we would deal with it under DP and it just was not raised under DP.

Dr. Rowley: So, an answer would come to the question.

Hon. Howai: I would give you the answer.

Dr. Rowley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: So we go immediately to Sub-Head 06: Current Transfers to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies. Item 001: Tobago House of Assembly.

Dr. Baker: Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Dr. Baker: I will just like to get the clarification of the Chief Administrator, of course through the Minister of Finance and the Economy, if, in his opinion, the allocation made by that Ministry meets the recommendations by the Dispute Resolution Commission, in the first instance.

Hon. Howai: The total, when we prepared the budget, Mr. Chairman, always meets the requirement of the Dispute Resolution Commission.

Dr. Baker: In that light, can you give us some historical underpinnings, particularly with respect to the allocation for 2014, as to the sums likely to be unspent by the THA and whether that has been a recurring theme over the last three or four fiscal years? Just some historical underpinnings.

Hon. Howai: The Chief Administrator advises, Mr. Chairman, that information can be provided subsequently. He does not have it at the moment.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, may I ask—

Dr. Baker: May I not be interrupted? I am still going, Mr. Chairman. Where does that unexpended balance go? Into which account, which bank and what is the total amount in that account?

Mr. Chairman: The Minister of Finance and the Economy.

Hon. Howai: Again, Mr. Chairman, we will have to provide that information subsequently.

Dr. Baker: Are we getting the undertaking that will be provided before tomorrow's end, if we had to end tomorrow?

Mr. Chairman: No. Well we have an undertaking and a commitment from everyone who has come here that they will try to provide the information before the end of our Committee period. That is the undertaking. If otherwise, we will inform Members. Yes, I recognize the Member—

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, I would like to participate in these proceedings.

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Dr. Rowley: So I would have to be able to follow what is being said. Are there other documents that we do not have? [*Interruption*] No, this is the Development Programme, I am on Recurrent. Is there a document that we do not have? I just want to know if there is another document somewhere that we do not have.

Hon. Howai: No, everybody has one.

Dr. Rowley: Because, Mr. Chairman, in this document under Recurrent, I am seeing—well before I go there, this is the Summary. I want to look at the Summary in the light of the questions asked. The Summary is on page 5. Is that correct? This is the correct one now, right?

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

8.05 p.m.

Dr. Rowley: Just the Summary.

Hon. Howai: This will be page 2, Member.

Miss Cox: Or, page 58?

Dr. Rowley: Page 58.

Hon. Howai: Oh, okay you are looking at the Recurrent.

Dr. Rowley: Page 58, Draft Estimates of the Recurrent.

Hon. Howai: Okay.

Dr. Rowley: Am I correct? That is where the question is now, eh? We started out—

Mr. Chairman: Yes, Current Transfers to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies.

Dr. Rowley: Okay, I just wanted to ask, it is not documented because if we look at current transfers, 2014, the estimate was 2.095 and we are being told that the revised estimates for the THA appears to be 2.011. That is 2 billion and 95 million against 2 billion and 11 million. So if I am to ask, the Member is asking about the difference between 2 billion and 95 million and 2 billion and 11 million. Is that the question being put to you, Mr. Speaker? Is that what you understand it to be? He is asking for the difference between those two numbers.

Dr. Baker: Mr. Chairman, if the Member has a question for me he should wait until my Ministry is presenting. He is questioning the Chief Administrator through the Minister of Finance and the Economy. He should not be asking you to clarify—do your job, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Rowley: When you get in the Chair I will talk to you.

Dr. Baker: You be quiet. I am speaking to the Chair.

Dr. Rowley: “You ketch yourself.” Who you talking about—

Dr. Baker: Be quiet, Sir. [*Crosstalk*]

Dr. Rowley: “You, ketch yuhself please!”

Mr. Chairman: Please, please, Member let us not—please, please, please. Let us behave in a disciplined manner and have respect for each other, please. [*Crosstalk*] Please, Members, please, please, let us have respect for each other, let us have respect for each other, please.

Dr. Rowley: I am talking to you and I ask for clarification—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Dr. Rowley: There is a matter before us of unspent balances, and I am asking whether the difference between 2.095 and 2.011, if that is what you are looking for, with respect to an unspent balance? Because the question that I am following from that, I would ask the Minister of Finance and the Economy if 2.095 was provided to the THA, and according to these documents they only spent 2.011. That is the clarification I am looking for.

Hon. Howai: Yeah, the 2.011 represents our estimate of the trend based on expenditure to date. So we think they will only spend 2.011. I think what the

Minister was asking is, then what becomes of the difference between the 2.095 and the 2.011, which is, we would provide the 2.095 to the THA.

Dr. Rowley: So as of now, this is what, September—

Hon. Howai: 25th.

Dr. Rowley: September 25th, would that 2.095 have already transferred to the THA?

Hon. Howai: We would have, yes, it should have been transferred by now.

Dr. Rowley: And we are estimating that they would only spend 2.011.

Hon. Howai: Yeah.

Dr. Rowley: And that is all I was asking.

Hon. Howai: No, I think what the hon. Member is also asking is then, what becomes of the difference.

Dr. Rowley: Well, that will flow on from that. So we now have a question in front of us to clear the answer. And could we get that answer now, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Chairman: We were told by the Minister of Finance and the Economy through advice given to him by the Chief Administrator, that that will be provided to us in writing. That is what he said, subsequently.

Dr. Rowley: Let me put my own question to him, because I am sure this is not a new question, and I am putting this to the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy: What happens in situations like this when there is a difference on the positive, because I am not asking for the number, amount of dollars, I am asking what is the procedure to be followed that the law permits?

Hon. Howai: In the case of the THA, there is no requirement to remit the funds back to the Central Government. In the case of Ministries, their cheques are drawn against the Central Bank so that we really do not give them cash in the same way that we would give to the THA. What we do is that we do releases. So we do a release for the various Ministries, and if it is not spent then it falls away.

Dr. Rowley: But in the case of the THA—

Hon. Howai: We send a cash.

Dr. Rowley: In the case of the THA if there is an unspent balance and that is retained by the THA in its account, that is not an improper act?

Hon. Howai: Not as far as I am aware.

Dr. Rowley: Okay. So the THA is permitted, unlike other bodies, to hold on to unspent balances?

Hon. Howai: As far as I am aware.

Dr. Rowley: And is it also true to say that the THA is allowed to use those unspent balances in its own development programme?

Hon. Howai: It is allowed to do so, yes.

Dr. Rowley: So there is nothing improper or illegal about the THA having an unspent balance which is used in a development programme in Tobago for Tobago.

Hon. Howai: I do not think the Minister is suggesting—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Rowley: I am not talking about the Minister, I am listening to him, I am talking to you through the Chair. [*Crosstalk*] Mr. Chairman, with your permission I still have the floor. I am dealing with a matter which is on record in this House, right, and I would like for the record—[*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: Please, Members, let us have respect.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Chairman, for the record and the reason—[*Crosstalk*] Mr. Chairman, I am talking to you, eh.

Mr. Chairman: Please, please, Members on both sides, let us have one meeting.

Dr. Rowley: The reason I am doing this, Mr. Chairman, is because I want to be clear and I want you to be clear and I want the population be clear, because I have heard it on many occasions where an allegation is being made by persons known and unknown that the THA is squirrelling away money illegally under the guise of unspent balances. When I know, that the THA as a public entity, is allowed as the Minister has just confirmed, to retain its unspent balance to use it in Tobago's development. That is all I am saying to you.

Mr. Chairman: I recognise the hon. Member for Tobago East.

Mrs. Alleyne-Toppin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want us to be very clear on what, if I may ask, what are unspent balances supposed to be used for, legally? And whether when these projects or whatever are accomplished or whether they are undertaken, who reports to whom about what has been spent and for what purpose?

Hon. Howai: The funds that are left unspent are allowed to be spent for capital expenditure. What was the second part of the question?

Mrs. Alleyne-Toppin: The second part of the question was: if this is done, who receives a report, what that capital expenditure was, what it was used for, whether the projects were completed, who is responsible for receiving such a report?

Hon. Howai: Yeah, now, the PSIP actually falls under the Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development, so that some of the things here in development programme is really dealt with by the Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development, not by the Ministry of Finance and the Economy. It is something I did not mention because I thought it is better, I can deal with it. But the thing is that, what I am being told by Mr. Sandy is that if there are any reports, those are sent to the Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development.

Mrs. Alleyne-Toppin: May I ask another question, please, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Mrs. Alleyne-Toppin: Can you give us a listing of some of the capital projects that you have undertaken under the Assembly with unspent balances over the past years?

Hon. Howai: I am told that some of them would be such as the cultural complex and other similar type of projects. [*Minister conveys with advisor*] Is there a list that we can give them? So we will provide a list of what those are.

Mr. Chairman: I recognise the hon. Member for Tabaquite.

Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, thank you. Following the question of the Member for Tobago East, what I would like to get is, not only what are the capital projects or development projects that have been done, but what was the original estimated cost of those development projects, and how much has been spent to date on those projects that have not been completed, as well as those that have been completed, to see whether they are substantial or any cost overruns on those projects.

Mr. Chairman: Let us deal with a structure here otherwise you are going to get confused. We are dealing with recurrent and then we will come to development. Okay, so hold that question until we reach development. I am dealing with Item 001, Tobago House of Assembly; Division 01, Assembly Legislature. Item 001, Tobago House of Assembly on this particular area,

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Division 01, Assembly Legislature, Personnel Expenditure, Goods And Services, Minor Equipment Purchases, Current Transfers And Subsidies. That is the first matter that is before this committee. Any questions? I recognize the Member for Tabaquite.

Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, in the 2015 estimates a provision was made of \$19,186,400 as against \$17,200—

Mr. Chairman: What page are you on?

Dr. Rambachan: Oh, sorry, page 60.

Mr. Chairman: Page 60 of what?

Dr. Rambachan: 01, Personnel Expenditure.

Mr. Chairman: Page 60 of which document?

Hon. Member: That is Personnel Department.

Dr. Rambachan: Oh, sorry, sorry, I got the wrong—

Mr. Chairman: All right, okay, you get the wrong one. Hon. Member for Tobago West.

Dr. Baker: It is reported in the THA's very budget documents that the unemployment rate in Tobago is 5.1 per cent. In that light, what are the number of vacant posts in the THA, under Personnel Expenditure, Item 01 and when are those posts likely to be filled by the Tobago House of Assembly? That is Item 01, Vacant Posts under Personnel Expenditure. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: We are on page 13, under Personnel Expenditure, Tobago House of Assembly, Vacant Posts. So he is on target. [*Crosstalk*]

You could go to page 11. [*Crosstalk*] We are dealing with the one on *Draft Estimates of the Revenue and Expenditure of the Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies and of the Tobago House of Assembly* for 2015, page 11. And we are dealing with the Sub-Item 08. Please, follow. Vacant Posts, the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy.

Hon. Howai: I will have to get back to you on that.

Dr. Baker: Can we get the undertaking that you will provide that list?

Mr. Chairman: All right, we go to Division 02: Office of the Chief Secretary, Personnel Expenditure, Goods and Services, Minor Equipment Purchases, Current Transfers and Subsidies. We go to Division 03: Finance and

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Enterprise Development, Personnel Expenditure, Goods and Services, Minor Equipment Purchases, Current Transfers and Subsidies. We go to Division 05.

Dr. Baker: Before you go, Mr. Chair, there are a number of quasi-state bodies under this Heading.

Mr. Chairman: Which Heading?

Dr. Baker: Goods and Transfers, Regional Bodies—

Mr. Chairman: You are talking about Finance and Enterprise Development.

Dr. Baker: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: What page are you referring to? Is it page 19?

Dr. Baker: I am on page 63.

Hon. Member: Wrong book.

Mr. Chairman: No, no, it could be confusing to some people. What is the question that you are trying to ask hon. Member?

Dr. Baker: You could go ahead.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, all right, so we were on Division 03, we have completed that.

Hon. Member: What page is that?

Mr. Chairman: We were on Division 03: Finance and Enterprise Development. We have completed that one. We now go to Division 05: Tourism and Transportation, Personnel Expenditure, Goods and Services, Minor Equipment Purchases, Current Transfers and Subsidies. We go to Division 06: Education, Youth Affairs and Sports, Personnel Expenditure, Goods and Services, Minor Equipment Purchases, Current Transfers and Subsidies.

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Division 07: Community Development and Culture: Personnel Expenditure, Goods and Services, Minor Equipment Purchases, Current Transfers and Subsidies. We go to Division 08: Infrastructure and Public Utilities, Personnel Expenditure, Goods and Services, Minor Equipment Purchases, Current Transfers and Subsidies. We go to Division 09: Agriculture, Marine Affairs, Marketing and the Environment, Personnel Expenditure, Goods and Services, Minor Equipment Purchases, Current Transfers and Subsidies. Division 10: Health and Social Services, Personnel Expenditure, Goods and Services, Minor Equipment Purchases, Current Transfers and Subsidies.

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I recognize the hon. Member for Tobago Development and Member for Tobago West.

Dr. Baker: Just enquiring as to the number of ambulances that are on the ground in Tobago this year, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. Howai: Mr. Chairman, we have to get back to you on that information—number of ambulances on the ground.

Mr. Chairman: All right. The hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy said that he will have to report to the Standing Finance Committee on the matter of ambulances on the ground.

I recognize the hon. Member for Fyzabad.

Mr. Sharma: Mr. Chairman, there is a little difficulty in the document because I am unable to find under which heading—

Hon. Member: That is to be expected.

Mr. Chairman: Please. Members, please—[*Crosstalk*] Listen, listen, listen! [*Crosstalk*] All right, when you all are happy, let me know. [*Laughter*] Listen, we have to help each other here. This is a collective, you know. This is the Standing Finance Committee, so if a Member, for some reason, is not following and he wants to get some help, it is our duty to help him. I “doh” see why we should be laughing at each other. Member, may I again advise that the document that we are dealing with is the *Draft Estimates of the Revenue and Expenditure of the Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies and the Tobago House of Assembly for 2015*, where you will find all the details of what we are dealing with.

Dr. Moonilal: Chairman, could I say, maybe it would be helpful if, as you go through the heading, the Clerk could just advise on the page you are at, because you are not saying the page; you are just reciting the—

Mr. Chairman: Okay.

Dr. Moonilal: And we want to move fast.

Mr. Sharma: Chairman, may I ask the question? [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: Please, please.

Mr. Sharma: I am on the same book. The difficulty I have is that I am looking for the award of scholarships and I thought it might be under Transfers and Subsidies. It does not appear; it does not appear under Education. Can you

advise under which heading scholarships awarded by the THA appears? And then I will be able to ask the question.

Hon. Howai: It would be part of the Development Programme estimates. So if we can—

Mr. Chairman: That will be part of the Development Programme and we are yet to arrive at that. So I would ask, if you are interested, look at your Development Programme and that is where you will follow us.

Mr. Sharma: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: So we are coming now to Division 10: Health—

Mr. Seemungal: Chair, may I? On that same book, page 16 on the book.

Mr. Chairman: Are you on Division 10, Health?

Mr. Seemungal: I am at page 16 of your book, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: No, no, no. We are not on page 16. Just refer to the pages for me—Division 10: Health and Social Services. We are now on page 63. So I will give our colleague some guidance, as was advised by the hon. Member for Fyzabad. [*Crosstalk*] Please, Member for Port of Spain South, let us conduct ourselves properly.

Mr. Seemungal: Chair, you started off the exercise by saying we are looking at Recurrent Expenditure, and then you turn to the book. That is what is confusing the entire thing.

Mr. Chairman: And that is where you will find the details.

Mr. Seemungal: No, but that is where you confuse the issue. You started off by saying—

Mr. Chairman: I did not confuse “no issue. I eh confuse issues.”

Mr. Seemungal: That is where the issue was confused.

Mr. Chairman: No, no, no. No, no, no. I would simply say that if Members were prepared, they would never be confused. I am fully prepared for what I am doing here.

Miss Mc Donald: They are not prepared.

Mr. Chairman: So do not accuse the Chairman of doing anything contrary to proper standards. Okay? So what I am now trying to do to assist Members who are not properly prepared, I am guiding you according to the pages, so all

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Members will know, as I call Division 10: Health and Social Services, we tell you page 63, so you will go immediately to page 63. I am helping Members, so I take objection to anybody accusing this Chair of being anything but fair to all Members here.

Mr. Seemungal: We are getting accustomed with this book. This is a first time for all of us.

Mr. Chairman: All right, good. Take your time. Let us go. We go to Division 10: Health and Social Services, Personnel Expenditure, page 63.

Miss Cox: How long we will stay on 63?

Mr. Chairman: Well, we going. Goods and Services, Minor Equipment Purchases, Current Transfers and Subsidies. We go now to Division 11: Settlements and Labour. We are on page 71, Member for La Horquetta/Talparo.

Mr. Seemungal: Sixty-three to 71—

Mr. Chairman: Page 70, that is Settlements and Labour: Personnel Expenditure—

Dr. Baker: Chair?

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

Dr. Baker: Under Personnel Expenditure, could the administrators, through the Minister of Finance and the Economy, indicate to us how members are hired in this department?

Mr. Chairman: Which particular Sub-Item are you on? In terms of salary and cost of living allowance?

Dr. Baker: Yes, Chair.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy, the Member has asked a question: How are persons hired under this particular item?

Hon. Howai: For Settlements and Labour.

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, Settlements and Labour.

Hon. Howai: I am advised that hiring for all the posts in the various heads are handled in the normal way as it is done for public officers.

Mr. Chairman: You follow, hon. Member?

Dr. Baker: Yes.

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

Dr. Moonilal: Mr. Chairman, I want to be very clear where I am. [*Laughter*] First, I am on page 71, Goods and Services, under Settlements and Labour. I just want to ask a quick question to the Minister of Finance and the Economy. I notice that in two areas, in particular, we have had what could be tantamount to 100 per cent increase in 2015, from the 2013 figure in Other Contracted Services.

Mr. Chairman: Other Contracted Services?

Dr. Moonilal: That is 28. And then in Promotions, Publicity and Printing, we have increased by 100 per cent. And I just wanted to have a sense of what had triggered this increase for Promotions, Publicity and Printing, 100 per cent, and for Other Contracted Services. In 2013 it was \$53,000 and the estimate for 2015 is \$150,000.

Mr. Chairman: Now, you are on page 71 as we speak, right?

Dr. Moonilal: Right.

Mr. Chairman: And you are referring to—

Dr. Moonilal: I am referring to 28—

Mr. Chairman:—Other Contracted Services?

Dr. Moonilal:—and 62.

Mr. Chairman:—and 62. The hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy.

Hon. Howai: One minute, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Caroni Central but they are just awaiting a response and I will come to you after.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Sure.

Hon. Howai: The area of promotions and publicity is the outreach programme which they are working on. Under the Other Contracted Services, Mr. Chairman, those would deal with things like manpower assessments and labour market surveys.

Dr. Moonilal: Chairman, as I have your attention, I notice in 2013, Short-Term Employment, number 22, \$1.2 million in 2013, but by 2014 this had gone down to \$480,000—Short-Term Employment—and I am wondering what happened in 2013 that by 2014 there was a need to reduce Short-Term

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Employment so dramatically. So that if there is some reason why this short-term—[*Interruption*]

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

Dr. Moonilal: I have a big interest in Tobago. Short-Term Employment, \$1.2 million—this is just in the heading of Settlement and Labour—in 2013, but there was some reason why it went down so dramatically by 2014. I just wanted to get some explanation.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy.

Whilst we are waiting on you, I recognize the Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Mr. Chair, I crave your indulgence, if you would kindly permit me. You moved relatively fast and you lost me along the way. Can we go back to 69 let me just ask one question—page 69?

Miss Mc Donald: No. “We only going forward”. [*Crosstalk*]

Dr. Gopeesingh: Just 009, Mr. Chairman.

Miss Cox: No, “we going forward”. The train waiting on no one.

Dr. Gopeesingh: The Chairman moved very swiftly. He lost me. Can I just ask, Mr. Chairman, for consideration, a question on 009, Sub-Item 07, Tobago Regional Health Authority? There has been an increase of—

Mr. Chairman: Just that one I am permitting eh?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yeah.

Mr. Chairman: That is on page 69?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes. 009, Other Transfers is the heading, sub-heading, 07: Tobago Regional Health Authority. In 2014, there was \$335 million expenditure and the estimates for 2015 is \$450 million. Could the Tobago House of Assembly explain the rationale for the increase of \$114 million? That is a big item, Mr. Chairman. What is the reason for the \$114 million increase for the Tobago Regional Health Authority?

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy.

Hon. Howai: If I may, Mr. Chairman, just to answer the previous question before I get to this one—

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Hon. Howai:—which dealt with short-term employment. I am told that the reason for the reduction is because this related to the vacation employment and so on, and with effect from 2014 that was transferred to the Office of the Chief Secretary so that the allocations were transferred to that particular Head. The second is the Member for Caroni East's question. The increase is due to the new hospital and the additional staff associated. My apologies, Minister, it is the operationalization of the new hospital.

Dr. Gopeesingh: That is the reason for the \$114 million?

Hon. Howai: That is what I am told.

Hon. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Oropouche East and then the hon. Member for Tobago East.

Dr. Moonilal: First, I want to thank the Minister of Finance and the Economy very much for his clarification on the matter. The Minister of Finance and the Economy has informed us that the short-term employment vote, of \$1.2 million for 2013, was subsequently transferred to the office of Chief Secretary. This is why there was a drop to \$480,000. I imagine, Minister of Finance and the Economy, that under the heading of Labour on page 72, when you look at contract employment at number 16, contract employment was also transferred to the Chief Secretary, because you have \$1.4 million in 2013 and this was reduced dramatically by 2014, to \$585,000. Is it that contract employment, short-term employment and other headings, maybe, have all been centralized at that office of the Chief Secretary? And was that a policy decision?

Miss Mc Donald: You trying to be cynical.

Mr. Chairman: Please, please.

Dr. Moonilal: And what influence—you see, the point I am making, Chairman, is that these transfers have been made to the office of Chief Secretary, as I understand it, but they continue to use the subheading of Contract Employment and Short-Term Employment. I just wanted to know what would have informed such a policy shift.

8.35 p.m.

Hon. Howai: That second Item, Minister, was not transferred to the Office of the Chief Secretary. I will have to get a response—I have to provide a further response on that Item.

Dr. Moonilal: Maybe the Minister can tell us then that the reduction from \$1.4 million in 2013 to \$585,000 by 2014, there would have been probably some contract workers who may not have continued on.

Mr. Chairman: All right. I recognize the hon. Member for Tobago East.

Mrs. Alleyne-Toppin: I want to go to the top of page 69, if you will allow me.

Mr. Chairman: No, no, we are not going back. I simply facilitated the Member for Caroni East. Let us go forward, please. We are under Division 11, Settlements and Labour and we have just completed Goods and Services and we now go to Minor Equipment Purchases. We are on page 72. Do you have any questions there, hon. Member for Tobago East?

Mrs. Alleyne-Toppin: Not yet.

Mr. Chairman: And then we go to Current Transfers—

Dr. Rambachan: Page 72. Well, you know, generally, but under 003 Labour: Item 16, Contract Employment, we notice it goes up from \$585,000 to \$1 million.

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, that was just addressed by the Member for Oropouche East.

Dr. Moonilal: No, no, I was addressing the 2013, I think the Minister is addressing 2015.

Dr. Rambachan: Well, in that case, I also address 2013 which was \$1.442 million and 2014 went down \$585,000. Why the dramatic drop between the two years and now it goes back up to \$1 million? Why the dramatic drop? And through this document, under Contract Employment, it has been increasing.

Mr. Chairman, with due respect to you, you are jumping fast and you jumped over page 71 and I do not mean to go back. [*Crosstalk*] But with due respect, if you ask me to leave it, I will leave it but Contract Employment under Settlements went from \$3.7 million to \$4 million.

Mr. Chairman: So you are seeking an explanation?

Dr. Rambachan: I am raising it. I do not think I will ever get an explanation but I am raising it.

Mr. Chairman: Minister of Finance and the Economy.

Hon. Howai: The administrator has advised that we will do a full response on the different short-term and contracts so that we could provide a proper response to the committee on this matter.

Mr. Chairman: Something will come in writing from the administrative officer. The Member for Tobago West.

Dr. Baker: Before you go, Mr. Chairman, I want to get a clear distinction from the Chief Administrator, through the Minister of Finance and the Economy, of what is a short-term contract in the THA; how are contract posts created by the Assembly and what are the hiring practices—specific hiring practices? Are those posts advertised? And I have a specific question for him in relation to a matter after he gives the response to those.

Hon. Howai: Mr. Chairman, I am told that the Executive Council will approve the creation of the post on the recommendation of the MSSU—the Management Support Services Unit. The thing is that all of these positions are advertised in accordance with the civil service procedure. So that is the process that they go through.

Mr. Chairman: Did you hear that response?

Dr. Baker: Yes, but to this specific question: Is the THA under the regulations of the public service, required to go through the CPO before those contract salaries are determined, required to go through the Ministry of Public Administration with respect to the Public Management Consulting Division before a Cabinet Note is sent up and Cabinet's approval is required in the creation of those posts, and under which regulation does the Executive Council have the right to create its own contract posts?

Hon. Howai: While some guidelines from the CPO are used, the overall compensation package is set by the Management Support Services Unit.

Dr. Moonilal: What is that unit? The Management Support Services Unit? Is this a unit of the THA?

Administrator (THA): Yes, it is.

Dr. Moonilal: Okay, and they have the remit to set job specifications and evaluate—

Dr. Baker: Mr. Chairman—

Mr. Chairman: Just now, Minister of Finance and the Economy.

Hon. Howai: They work closely with the PMCD so they would consult with the PMCD, and they would use guidelines that the CPO uses but apparently there is some level of discretion as far as the MSSU is concerned.

Dr. Baker: Mr. Chairman, I am still not getting clearly what regulations allow the Executive Council to override the authority of the Cabinet in the creation of a contract post. Every Ministry has to follow the same public administration guidelines, a recommendation from PMCD, the post then goes to Cabinet for approval. The THA operates through the Permanent Secretaries of the Ministry of Finance and the Economy or the Ministry of Tobago Development and are still part of the public service infrastructure and architecture.

Hon. Howai: Mr. Chairman, the THA is of the view that in their interpretation of the Act that they can be used to be guided, but they do not fall directly under the remit of these particular bodies.

Mr. Chairman: All right, we go on to Division 12.

Mrs. Alleyne-Toppin: Mr. Chairman—

Dr. Baker: Can I get it clear from the Minister of Finance and the Economy that the THA—[*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: Please, Members, please.

Dr. Baker:—can create its own contract posts determined by the Executive Council, the salaries for those posts—

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman?

Dr. Baker:—and then apply to the Ministry of Finance and the Economy for the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago to fund those positions?

Hon. Howai: I cannot answer that—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, is the five-minute rule applying here? But the Minister keeps asking the same question over and over and over.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the hon. Member for Tobago East.

Mrs. Alleyne-Toppin: Page 73, 04, 005, Non-Profit Institutions, 01 Contribution to Non-Profit Organizations, I want to know what—give me a list of the non-profit organizations that this money is expended on. I am saying this in

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light of the fact that the homes for the aged and the children's homes in Tobago do not receive any subventions from the Tobago House of Assembly or from the national purse. So I am saying the contribution to non-profit organizations, which organizations does this money go to?

Mr. Chairman: Under Settlements and Labour, the Member is asking which non-profit organizations, the sum of \$500,000 would go to.

Hon. Howai: This matter was under the Finance Division at one stage but then it was subsequently decided to spread it out among the different Divisions of the THA, and this is intended to be contributions to various organizations. I do not have a list of those.

Mr. Chairman: The Member has asked for a list. You will provide that list?

Hon. Howai: Yeah, we could.

Mr. Chairman: All right, let us go on. Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes, I am on page 74: 02, Goods and Services; Sub-Item 08, Rent/Lease.

Mr. Chairman: All right. Let me now proceed to Division 12, Planning and Development: 01, Personnel Expenditure; Sub-Item 02, Goods and Services. Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: In 2015, you have an estimate for \$1 million for rent/lease. Is this the rental that was given by the rental for the Chief Secretary at Tobago Plantation? Is it \$1 million for the rental of the property when he resided there for a few months that rent/lease? Is that \$1 million the rental for the property in Tobago Plantation? And then if I may draw you to 21, Repairs and Maintenance – Buildings. Is that \$200,000 the repair for the Chief Secretary's building in Tobago?

Hon. Howai: No, those expenditures will have to be—they will not fall under this Head of Planning and Development, it will fall under the Office of the Chief Secretary.

Mr. Chairman: No, it will not fall under that Head.

Hon. Howai: This would be in respect of premises and repairs for this particular Division.

Mr. Chairman: All right, we go on to Minor—sorry, Member for Oropouche East.

Dr. Moonilal: Mr. Chairman, I just want to confirm under—I am on page 74, of course, Goods and Services, Item 16, Contract Employment under Planning and Development, to confirm as well the Contract Employment figure for 2013 was \$3.5 million. This was also reduced dramatically by 2014 but it is expected to pick up in 2015. Could you confirm as well, Mr. Minister, that this was also the same summer programme that you ceased to—that persons were not carried forward in 2014 so that there was no need to spend as much as you did in 2013, but you expect that this programme will kick-start itself by 2015?

Hon. Howai: Mr. Chairman, as we said, we would give a comprehensive response to this.

Mr. Chairman: All right. The Member for Tobago West.

Dr. Baker: Yes, I am going back to Rent/Lease - Office Accommodation and Storage, can we be provided with a list of all the—

Hon. Member: You are going back again?

Mr. Chairman: No, no, under the same Planning and Development.

Dr. Baker: Yes, 74, Personnel Expenditure; 02, Goods and Services; Sub-Item 08, Rent/Lease – Office Accommodation and Storage. Can I get a listing from the Chief Administrator indicating the number of office spaces or buildings being rented by this Division; the landlord; the amount paid for each of those buildings; and when the THA started occupying those buildings and whether they are occupied at present? Because I am aware of one building that has been unoccupied for more than six months on this same stretch with the Ministry for Tobago Development.

Mr. Chairman: So the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy, that will be provided. Right?

Hon. Howai: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Let us go on. Current Transfers and Subsidies. So we now go to the Development Programme on page 19, Item 002, Productive Sectors. Hon. Member for Couva North.

Miss Ramdial: Mr. Chairman, under 09, Development Programme: 002, 467, I. Production and Marketing, Establishment of Processing facilities for Coconut, Bayleaf Oil and Pigeon Peas. I am seeing estimates from 2013, \$300,000; 2014, \$280,000; 2014 Revised Estimate, \$280,000, and in 2015 a reduction by \$80,000, at \$200,000. Could they explain the reason for this decrease?

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Chair, wait just one more part to that question. So the explanation for the decrease and also the location of this processing facility.

Hon. Member: Tobago.

Miss Ramdial: Where in Tobago?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy, where and what is responsible?

Hon. Howai: Mr. Chairman, the location is in Hope Farm, which is in Hope Estate and it is operational but it has a fairly low level of operation.

Mr. Chairman: It is in Hope Farm, okay.

Mrs. Alleyne-Toppin: Mr. Chairman, please, do we actually have a processing plant facility for coconuts in Tobago? Where are the coconut estates that we are getting these coconuts from to process? Do we have bay leaf oil processing? I have never seen any. Where do we have that facility? Where do we have the bay leaf trees from which we can process? Do we have pigeon peas, any plantation of pigeon peas? Where is this facility? Where are the things that have been processed and who have been eating them or rubbing with them or whatever? I do not know them at all. I have not seen them. I live in Tobago.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, we understand your question.

Hon. Howai: Mr. Chairman, I am told—[*Crosstalk*]

Mrs. Alleyne-Toppin: I live in Tobago.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, please, please, let us get the answer from the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy.

Mrs. Alleyne-Toppin: We are actually living in Hope.

Mr. Chairman: Yes. Order!

Hon. Howai: Mr. Chairman, the focus is really on the bay leaf oil, not so much the other areas. And the bay leaf trees are on the Hope Farm and they are—[*Interruption*]

Mrs. Alleyne-Toppin: Mr. Chairman, I am not hearing properly.

Miss Mc Donald: On the Hope Farm.

Mrs. Alleyne-Toppin: We are living in Hope.

Mr. Chairman: We do not need your help really. Otherwise we would ask you to come and sit here.

Mrs. Alleyne-Toppin: We are not hearing the answer.

Mr. Chairman: Minister of Finance and the Economy, could you just repeat? Members are not hearing you.

Hon. Howai: Mr. Chairman, it is really the bay leaf oil facility that is really operational, not coconut and pigeon peas just yet. The intention is to expand into those areas. But at the present time it is bay leaf and the bay leaf trees are actually grown on the Hope Farm.

Mrs. Alleyne-Toppin: Mr. Chairman, I would like to see some details of the production elements of that. I have never seen any. How many trees we have? What is our production output?

Mr. Chairman: Could you provide some details for us? We go on to Item 003: Economic Infrastructure; Item 004: Social Infrastructure.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Couva North.

Mrs. Alleyne-Toppin: Mr. Chairman, you are going too quickly.

Miss Ramdial: Chair, 003: Economic Infrastructure, D fishing, 156: Flying Fish Processing. I am seeing an estimate for \$100,000 here. Exactly where is this processing facility and why at such a low cost of \$100,000 and what stage of processing are we at?

Hon. Howai: Mr. Chairman, it is just a provision. It has not actually been used.

Mr. Chairman: Has not been used. Member for Oropouche East.

Dr. Moonilal: Mr. Chairman, I am at Economic Infrastructure, of course, and I am looking at 463: Agriculture Access Roads. I just want to be clear that I am here reading this correct. In 2013, under this area of Agriculture Access Roads the THA managed to spend \$28.2 million but by 2014, that went down to \$5 million. Now, they built the roads. So 2014 did not want, but they estimate that they will need \$20 million more to build more roads in 2014. Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to be clear that the \$28 million in 2013, initially they budgeted or requested \$5 million but that has gone to \$20 million as a revised estimate. I am just concerned that would have been a \$15 million more expenditure in 2014, if they had suddenly discovered that after receiving the subvention?

Mr. Chairman: Minister of Finance and the Economy, and then the Member for Couva North and then the Member for Tobago West.

Hon. Howai: I will come back with the answer.

Mr. Chairman: He will come back with the answer. Member for Couva North, then Tobago West and then Tobago East.

Miss Ramdial: Same under Economic Infrastructure D. 165: Commercial Tilapia/Prawn Production. Am I to assume that is another provision that has not been used for \$200,000?

Hon. Howai: Yeah, it is supposed to be a pilot project, which did not take off really.

Miss Ramdial: So it has not been used, right? Am I to understand that? The pilot project did not come off the ground?

Hon. Howai: I suspect it has not been used.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Member for Tobago West and later the Member for Tobago East and Caroni after.

Dr. Baker: I am looking at Land Management Services, F. on page 21. I am seeing Sub-Item 454: Sub-division of Estates, and Sub-Item 459: Tobago Heritage Land Trust. What is the sum of \$400,000 to be used for with regard to the subdivision of estates? I need a list to be provided to this committee as to the number of estates under the purview of the Tobago House of Assembly, as to who the Assembly intends to subdivide these estates and share to, if they have not yet done it? And as to what law are they utilizing and to whom? Do they plan to share up this heritage land? What are they doing with this Tobago Heritage Land Trust for which they received \$16 million in 2013 and are receiving \$2 million in fiscal 2015?

Hon. Howai: Chairman, the \$400,000 would have been for the lands which are owned by the THA already. It would be for things such as surveying with a view to subdividing the land. So the allocation is simply an allocation to facilitate that. This would be subdivision of agriculture estates, mainly. Right?

Mr. Chairman: The Member for Tobago East and then Caroni and then we moving on.

Mrs. Alleyne-Toppin: Mr. Chairman, I want to ask a question of the Minister of Finance and the Economy here and I want to broadly move from 467, right down to 165. Mr. Chairman, I am submitting that these things I have not seen:

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development of demonstration and training centre at Goldsborough. I have seen other things developed at Goldsborough, including a Chubby Place to buy Chubby, including a heritage park. I have not seen any of these facilities.

Mr. Chairman: What page are you on?

Mrs. Alleyne-Toppin: I am on page 21 actually, but I am talking generally about this agriculture section here.

Mr. Chairman: No, no, no.

Mrs. Alleyne-Toppin: Page 21, 025.

Mr. Chairman: No, please, please. Let us deal with page 21.

Mrs. Alleyne-Toppin: Page 21, 025.

Mr. Chairman: Item 025, okay.

Mrs. Alleyne-Toppin: Yes, Development of Demonstration and Training Centre at Goldsborough, 027: Development of Government Stock Farm; 031: Establishment of Sheep Semen Export Facility.

Mr. Chairman, what I am saying here, notwithstanding the noise on the other side, this is really important stuff that is not happening in Tobago, item after item, not happening year after year. Nothing happening here and the land that the Member for Tobago West is describing is being subdivided and given to people who are not in agriculture and who are not using it for that purpose. We are serious here.

Mr. Chairman: All right, let the Minister of Finance and the Economy answer that question.

Hon. Howai: Mr. Chairman, I am told that these are all ongoing programmes and projects which a certain amount is provided on an annual basis to ensure that they continue.

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

Dr. Gopeesingh: Mr. Chairman, my colleague, Member for Tobago West asked the question under F 459 on page 21, but I am not getting the answer, the Tobago Heritage Land Trust.

Mr. Chairman: No, they said they will provide that in writing for you.

Dr. Gopeesingh: They would provide it in writing?

Mr. Chairman: The Tobago Heritage. They will provide that. Hon. Member for Caroni East, that will be provided in writing. We go on to Item 005: Multi-sectoral and Other Services.

Dr. Moonilal: What page, Sir?

Mr. Chairman: That is Item 005. What page is that?

Miss Mc Donald: The last page.

Dr. Moonilal: Mr. Chairman, did you go to research and development? Did you call research and development?

Mr. Chairman: That would be Economic Infrastructure.

Dr. Moonilal: Research and development, I have one question.

Mr. Chairman: What page are you?

Dr. Moonilal: Page 23, No. 580, a quick question to the Minister of Finance and the Economy.

Miss Ramdial: Page 22.

Mrs. Alleyne-Toppin: Page 22, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Moonilal: Page 23, No 580.

Miss Ramdial: Page 22.

Dr. Moonilal: A quick question.

Mr. Chairman: Take it easy. We have the Member for Oropouche East.

Dr. Moonilal: I would just like the Minister of Finance and the Economy to indicate to the committee what exactly constitutes the Urban Forestry Programme, because I see in 2013, the Urban Forestry Programme was able to spend \$3.1 million but by 2014, it went down to \$100,000 and by 2015, they do not estimate that they would need anything again. But in 2013, they managed to do a lot in the Urban Forestry Programme. So if we can just get an understanding of what this—and maybe it should be sustained in 2015.

Hon. Howai: Mr. Chairman, we will have to get the answer.

Mr. Chairman: We would have to get the answer for you on that one. I am looking at the Member for Couva North, the Member for Tobago West, the Member for Tobago East. After that I am wrapping up.

Miss Ramdial: Chair, under Research and Development, 482: Cocoa Rehabilitation, I am seeing a decrease from 2014 by \$500,000, is there a reason for this decrease, and if so what is the status of that Cocoa Rehabilitation programme that you have asked for a decrease?

Mr. Chairman: Item 482.

Hon. Howai: What I was told, Mr. Chairman, is that they would have asked for more but this is the allocation that they would have gotten from the THA.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Tobago West and then the Member for Tobago East.

Dr. Baker: Chair, quite frankly very little—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Chairman: Please, let us have one meeting, please and it is one love here.

Dr. Baker: Very little of the activity listed under H from Sub-Item 472 unto 588 is actually happening on the ground in Tobago. Seriously, through the Chief Administrator, I would like to have a project update on each of the Items listed between 472 to 588. When those projects started, the sum expended to date, the number of consultants employed in each of these projects, the number of staff members employed in each project and as to the value outcome for the people of Tobago for each of these projects between Items 472 to 588. I am fully aware that very little of those activities are happening.

Mr. Chairman: All right, we deal with Tobago East and then Caroni East and then we close.

Mrs. Alleyne-Toppin: I want to extend that to page 24 to 590 and 600 and I want especially to have a report on what is happening with the mistletoe invasion, the plant invasion, in Tobago and whether we are doing anything about it because it is destroying our crops and we have no programme in place, and if you count all of this money that goes from 472 to 600, you will find millions of dollars that are not being spent year after year, with no cultivation on the 34 estates held by the Tobago House of Assembly in Tobago and agriculture is being neglected.

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

Dr. Gopeesingh: Mr. Chair, page 29, under Transport and Communication, D, Nos. 690, 698 and 700. Under 690 you have Resurfacing Programme and in 2013, approximately \$32 million was spent, and I want to note that in 2012, only \$5 million is asked for.

In 698: Programme for Upgrading PURE in Tobago was \$20 million, now you are asking for \$8 million and Windward Road Special Development Programme, was \$23 million, you are asking for \$4 million. So in 2013, \$75 million was spent on these three areas of resurfacing, PURE and Windward Road, \$75 million, and now in 2015, \$5 million, \$8 million and \$4 million, \$17 million. So we have gone down from \$75 million in 2013, to \$17 million in 2015.

9.05 p.m.

We just want an explanation of what happened in 2013 that would have caused the expenditure of \$75 million for road surfacing, et cetera. In 2013, \$75 million spent for roads.

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Hon. Howai: We will have to come back to them on that.

Mr. Chairman: The last question is from the Member for Oropouche East.

Dr. Moonilal: Mr. Chairman, I just want to—under Business Services, 009 page 27.

Mr. Chairman: Page what?

Dr. Moonilal: Page 27, 009 under Business Services, in 2013, the Enterprise Development Company of Tobago managed to spend \$12 million, but by 2014, this had gone down to \$2 million. Just an explanation as to what work was done by this company in 2013 that had an expenditure of \$12 million, as opposed to \$2 million required by 2014 and \$2 million by 2015.

Mr. Chairman: It will be provided.

Hon. Howai: The \$12 million, Chairman, would have been the construction of the factory shelves in Cove, and that would have created the figure for 2012, most of that having been completed in 2013, the figures came down thereafter.

Mr. Chairman: I am closing off now.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Ask them to provide the list of the contractors for us please, on these three—

Mr. Chairman: Member for Tobago East, final question before I close off.

Mrs. Alleyne-Toppin: Mr. Chairman, I want to know how many factory shelves were constructed at Cove.

Mr. Chairman: All right, good. Hon. Members—“yuh hear dat”, right? Hon. Members, the question is that the sum of \$2,586,207,000 for Head 15, the Tobago House of Assembly stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 15 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: The sum of \$2,586,207,000 for Head 15, the Tobago House of Assembly now stands part of the Schedule. [*Crosstalk*]

Before—please! Please! I want to advise everyone who is coming before this Standing Finance Committee, those who have gone, and those who are coming. We in the Parliament are taking copious notes. The *Hansard* is recording every request coming from the Members of the Standing Finance Committee. We will be writing to the Tobago House of Assembly, and any other agency, the Judiciary and those that have gone before, and requesting the answers to every question that Members have asked, and we expect answers from those agencies. I want to put it on record this is no Mickey Mouse arrangement, this is serious business, and anybody coming before this Committee, must bring answers at the end of the process.

I want to thank the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy for assisting us, although this Tobago House of Assembly is an autonomous body, we understand your responsibility. And those who were asking for the Chief Secretary to appear here, let me make it very clear, until the THA Act is repealed, and it is said that the THA Secretary is accountable to the Parliament, he is not compelled to come here. And even if he comes here, he has to sit there in the Speaker’s Gallery. He cannot come here, that is the law.

So I will like to thank the Minister of Finance and the Economy. Mr. Sandy and your team, thank you very much.

We now go to the Ministry of Education.

Head 26.

Question proposed: That Head 26 stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we are on Head 26, Ministry of Education, \$4,445,761,328. I will now invite the hon. Minister of Education, if he so desires, to make a brief opening statement, for no more than five minutes giving us an overview of his priority areas for 2014/2015. The hon. Minister of Education.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. May I first introduce my team from the Ministry of Education, Permanent Secretary, Mrs. Jennifer Daniel; Director of Finance and Accounts, Mrs. Vidya Heeraman; Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ms. Natasha Barrow; Mr. Bhadase Seetahal-Maraj, Project Manager and Mrs. Simone Thorne-Mora, Deputy Permanent Secretary.

Mr. Chair, the Ministry of Education has over the last four years been strategically re-engineering the education system, to make it more outcome and purpose driven, such transformation has been an absolute imperative. We are at the stage where there is greater clarity and assurance, that the direction pursued and plans implemented are delivering the decided results. Much work has been done, but lots more to be done, while we are successfully achieving changes. The confidence where we are and where we are going, have brought us to understand and create our strategic positioning for greater excellence in our re-engineered education system, which differentiates us on a global basis.

Mr. Chairman, the allocation of \$10.1 billion to the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training, places Trinidad and Tobago as a world leader in our quest on human capital development or people-centred development for sustainable development. Close to 16 per cent of our national expenditure annually, and nearly 6 per cent of GDP, way beyond some of our developed countries internationally.

Mr. Chairman, on coming into office, all education task force reports, action plans and recommendations sitting in the Ministry were analysed, and due recognition were given to them. However, there was an absence on the value outcome of education on our education system, and what do we want for our students to become. In that context, the major paradigm shift or transformation or retooling of the Ministry of Education, was urgently needed. Our mission and vision were redefined.

A business development report was prepared in 2010, and the strategic plan 2011/2015 was produced with an annual roll over, 2012/2016. We became focused on 16 prioritized areas, Mr. Chairman, and they remained prioritized.

The laptop initiative, universal early childhood education, literacy and numeracy, expansion of CVQ at the secondary level, pilot testing and neurodiagnostic of children, change of the date of the SEA which we did, and we successfully implemented; continuous assessment component, improving academic performance improving infrastructure in schools, teacher training and

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development, curriculum reform, human resource management, with full computerization; organizational restructuring and institutional strengthening, career guidance, parenting in education and a strong communication strategy.

So far we can say with confidence, we have succeeded in implementing approximately 85 per cent of our promises and prioritized areas, and by 2015, we would have succeeded in complete implementation of all our promises.

We wish to thank and congratulate all our near quarter million students, 126,000 approximately primary, 96,000 secondary, and 34,000 ECCE students, and their teachers, parents, guardians, the Ministry of Education employees, the principals, school supervisors, and the executive management of the Ministry of Education in their successful efforts.

Mr. Chair, in closing, for our quarter million students, and close to 16,000 teachers, nearly 2,600 Ministry of Education public service employees, and 1,000 contract officers, and having to manage 134 secondary schools, 476 primary schools, and linking with 76 private primary schools, 18 private secondary schools and nearly 700 ECCE Centres, our goal of achieving universal early childhood education is now a reality. We have universal primary education, universal secondary education, universal tertiary education, up to the undergraduate level, and Trinidad and Tobago is now a world leader in education, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much. Hon. Members, the question is that the sum of \$4,445,761,328 for Head 26, the Ministry of Education, now stand part of the Schedule.

Hon. Members, the sum of \$4,445,761,328 for Head 26, the Ministry of Education, 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*. I go immediately to Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure; Item 001, General Administration. I recognize the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: I want to refer to Item 01, Chair, Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance, and I see there has been a substantial increase of \$12.5 million over the revised estimates for 2014. I would like the Minister to elucidate on this for me please.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: I think you are referring Member, to Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance, 2014, the revised estimate was \$2.139 billion and in 2015,

\$2.256 billion that is an increase of \$117 million. There are a number of vacancies that we have at the Ministry, both from the public service and some of the contract positions, and there is expansion of the ECCE Programme, and this will be—this \$117 million will be paying for some of the positions that are unfilled now, that will be filled subsequently in the various areas, primary, secondary, the Ministry of Education, public service and ECCE.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Did you mean \$171 million?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes, \$117 million.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: I am seeing \$171 million here.

Mr. Chairman: No, we are on page 167, hon. Minister. We are under Personnel Expenditure, 01; Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance, that is the reference that the hon. Member is making.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Well, I was looking at the first page still—\$117 million.

Mr. Chairman: Go on to page 167. She is asking why this increase? What is responsible for the—

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: I am being advised as well, there is expected wage negotiations for the public service and, therefore, this is an estimate that will probably be the rationale and being incorporated for the increase.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: All right. I see Sub-Item 08, Vacant Posts, Salaries and COLA (without incumbents), and I see there is an increase of \$10 million. Where there was no—no it is new. There was no allocation for that—no it was—previous year, previous year.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: No, it was there. It is not new. It is additional funding.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Additional funding for?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: The same thing, the salaries.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: The vacant posts, does this concern contract positions?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: No, this is public service.

Mr. Hypolite: Can the Minister indicate how many vacant positions there are? And in what area, whether they are—

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Sure. In our secondary school system the established positions, 7,458; the number of positions filled, 7,302; and that includes supervisors, heads of departments, deans, et cetera. The number of positions

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vacant without bodies, nobody there, 156 and the difference will be people who are acting, from this total, 7,458, 5,952 are teaching positions.

Mr. Hypolite: What steps are—

9.20 p.m.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Let me go on to primary: 8,827 established positions for the primary schools; the amount filled, 8,725; and without bodies, it is 102. So we have 7,699 teaching positions and 1,128 administrative positions in the primary schools. In the civil service, 2,788 established positions: number of positions filled, 2,450; vacancies, 338; and the recruitment is now being done by the Service Commission in a number of these areas. [*Interruption*]

Let me just complete and I will come back to you. The contract positions, 2,893: number of positions filled, 1,621; and we have a large vacancy under contract positions: 1,272.

Delinked positions—remember we were under the Public Service Commission and under Schedule 3 of the Education Act, a number of these positions were delinked and went to the Teaching Service Commission. So out of the 376 established positions, 333 are filled and 43 vacant.

So, altogether, the Ministry of Education established positions are 22,342, number of positions filled, 20,431; and number of positions without bodies, 1,911.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Of the teaching positions, how many are literacy experts?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: I will have to come back to you and give you that information, but I can tell you that we had, graduating from the University of the West Indies, 83 students graduating with their masters in 2012 and we are now utilizing them to be literacy coaches across the primary schools, supported by other—

Mrs. Mc Intosh: They are already in the system?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: They are in the system.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Are they on contract or permanent positions?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Permanent positions, but we have to give them an additional stipend because they are pulled out of the teaching positions, but roving through the primary school system.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: They are not on contract?

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Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: No, those are—and some of them came from primary schools and some came from secondary.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: How soon do you expect to fill your 1,272 vacant contract positions?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: It is ongoing. Some of these areas can be suppressed and we will probably look at contract positions. A lot of these are ECCE positions which we are filling from time to time because, you know, we have built 53 new ECCE centres and we are filling these positions as they become vacant.

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

Mr. Hypolite: Item 14, Remuneration to Members of Cabinet-appointed Committees of \$500,000. Can the Minister indicate what Cabinet-appointed committee?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: We were searching, the Permanent Secretary and our team, for those committees, but I do not believe we have any.

Mr. Hypolite: So this is just a figure.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: In the past, there were a few committees, but we may be reconsidering some of these. You see, there is an Advisory Committee on Special Education. We will probably have to reconstitute that. The Learning Materials Evaluation Committee, that is to be reconstituted. A Committee for Teacher Education, that is a National Curriculum Council. These were some of the committees that were there up to 2005/2006, but we have restructured the organization and we have brought some of these committees under the restructured organization. So that is part of the \$500,000 as well.

Mr. Chairman: We go to Item 5, Secondary Education; Item 6, Primary Education. We go to Goods and Services. I recognize the hon. Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Miss Hospedales: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In referring to Item 005 and 006—it is the same, similar, things—Sub-Item 32, Remuneration to Substitute Teachers in the secondary schools and in the primary schools.

I want to know whether or not this allocation is adequate and if the Minister could tell us the current number of substitute teachers in the secondary school as well as in the primary school, and if he can identify for us the schools where this type of service is provided.

Mr. Chair, the reason why I am asking, I am not sure if the Minister is aware, particularly in the primary schools, when the teachers are not going to attend school on a particular day, they normally would advise the parents to keep the children at home and I do not think that is a good practice.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: We do not advise that the children be kept at home at all because we do not have substitute teachers in the primary schools, but the principals make adjustments—if we have any training programme for any of the teachers in the primary schools—for filling these classes during the time that the teachers are absent on their training.

I missed one of your questions, Member.

Miss Hospedales: I asked the current number—

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: That Note is being prepared for Cabinet to bring substitute teachers for primary schools, remedial teachers as well and there is another category.

Mr. Chairman: Let us go to Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Do you have the substitute teachers' system functioning in the secondary schools?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: It fell into some disrepute and we have begun to strengthen it because we needed a strong IT communications strategy for it by putting the names. First of all, we are getting Cabinet's position now to go with more remedial and substitute teachers and we will have these on an IT list that the principals can pull down from and have the teachers in the school as readily as we want.

Mr. Chairman: Let us go the Sub-Head 02.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Chair, I need to say something on—I will be guided by you, but I think it is appropriate for me, at this point, to note that in the Auditor General's Report on this Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services and 001, General Administration, certain concerns were raised about expenditure in this area and I should like to know what oversight is there in spending of moneys.

The concerns that were raised were: one, vouchers bore no evidence that availability of funds was checked before payments were processed. What I would like to ask is: what is the process for making payments and why are payments being made before checking the availability of funds? That is one.

The other one is: the dates of cheques were not included on vouchers and on schedules of accounts as required by Financial Instruction 27. Who is responsible

for making these cheques? Why are the dates excluded? And the third point the Auditor General's Report referred to in respect of this particular Sub-Head and Item is that invoice orders were not being completed and properly utilized. I would like to know why were the invoice orders not being completed? If we are talking about expenditure, we have to know why—

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Could you guide me on the line item there, Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West? Are you speaking about the substitute teachers?

Mrs. Mc Intosh: It was 02, Goods and Services; Item 001, General Administration. These were observations in the Auditor General's Report. I would just like some—

Mr. Chairman: I understand what the Member is saying. Just for your consideration and your team, she is making reference to the Auditor General's Report. It is not a direct item, but she is asking you to consider that report to strengthen the administration of the Ministry to avoid these occurrences taking place in the future. That is all she is asking.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Mr. Chairman and Member, I just spoke with my accounting officer and they have indicated that this was brought to their attention and they have responded to the Auditor General on these matters.

Mr. Chairman: All right. So let us go on to Item 005, Secondary Education. We can go on now to Item 006, Primary Education; Item 007, District Services Division; Item 008, Rudranath Capildeo Learning Resource Centre; and then we go to Item 009, Early Childhood Care—*[Interruption]*

Miss Hospedales: Chair, you are going too—

Mr. Chairman: Where are we? But I am at Early Childhood Care and Education Unit.

Miss Hospedales: Will you just back up a little bit for one second, please. I just want to ask about 05, Sub-Item 05, Telephones.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: What page are you on?

Mr. Chairman: Where are we?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: What page, Member?

Mrs. Mc Intosh: I am at page 169; all of us are on 169. You are not finished there. There is an increase of \$60 million for telephones and the provision of free Internet access to schools. Is there a particular state enterprise that will be

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managing this? Has a contract been signed with a supplier for this provision? If so, who is the supplier?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: This here is an estimate for the proposed introduction of the Wi-Fi system in the schools where we have Internet connectivity and a dedicated fibre-optic cable link. You yourself had asked the question in one of the debates whether we are going to improve the connectivity and this here is the estimate that we believe—

The tender was before the Central Tenders Board and held up there for nine months. It is going to be re-tendered pretty shortly and this will take care of the Wi-Fi and the dedicated fibre-optic cabling.

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

Miss Hospedales: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Sub-Item 16, under Contract Employment, could the Minister indicate the current number of persons on contract and if there are any vacancies and the units the vacancies are in?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Member, I think I gave all those figures—

Mr. Chairman: He gave an overview of all the contract officers. Let us go on now—

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: I think my voice is loud enough to—

Mr. Chairman: Let us go on to secondary education.

Miss Hospedales: The same applies for short-term employment as well, if the Minister can give a breakdown in terms of the number of persons employed and proposed to be—

Mr. Chairman: That will be provided in writing, short-term employment.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: It is not many.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, Ma'am.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Item 23, Fees. Minister, could you give us a little more detail about the fees, please? A little breakdown.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Well, you know, Trinidad and Tobago is one of the major contributors towards the sustainability of CXC. I think we pay the most amount of fees that any Caribbean country, including Jamaica, pays to CXC for fees. These are the fees that we pay, close to \$50 million, on a yearly basis.

Mr. Chairman: That is for CXC, fees. Okay? Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Miss Hospedales: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to refer to Sub-Item 37, with reference to Janitorial Services. What we have seen is an increase in the allocation for janitorial services from \$105 million to \$120 million. I want to find out from the Minister whether or not they have done an evaluation of the janitorial services that are being provided for both the primary and secondary schools and, in conducting that assessment, if they intend to make changes where those janitors are concerned because some of the primary schools and even secondary schools are extremely dirty and they have people filling those positions as janitors.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Chair and Members, to date, MTS is providing maintenance and janitorial services in 76 of the secondary schools and institutions; to 18 primary schools, and security services in 85 secondary schools, 320 primary schools and 29 Early Childhood Care and Education centres.

At the moment, the Ministry of Education pays MTS for over 800 employees in the secondary schools, consisting of close to 83, and we pay for at least eight, nine or 10 people for each one of our government secondary schools and the fees that we pay to MTS for maintaining and doing some work in our schools comprise of people like Building Supervisor. Let me give you an example. At Aranguez North Secondary, there are 12 people that we are paying MTS for: Building Supervisor, three groundspeople, seven Maintenance Technicians I and one Maintenance Technician II.

I must say publicly that we have been appalled by their inability to do exactly what they were being paid for over a period of time. We had to call them in and read the riot act to them. And so now we could see that we are getting better performance from them. It is a state company, people are employed. Your first issue is that you do not want to separate anybody, but we have asked them to improve their performance.

Over 800 people, so the maintenance and janitorial services in our government secondary schools are done by MTS and the board-assisted schools they get their payments through the other way.

Mr. Chairman: We are now going to Item 005, Secondary Education.

9.35 p.m.

Mr. Hypolite: Chair, my hand was up. I have one question on page 170, 65.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Let me just make a point. We paid close to about \$110 million—where it is, janitorial?

Mrs. Mc Intosh: An increase of \$50 million.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes, because they are asking for increased fees and so on because of their new wage negotiations, et cetera.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: What accounts for the increase in security services—\$39 million? Is that cameras?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Well, Member, you had been a principal as well and you know we are having some difficulties in certain schools, and we have had to increase security.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Does that include camera equipment?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes, it will, particularly in the ECCE centres where we have to pay for the entire 24 hours as well. We believe with the ECCE centres we can do some CCTV camera system for 12 hours, and while the students are in school during the 12 hours, we will have the security guards. So it is a combination of increased fees that MTS needs; more schools—ECCE centres constructed, and we have beefed up the security in some of the other schools.

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

Mr. Hypolite: Chair, Item 65. Earlier on it was made mention that there were no Cabinet-appointed committees, but yet still we are seeing here in 2014, \$10,000 was spent, and in 2015 we are looking at \$200,000. Can the Minister indicate exactly what is happening there?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Well the Permanent Secretary is just telling me she does not know why this was—but we do not know—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Hypolite: Why that is inside there?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: In the event probably we formed something, so they gave us—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Hypolite: That is \$10,000 that was put.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, let us go to Item 005, Secondary Education; we go to Item 006, Primary Education; Item 007, District Service Division; Item 008, Rudranath Capildeo Learning Resource Centre; Item 009, Early Childhood Care and Education Centres.

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair.

Mr. Speaker: Which one would you want to raise?

Miss Hospedales: 008.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, quickly.

Miss Hospedales: Sub-Item 22, Short Term Employment. Again, could the Minister indicate what has accounted for that significant decrease of \$3 million plus?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes, you know, we had the reform of the primary school curriculum which we successfully did, and we also reformed the Early Childhood Education curriculum, and we are now moving to reform the secondary school curriculum. We had a number of consultations nationally and through the district offices for the review of the primary school curriculum, and out of that emanated the request for the inclusion of physical education and visual and performing arts, which we have included for the last two years in the primary school curriculum.

In addition, we included morals, values, ethics, citizenry development, character development, agri-science, science, health and family life education. In that component we have introduced the continuous assessment component which gave the 20 per cent marks before the SEA examination. So we needed to have a number of expert moderators and monitors for these areas, and this is the fee we had paid to them. I think, if I am correct, there are about 80 monitors—147 moderators and monitors in the primary school curriculum.

Mr. Chairman: All right. We go on to Sub-Head 003, Minor Equipment Purchases; Item 001, General Administration; Item 006, Primary Education; Item 007, District Services Division; Item 008, Rudranath Capildeo Learning Resource Centre; Item 009, Early Childhood Care and Education Unit. I recognize the hon. Member for Laventille East/Morvant.

Miss Cox: Mr. Chairman, through you to the Minister, I wanted to find out about the Early Childhood Care and Education Centre in Morvant. What is the present—?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Yeah, sure, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair and Member, you know, we completed construction of 53 new Early Childhood Care and Education centres. If I search the list for those that we did in the PNM constituencies—

Mr. Chairman: No, no, no.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Well, sorry.

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Mr. Chairman: I think the Member asked if you could give her an update. You see, we have a problem with time and we have about 20 more to complete until 12 o'clock.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Is that Cosmos Street, Coconut Drive in Morvant.

Miss Cox: Yes.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: That had a sewer problem for a while, and I think we have now put in a new type of sewer system. If it is not functioning yet, it will soon be functioning.

Mr. Chairman: All right. So could we go on to Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies? The hon. Member for Port of Spain North St. Ann's/West.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Hon. Minister, the grant you are saying for secondary schools education programme, what is that programme about please? Thank you.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Where is that?

Mrs. Mc Intosh: It is Sub-Item 24 under 04.

Mr. Chairman: Under 04, okay. You are dealing with Regional Bodies under 04?

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Sub-Item 24.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, I understand; I understand. Okay.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: 76.

Mr. Chairman: Right. Educational Institutions. The hon. Minister. The Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West has gone ahead of you. We gone to educational institutions long time.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: "Ah press de gas."

Mr. Chairman: Of course. You have to wait on the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Grants paid in respect of government-assisted denominational primary schools—*[Interruption]*

Mrs. Mc Intosh: It says educational programme.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: We have 317 primary schools that are managed by denominational boards. We pay approximately \$34 million for the cleaning and maintenance and requisites to the primary schools. So the grants to government secondary schools—that is money that we give to each one of the secondary schools—the government secondary schools. I have it here—this is what I have been saying—they have the ability to spend the money.

For secondary schools annually, we gave to the denominational secondary schools \$60 million. That takes care of the practical subjects, books, materials and services, running costs, minor equipment and protective gear. So there are 39 denominational secondary schools. When I look through the list here, we pay approximately \$7 million per month to these 30-something schools, and the total we pay to these schools range between \$1.5 million, \$1.6 million, \$1.9 million, \$1.7 million and \$1.2 million. So it is a range depending on the size of the schools and the number of students.

These government secondary schools are given a substantial amount to the tune of—the 39 schools—over \$60 million for them to spend as they believe that they should in the management of the schools, and value about \$50,000, they seek the guidance and the protection of the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Now, Mr. Chairman, we asked a question about the textbooks. Sub-Item 27 Textbook Rental Primary Schools and Sub-Item 30 Textbook Rental Secondary Schools. I see you have increases here.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: But I would like to know, why is the Ministry of Education still owing moneys to local and foreign publishers since 2013? I want to know why the local and foreign publishers have not to date received purchase orders for textbooks.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Just today, I think we had a Cabinet Note for that and they have been preparing the orders to give to them pretty shortly. So before the end of this fiscal year, they would have been given the purchase orders. Most of these books now that we are purchasing are from sole publishers. They are not varying publishers. So, the tendering process is not difficult with that. There is only but 6 per cent of the publishers that we have to tender—go through for some international tendering, but so far over the four-year period, we have purchased over 2.2 million textbooks for our students in the schools at a cost close to about \$200 million.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: What about the moneys going to the publishers?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: We are paying them now. EFCL has been the company, as a special purpose company, given in 2004, that was formed under your administration, but in 2009, I believe you all gave them the authority to purchase books which we have continued, and they purchase books on behalf of the Ministry of Education. We are trying to get the producers to bring books with PDF format now—and they are a little reluctant—for the e-textbook.

Mr. Chairman: Please. The hon. Member for Laventille East/Morvant.

Miss Cox: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I would like to know, the publishers—
[*Interruption*]

Mr. Chairman: Yes and then the Member for Tabaquite and then the Member for Laventille West and then the Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Miss Cox: I would like to be supplied with the list of publishers that were paid and those who were not paid, please.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Sure.

Miss Cox: I would like to get that list.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: We have 34 publishers.

Mr. Chairman: The Member for Laventille West and then the Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Most of them are paid. Some of them have been paid, not the full amount. One of the problems we had is the delivery. They had to satisfy the delivery.

Mr. Chairman: No problem, hon. Minister. The Member for Laventille West and then the Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Mr. Hypolite: Chair, page 176, Item 22—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Chairman: Oh, yes, I recognize the Member for Tabaquite after. Sorry.

Mr. Hypolite: Items 22 and 28 Local School Boards. Can the Minister indicate how many local school boards are there under the secondary schools and the primary schools? Can a list be provided of all those schools?

Mr. Chairman: Could you provide that list?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes, they are very easy. We have it.

Mr. Hypolite: Also, Mr. Chairman, Item 34 Grants for Expansion of the Universal ECCE. It is a new item. Can the Minister give some more information on that?

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Member for Tabaquite.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Can I just answer him?

Mr. Chairman: Oh, I thought you said you are going to provide him with the information.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Eighty-two school boards were introduced for the government secondary schools. The same school board is responsible for about two or three primary schools as a cluster for the time being, while we bring on more school boards for the primary schools, but the local school boards now are interacting with a school-based management team where the same members of the school boards are members also of the school-based management team.

So, in terms of the management of the schools, we have a school-based management team here and we have the local school boards with nine members on the local school boards with principal, vice-principal, three members of the community. So they are interacting now and managing the schools and, basically, owning the schools and this is going to improve the education system for the students. *[Interruption]* You gave me some names, and I introduced those names. The people you gave from the communities—remember I had asked all of you and I believe we put all the names of the people that you all recommended on the board.

Mr. Hypolite: Some more information, Item 34. It is a new sub, Universal ECCE.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Well, you know, we are in a strong construction programme. We have constructed 53 Early Childhood Care and Education centres. We have 31 under construction now and we have another 52 to be started pretty shortly. Of course, we have to go through the major tendering process. *[Crosstalk]* Hold on. So this is to be paid for the new construction.

Mr. Hypolite: This is for construction?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Part for construction, but part for paying for students in the public/private sector partnership for ECCE. At the moment, this year, at September, we are paying for 5,062 places in private ECCE centres. That is bringing us closer to fulfilling the goal of universal early childhood education—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh:—\$3,600 per student per year.

Mr. Chairman: Member for Arouca/Maloney, hold on. The Member for Tabaquite and then the Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Dr. Rambachan: Chair, thank you. The question was answered in terms of 34. Just that I wanted to know on 26, Special Education Resources Programme: a lot of children have difficulty, for example, in the schools. You have ADD and ADHD children, for example, and they tend to fall through the cracks. Does this include dealing with those kinds of children?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes, Member for Tabaquite. In fact, you have come straight to the point that there are a lot of students. We have 14 government special needs schools and 11 private special needs schools, and we take care of almost 3,000 students in the special needs schools. We provide materials and learning materials for these 3,000 students. Also, with the inclusive education model, we have special needs students in our mainstream schools where we get all the things for them like braille machines, et cetera.

9.50 p.m.

Miss Hospedales: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am referring to Sub-Items 22 as well as 28, with reference to the Local School Boards for both the primary and the secondary schools—could the Minister indicate exactly when those persons who are appointed to be on those boards are expected to be appointed? Because there are some boards that are not yet appointed, and if he can indicate exactly, you know, what school—well, my colleague did ask about the schools that they are assigned to.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: All right, we will verify, Member, which schools have not had their boards appointed and we will ensure that—

Mr. Chairman: Right, you will get that. So we go to Item 007, Households, then we go to Item 011, Transfers to State Enterprises—

Miss Mc Donald: I want to find out something at 011—

Mr. Chairman: Where?

Miss Mc Donald: At 011, at 05.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, go ahead.

Miss Mc Donald: Repayment of Loan and Interest - Procurement of Laptops; could you, Minister—

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Where are you? Port of Spain South—

Mr. Chairman: What Item are you on?

Miss Hospedales: We are on Households, Mr. Chair.

Miss Mc Donald: Page 177.

Mr. Chairman: We will come to you in a short while, let the Member for Port of Spain South answer.

Miss Mc Donald: Page 177, under 011, Transfers to State Enterprises, I am looking at 05. I want to find out from the Minister, these figures here represent the loan from 2010 for the purchase of laptops? What does it represents?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes. In the first year, remember when we came into office in June 2010, when the Prime Minister had promised that we will deliver the laptops to the students by September. We did not have the budgeting there so we had to borrow the money for the first set of laptops which cost about \$83 million in 2010—

Miss Mc Donald: So how much was the total?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Eighty-three million was in 2010, and so I think this might be the last year for repayment, if I am not—

Miss Mc Donald: So this represents the payment from 2010?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Payment for the borrowing for the first year.

Mr. Chairman: So you did not have to borrow for the 2011/2012—

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: No, in 2011 we budgeted and that cost \$54 million; in 2012 it was \$56 million; 2013, \$49 million, and this year it is \$46 million, so the cost for a laptop has gone down from \$4,000 each, now to \$2,250.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Member for Arouca/Maloney and then the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West.

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair, under Sub-Head 007, Sub-Item 15, Student Support Services; I am asking the Minister whether or not they intend to rectify the problem faced by Guidance Officers and Guidance Counsellors with reference to the non-payment of travelling, as well as their communication allowance, and within which time frame, how soon are they expected to get their payments?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Member, you remember you gave me that note and I brought it immediately to the Permanent Secretary. The Permanent Secretary has just advised me that the travelling aspect of it has been completed. It is just the communication aspect, 200 is going to be done. But may I say that Cabinet had passed a Note for us to expand the Student Support Services to 732, we now have one Guidance Counsellor or one Guidance Officer in every secondary school. We have School Social Workers, Clinical Psychologists and Behavioural Educational psychologists around our schools now, and taking care of the students.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Chair, I am on page 177, I think I am saying it right, Item 011, Transfers to State Enterprises; Sub-Item 03, Education Facilities Company Limited-Repayment of Interest on loan-ECCE centres. We will see, hon. Minister, that since 2013, \$21.4 million has been appropriated to EFCL for repayment of a loan to ECCE project, but this amount is not reflected on EFCL financial statement. I want to know why it is not reflected on your statements, on your notes, and what exactly was the loan for?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: The EFCL statement is not before me, Member, so, unfortunately, I cannot comment whether—

Mrs. Mc Intosh: But you will respond to this?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: I will look into it, certainly.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Thank you.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: But this is a loan repayment on a bond issue, remember we had borrowed \$400 million, which your administration had sought to do. You wanted to build 600 ECCE centres by 2012; unfortunately you built 22—

Mrs. Mc Intosh: More than that. More than that.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh:—but we borrowed the \$400 million and we built 53 so far, and this is a loan repayment on the bond issue.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Yes, I just have one last question, and this is one on the laptops. Has any assessment been undertaken to determine the impact of the laptops on the pedagogical process? Have you had an assessment conducted?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Well, Member, you spurred me on when we spoke in the debates last year and, subsequent, when we discussed things, and we did do an

evaluation. I have a very voluminous thing, I have to study it myself, and I will probably come and speak about it in Parliament. But it has benefited students and, you know now, we have moved to 21st Century “smart classroom”, every school now has a computer lab; 128 of the 134 schools have Internet connectivity, some schools have one to six labs, some labs have up to 60 computers. We have 150 ICT technicians in the schools, and we have audiovisual rooms in most schools. We gave them smart televisions and multimedia projectors and so on, so we are going ahead.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Hon. Minister, you had made a statement, you accepted that some of the laptops are not functional; how many laptops are in a state of disrepair? I am particularly concerned about Forms 4 and 5, where students have a lot of SBAs and research work to do for their exams, very critical to their CSEC. So those were the students who were first given the laptops in Form I. I understand, my information is that a lot of those laptops are in a state of disrepair. What arrangements have been made—

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: I have kept my word.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: What numbers—

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: I will tell you.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: How many are in a state of disrepair?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: I sought to get the information from the school supervisors who I asked to collect the information for the—one minute. All right, I will try to give you the information. There are a number of laptops that have to be repaired and we have been collecting the information from the principals and the supervisors. We have collected them now, and next year’s budgeting takes care of about \$10 million. We expect to use—

Mr. Chairman: So you will get the information.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: No. No. No. Sir, I am not finished. I am not finished.

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, final question and then we go to the Member for Laventille East/Morvant.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: I have been advised it is not very significant.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Well my advice is—okay. What arrangements you have put in place? I know you have \$10 million, how are you going to go about to repair?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: We have to tender. We have to get, first, what areas of the laptops are down, and we have to provide that information in the scope of work for a request for proposal for tendering. We will have to open it up to—quickly we will do it.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: I just want with your permission, Mr. Chair, hon. Minister, I just want to suggest: do you think it is beneficial—technologically-wise and cost-wise—to repair what will be now five years old, obsolete laptops, because the technology is moving fast, rather than purchase for those students, new laptops which are cheaper?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: We will have to do a cost analysis. We will do a cost analysis, Member, and we will weigh the pros and cons and then we will work on it.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Think of it, and give them new laptops in Form 5 and Form 4.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Well, if it is needed we will have to—

Mr. Chairman: The Member for Laventille East/Morvant.

Miss Cox: Thank you, Mr. Chair, under Transfers to State Enterprises, 02, National Schools Dietary Services Limited, I see an increase of \$11.3 million; what accounts for this increase?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: All right. First of all, we have increased the amount of meals to students. We now provide about 100,000 lunches and about 55,000 breakfasts, and we have now included a number of the ECCE centres, the younger children, in provision of meals for the students in the ECCE centres.

In addition, the contractors, the caterers had been complaining for years, bitterly, that they had no increase in the amount that we were paying them for the provision of a meal, and on discussions at a wide level, Cabinet passed a Note to give them an increased payment of about, I think 70 cents per meal—yes, and that will cause an increase. We pay \$1.2 million per day for school meals, and it is approximately \$236 million for the year for the students. We have now staffed the area, and we are now monitoring and evaluating the whole aspect of the use of the meals and the wastage areas and so on.

Mr. Chairman: All right, let us go. We go to Sub-Head 06, Current Transfers to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies; Item 004, Statutory Boards. We go now to the Development Programme, Sub-Head 09, Development Programme; Item 004, Social Infrastructure. [*Crosstalk*]

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Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: We are in the next book?

Mr. Chairman: We are now in the Development Programme. Yes.

Miss Mc Donald: Physical Security of Secondary Schools; I would have thought that—

Mr. Chairman: Which Item are you on?

Miss Mc Donald: I am on 380, Mr. Chair.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: What page?

Mr. Chairman: Page 85.

Miss Mc Donald: Page 85, under Physical Security of Secondary Schools. I thought that that figure was a bit low, but I do not know what it is for, so can I get an explanation there?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: But that was just one little minor aspect—fencing.

Miss Mc Donald: Pardon me.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: The fencing.

Miss Mc Donald: Fencing. Okay.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: But with the security of schools it is about \$210 million per year, and if we have three security guards—one security guard costs about \$30,000 per month, so \$360,000 per year—so three security guards are \$1.08 million per year. We spend over \$210 million for security services per year.

Mr. Chairman: We recognize the hon. Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Chair, are you at Educational Services? Have you reached there?

Mr. Chairman: We are on Development Programme under Infrastructure.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Well, I am at Educational Services.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, you can go.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Item 711, this Development of a Management Information System Unit, has this already been contracted? Is there a provider?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: My understanding is part of the Project Planning and Management Unit—

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Was this project tendered? When did it start?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Is it Library Service (NALIS)? Is it 711?

Mrs. Mc Intosh: No. No. No. This is the Development of a Management Information System Unit; tell us about it.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: We have X-amount of teachers around the country and, over the years, we have had to use files, and we are using now the IHRIS programme, to work with the IHRIS programme to computerize the information related to the teachers within the school system. My understanding about this is, today, CTB would have given a letter of award for a contract on that, I think, to PricewaterhouseCoopers.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: It was tendered?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes, of course, international tendering.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: So it has not started as yet? It has not been implemented as yet?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: No. Preliminary work has started, but we hope—completion time is about nine months.

Mr. Chairman: Let us go to Item 05, Multi-sectoral and Other Services, Infrastructure Development Fund—

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair, I have some questions on the IDF. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the hon. Members for Laventille East/Morvant, Port of Spain South, Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West, Arouca/Maloney—hon. Member for Port of Spain South, the floor is yours, then the Member for Laventille East/Morvant.

Miss Mc Donald: I am looking at page 250. I am looking at, Minister, Construction of Piccadilly Primary School, \$3 million budgeted for 2014, as well as St. Philips Government Primary School, \$3 million budgeted, nothing in 2015. Am I to assume that these two schools have already been built, or because I see a dash, nothing is happening? Clarify it please.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: First of all, I believe we are going ahead with the Lower Morvant for you.

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Miss Mc Donald: No. No. I am not Lower Morvant. I am—

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Rose Hill. Rose Hill is yours?

Miss Mc Donald: Yeah, Rose Hill.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: We have completed Rose Hill, but obviously—

Miss Mc Donald: No. No. No. Let us talk about these two here.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh:—the Member is desirous of having these two schools constructed. Receiving no allocation under the PSIP does not mean that we will not be able to construct it. We will have to have discussion for you, but in terms of the prioritization and where the funding can be available, we have 31 primary schools under construction now so, you know, and we have been able to reduce the cost of these primary schools from about \$40 million/\$45 million to about \$25 million. There is a possibility—

Miss Mc Donald: Just now, just a minute. Minister, let me help you and then I could ask you—

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: You think I need help?

Miss Mc Donald: Yeah, I want to help you.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: All right.

Miss Mc Donald: On what basis were some of these schools here? And I do not want to call out the schools' names, these schools here were selected to begin their construction. And why these two schools, Piccadilly Primary and St. Philips Government Primary, why were they not in that back batch? What was the justification or criteria for selection?

Mr. Chairman: Could you give an undertaking as to when these schools are going to be addressed?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Member, there are varying requests from all over the country. For instance, Chatham from Point Fortin, Rousillac from La Brea, Lower Morvant from Laventille East, Cap-De-Ville from Point Fortin, Point Cumana, Diego Martin West; Paramin, Diego Martin East; Belmont from St. Ann's West, San Juan Girls and Boys in St. Joseph, Fanny Village—all these have been constructed. Mr. Chair, all these have been constructed.

10.05 p.m.

We have constructed so much so far—

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Member is asking—[*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: And all these are within the constituency of—

Miss Mc Donald: Minister, you are waffling—you are waffling. [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: No, I will try my best to make sure that the schools are started.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister said that he will meet with you to discuss priorities.

Hon. Members, final two questions, the Member for Arouca/Maloney and the Member for St. Ann's East, and then we are finished.

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair, I too would like to ask the Minister exactly what has happened to the Arouca Government Primary School. The school is very old. You have instances where two classes are sharing—

Mr. Chairman: You would like to find out what is happening with the Arouca School?

Miss Hospedales: Yes. I would like to find out exactly what is going on with that school. It is in dire need of reconstruction.

Mr. Chairman: Minister, could we go direct to the answer, please; and, also let us take the Member for St. Ann's East one time.

Miss Hospedales: I will also like to find out from the Minister exactly when the Arouca library would be constructed. That is located under Multi-sectoral and Other Services at Sub-Item 029. I saw an allocation of \$9 million was made in 2014. I would like to know why has there been a reduction in that allocation from \$9 million to \$4 million in 2015. Minister, could you indicate to us exactly when would that facility be constructed?

Mr. Chairman: Both the library and the Arouca Primary School.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: The Arouca Primary School is not on the list here under the PSIP, but depending on what we see, we may have to probably go with a Cabinet Note to give the Member some assistance.

Mr. Chairman: What about the library?

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: The Arouca library—in fact, the board of NALIS would have met this week and it was tendered out. I think the cost is close to about \$18 million or \$19 million, and the work will start pretty shortly on the Arouca library.

Mrs. Thomas: Mr. Chair, I would just like to include, if you can check on the Las Cuevas Government School as well.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: That is La Fillette Government Primary.

Mrs. Thomas: No, the Las Cuevas Government School.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: I do not have that on the list here, Member. But we are building the one for you in La Fillette, and I think work has started in La Fillette already.

Mrs. Thomas: I am just asking about when—

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: La Fillette started, but we would have to look then at the Las Cuevas school as well.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 26 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: May I thank the hon. Minister of Education and your staff.

Hon. Dr. Gopeesingh: Mr. Chairman and colleagues, may I thank very kindly my colleagues here for bearing from since lunch time.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, yes; we want to thank you for bearing with us too. Thank you very much. We now go to the Minister of Tobago Development. *[Interruption and crosstalk]*

Head 59.

Question proposed: That Head 59 stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, Head 59, Ministry of Tobago Development. I now invite the hon. Minister of Tobago Development to make a few brief remarks on the priority areas of the Ministry of Tobago Development.

Hon. Dr. Baker: Chairman, let me thank the staff of the Ministry of Tobago Development for their forbearance with us for this very late hour. The Ministry's team as you would see would have journeyed from the island of Tobago to ensure that we come to the Parliament to account for the moneys spent by us under 2014, and to give the Parliament a good idea as to what the Ministry of Tobago Development intends to do in 2015.

The Ministry's overall function is the coordination of matters for which Tobago would be most interested. We are responsible for the Central

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Administrative Services of the island, and also administratively responsible for the Met Services Division, the Registrar General's Office and, of course, we are looking at legislation regarding the THA Act and all matters relating to Tobago for which we can have an input in this Parliament at this level to ensure that service delivery in Tobago is improved.

Let me thank you and I would begin.

Mr. Chairman: All right, thank you very much. Let us go on.

Hon. Members, the sum of \$126,234,800 for Head 59, the Ministry of Tobago 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. I recognize the hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Imbert: I have no questions for this Minister.

Mr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman, you just mentioned the \$126 million.

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Dr. Rambachan: Just for the sake of clarification of the records, is this \$126 million in addition to the two point whatever billion that was given to the Tobago House of Assembly? Are they two separate amounts? So in other words, in addition to the two point whatever billion we discussed for Tobago House of Assembly, is this additional money this Ministry now has to spend in Tobago?

Hon. Dr. Baker: That is correct.

Mr. Chairman: We go to Item 002, Trade and Industry; Item 005, Meteorological Services; Item 007, Registrar General. We go to Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services; Item 001, General Administration; Item 002, Trade and Industry; Item 005, Meteorological Services; Item 007, Registrar General; Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases; Item 001, General Administration; Item 005, Meteorological Services; Item 007, Registrar General. We go to Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies; Item 005, Non-Profit Institutions; Item 011, Transfers to State Enterprises. We go to the *Draft Estimates of Development Programme*, Sub-Head 09, Development Programme; Item 003, Economic Infrastructure; Item 005, Multi-sectoral and Other Services.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 59 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, hon. Minister and your team.

Hon. Dr. Baker: Thank you, Chair. Let me just thank the Parliament for the confidence it has espoused in the Ministry of Tobago Development. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Chairman: Head 63, the Ministry of the Arts and Multiculturalism. After this Ministry we go to the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development.

Hon. Members, we are at Head 63, Ministry of the Arts and Multiculturalism, \$464,117,692. I now invite the hon. Minister, if he wishes to say a few opening remarks, giving us a little idea of your priority areas, you can do so now for a few moments.

Hon. Dr. Douglas: Mr. Chairman, let me say thank you to the Members of Government and—

Mr. Chairman: No, Members of the Standing Finance Committee.

Hon. Dr. Douglas: Members of the Standing Finance Committee. I am here with my Permanent Secretary, Mr. Maurice Suite; the Deputy Permanent Secretary, Miss Patricia Boyce-Diaz, and other members of my staff here.

The Ministry of the Arts and Multiculturalism, as you are aware, is responsible for the development of the arts and the harmonious running of our society as it relates to culture in Trinidad and Tobago. We have outlined five specific areas in which we have embarked in order to make this happen, and that has to do with the development of a Ministry that could really carry the responsibility of the development of arts and culture as you know.

In the past, this Ministry has been fairly abused and used as a way station, but we are at the moment developing a strong Ministry. We are providing a lot of support for artistes and the development of the artistic products; outreach in terms of reaching out to communities through the arts; the cultural industry, monetizing the arts and culture, moving not only the development of festivals but development of culture as an industry that could make a contribution to the economy of Trinidad and Tobago and the livelihood of artistes. Finally, the development of cultural spaces, what we call “festival villages”.

As you know, in our manifesto, pages 46, 47 and 48 we have promised the development of additional spaces for the performance of the art, and we are in the

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process of developing about five of these. We have the Arouca facility; the Arima festival centre. We have the Ramleela Cultural Festival Village. We are working also with the Laventille Rhythm Section and the development of their yard. We are working on developing and regularizing a lot of the pan yards in Trinidad and Tobago, and also the Panberi pan tent; so these we continue to do. We have the Ramleela Festival Village which we are working on—

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much. [*Laughter*]

Head 63.

Question proposed: That Head 63 stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the sum of \$464,117,692 for Head 63, the Ministry of the Arts and Multiculturalism 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, Culture Division. Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services; Item 001, General Administration; Item 002, Culture Division. Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases, Item 001, General Administration; Item 002, Culture Division. Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies; Item 005, Non-Profit Institutions; Item 009, Other Transfers. Sub-Head 06, Current Transfers to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies. Item 004, Statutory Boards.

We go to the *Draft Estimates of 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 63 ordered to stand part of the Schedule. [Crosstalk]

10.20 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, we would like to thank you and your team. Thank you very much.

Hon. Dr. Douglas: Yes, I want to thank you. Also my staff for working very hard at preparing for this event, and I thank you all for coming.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much. We go to Head 30, the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development. Okay. While we are awaiting the arrival of the technocrats and the accounting officers, the PS is here.

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Hon. Members, we are now examining Head 30, the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development. This Ministry has an allocation of \$202,171,070.

I will now invite the hon. Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development to make a few brief opening remarks giving us what he considers to be his priority areas for 2014/2015. Hon. Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development, the floor is yours.

Hon. McLeod: Thank you, Chair, Members. Let me first of all introduce the members of my team, the Permanent Secretary Cecilia Greaves-Smith; Manager/CEO of the NEDCO, Mr. Julien Henry; Deputy PS in the Ministry, Mr. Dalkeith Ali; Director of Research and Planning, Mrs. Shanmatee Singh Ng Sang and the Director of Cipriani College of Labour and Cooperatives, Dr. Denise Thompson. I wish to put on the record, indeed, my appreciation for the contributions that they have been making, as we tried to fully establish what I identify as the four or five major flagships of the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development. And what we did over the past 48 months or so was identify our responsibility under the portfolio of the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development. And we sought to categorize and prioritize our work programme for the five-year period of our involvement. And we spent the first 24 months clearing the backlog of outstanding wage and salary collective agreements, and then we pounced on the development of our small business enterprises and so on, wherein we sought to transform NEDCO from being an institution which we were not proud of, into an institution which today is extending quite a hand at establishing entrepreneurship and the development of small and micro enterprises.

We are concentrating, at this time, on transforming the Cipriani College of Labour and Cooperative Studies, and also to develop fully our approach to the legislative agenda that will deal with transforming the IRA, and so many other laws that affect labour in a very, very direct way. I think we are doing quite well, except that we would have liked to see a lot more allocations so that we can more fully represent the work that we have to do. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, hon. Minister.

Head 30.

Question proposed: That Head 30 stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the sum \$202,171.070 for Head 30 the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise 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 002, Cooperatives—I recognize the Member for La Brea—Item 003, Friendly Societies. Hon. Member for La Brea.

Mr. Jeffrey: Under 02, Goods and Services. I will wait for that.

Mr. Chairman: All right. Good. Item 004, Occupational Health Authority. We go to Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services; Item 001, General Administration. I recognize the Member for La Brea and the Member for Laventille East/Morvant.

Mr. Jeffrey: Under Rent/Lease for Office Accommodation, we see \$10 million for 2013; for 2014—\$10.3 million; for 2015—\$10.5 million. My question has do with how many of the buildings that are occupied by the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development is under lease? How many are under rent and what is the total cost? That is the first question.

The second is, in Point Fortin there is a Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development office building. Is that building under lease arrangement or rental arrangement, and what is the cost of the annual money paid to the landlord? That is first question.

Mr. Chairman: That is your second question.

Mr. Jeffrey: Second question. Yeah, for 08.

Mr. Chairman: Do you have any further questions?

Mr. Jeffrey: I have other questions down the road.

Mr. Chairman: Okay.

Mr. Jeffrey: Under that same section.

Mr. Chairman: All right. Hon. Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development.

Hon. McLeod: Currently we rent 11 offices. We have some of them on particular lease arrangements. We are at 50—54 Duke Street, Port of Spain, wherein we house our conciliation department, our library, our trade unions division, our HIV/AIDS, and this is AIDS—how we call it again?—HASC—yes—and this is to deal with work place activities and so on, policies; friendly societies,

national employment service, labour inspectorate, and the farm programme which you might have seen advertised in the newspapers. We are currently inviting people to participate in the programme. If I might just give a little idea on that, although the question has not yet been asked. This time, up to a month ago, we had 1,100 participants in that programme which has seen remittances of 12 million or so Canadian dollars coming annually.

At the International Waterfront Centre, where we have our head office. Okay. We are at 40—42 St. James Street in San Fernando, and we are at the corner John and Lance Street in Montrose, Chaguanas. We are at Siparia and we are in Point Fortin.

Mr. Jeffrey: Mr. Chairman, I am asking about the number of buildings under rental arrangement. The number of buildings under lease arrangement.

Mr. Chairman: Yes. The hon. Member, you all would be able to supply that in writing?

Hon. Mc Leod: All of these that I have mentioned are rental.

Mr. Chairman: Rental.

Hon. Mc Leod: We are at Brierley Street in Sangre Grande; Eastern Main Road, Tunapuna; corner Mota and Elie Streets, Rio Claro; Gulf City, Lowlands Mall, Scarborough, Tobago. We are all over the country.

Mr. Chairman: What about Point Fortin? He asked about Point Fortin.

Hon. Mc Leod: Yes, we are at Point Fortin.

Mr. Chairman: Whether we are leased.

Hon. Mc Leod: The cost at Point Fortin, I will have to furnish that later on.

Mr. Chairman: We will furnish that to you. I recognize the Member for Laventille East/Morvant.

Miss Cox: Mr. Chairman, Sub-Item 16, Contract Employment. I see an increase of \$3 million for Contract Employment in the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development. I would like to know what accounts for this.

Mr. Chairman: Yes. The hon. Minister.

Hon. Mc Leod: We have a number of new positions to be filled. In our establishment there are some 47 vacancies at this time, and that is just the

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Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development main offices. At the OSH Authority and Agency there are many vacancies there, and that would account for the allocation that is seen in Item 16, Contract Employment.

Miss Cox: What accounted for these vacancies, these posts? Are they public service posts or contract positions?

Hon. Mc Leod: They are contract positions.

Miss Cox: What accounted for the vacancies?

Hon. Mc Leod: Well some of them are new positions. A number of people have left. I mean, we have a difficulty, I think, in almost every Ministry with terms and conditions of employment. Yes? And I say that strongly as a former trade unionist myself. We have as a result of those positions, 160 vacancies—81, a total vacancy of 81. Yeah? We have 160 contract positions in the Ministry. Yes.

Miss Cox: One hundred and sixty?

Hon. Mc Leod: One hundred and sixty. Yeah.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West and then the Member for La Brea.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Minister, I refer to Sub-Item 22, Short-Term Employment.

Hon. Mc Leod: Sub-Item 22.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Yes. How many people are employed under this Sub-Item, Short-Term Employment? And in what areas do you have short-term employment?

Mr. Chairman: The number and the areas—short-term employment.

Hon. Mc Leod: Well that number swings, eh, swings. [*Minister confers with advisor*] Where do we have such short term people? Oh, yes. It is one story. When contract positions end, and while we are awaiting the decisions of the CPO, is it?—and PMCD, we retain people on short-term contracts, three-month contracts and so on. Yeah.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for La Brea.

Mr. Jeffrey: Yes. Mr. Chairman. I come back to Item 10.

Hon. Mc Leod: Item 10.

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Mr. Jeffrey: Yes, Office Stationery and Supplies. We noticed that it is a kind of see-saw 2013—\$1.1 million; 2014—\$681,000; 2015—\$1 million. What is the policy for the distribution of office stationery and supplies?

Hon. McLeod: The policy of the distribution of stationery and supplies?

I do not understand the question.

10.35 p.m.

Mr. Jeffrey: Okay, let me explain to you. What normally happens in a lot of those offices sometimes, one office has a large supply of stationery whereas another one is in short supply. What happens is that one that is in short supply goes and orders more stationery. What I am saying is, in some offices there is an arrangement whereby you try to make sure that the level is distributed apportionately in the different offices and so on.

Hon. McLeod: Well, we would have to look at the activity of each of these offices. And I would be worried if we had an office that did not have stationery rather than having some offices with more stationery than others.

Mr. Jeffrey: Well, I think you need to check that.

Mr. Chairman: All right, could we go on to Item 002, Co-operatives?

Mr. Jeffrey: No, Mr. Chairman—

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Jeffrey: I have not yet finished—

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Jeffrey: Sub-Item 19, Official Entertainment.

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Jeffrey: From \$45,000 in 2013 to \$12,000 in 2014 and \$130,000 in 2015. The question is, what events are planned for 2015 that will trigger a 1,100 per cent increase in Official Entertainment?

Hon. McLeod: I will have to look into that one because I do not know that I have ever entertained any official entertainment. All right?

Mr. Chairman: All right, you will get something in writing. We go to Port of Spain South.

Miss Mc Donald: Mr. Chair, through you—

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Miss Mc Donald: Minister, Co-operatives, I am looking at page 196.

Hon. Mc Leod: 196.

Miss Mc Donald: 002. Exactly what bodies are under this heading, Co-operatives? That is the first question. The second one, because I am not seeing it anywhere in the accounts, perhaps I should ask you at this point. With respect to the new legislation for the Co-operatives, could you give us an update as to what is happening? I am talking about the financial co-operatives this time.

Hon. Mc Leod: Okay, at this time, we are before the Legislative Review Committee, with draft legislation for the financial co-operatives to come under the aegis of the Central Bank and for the non-financial co-operatives to remain with the Commissioner of Co-operative Development (CCD). It is essentially just separating the financial co-operatives from the non-financial co-operatives.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Member for La Brea.

Miss Mc Donald: No, he is not finished with my question.

Hon. Mc Leod: Okay, what else?

Miss Mc Donald: I asked, under that rubric—Co-operatives—what comprises, you know, who are the people under there, what bodies?

Mr. Chairman: Do you want the organizational structure and the people who make up that—

Miss Mc Donald: The co-operatives—because you have a number of co-operatives. You may have financial, you have agricultural, you have fishing—

Hon. Mc Leod: All co-operatives.

Miss Mc Donald: That is what I am saying, all co-operatives.

Hon. Mc Leod: All co-operatives.

Mr. Chairman: All right. The hon. Member for La Brea.

Mr. Jeffrey: Mr. Chairman, Sub-Item 28, Other Contracted Services—2013, \$1.4 million; 2014, \$841,000 and 2015, \$1 million. Can you tell us specifically what are the other contracted services and the amount for each service that constitutes the \$841,000 in 2014? Secondly, could you provide us with a list of the service providers expected to receive this payment?

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister.

Hon. Mc Leod: You are at Sub-Item 28, you said?

Mr. Chairman: You are on Sub-Item, what?

Miss Mc Donald: 28, Other Contracted Services.

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, that is on page 195?

Miss Mc Donald: 196.

Mr. Chairman: Oh, yes.

Hon. Mc Leod: 195. Just now, please.

Mr. Chairman: Yes. Other Contracted Services, right?

Hon. Member: Um hmm.

Mr. Chairman: Yes. What was the next question?

Mr. Jeffrey: And the third part of that same question is if he could provide us with the selection process for the selection of each provider.

Mr. Chairman: For what provider?

Mr. Jeffrey: The selection process of the providers.

Mr. Chairman: Okay.

Hon. Mc Leod: Okay, right now we have engaged Other Contracted Services to deal with our website, security access systems, Rentokil, cable, plant rentals and so on. I could give you a more elaborate list later.

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

Mr. Deyalsingh: Thank you, Chair. Chair, the hon. Minister mentioned, just recently, the financial co-operatives, he is expecting legislation and making provisions under 002. Is the Minister aware that the negotiations to the Central Bank and the co-operatives were abruptly ended on September 17, 2013 with no further input from the credit union movement and they are not willing to support the draft legislation that you spoke about because of the abrupt stoppage of negotiations with the Central Bank on September 17, 2013?

Hon. Mc Leod: You said the co-operative movement and the Central Bank?

Mr. Deyalsingh: Yes, sir. The financial co-operatives that you said will go under the Central Bank.

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Miss Mc Donald: The credit unions.

Hon. Mc Leod: Um hmm.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Are you aware that those negotiations were stopped abruptly by the Governor of the Central Bank on September 17, 2013?

Hon. Mc Leod: No, I am not aware that it was stopped abruptly.

Mr. Chairman: All right, the hon. Minister is not aware of that. So let us go on. Item 003, Friendly Societies; Item 004, Occupational Safety and Health Authority.

Miss Mc Donald: Friendly Societies, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Miss Mc Donald: One question. Minister, what is really the work of the Friendly Societies, tell me “nah”. Are they still relevant in this society?

Hon. Mc Leod: I was saying to some colleagues—if you would allow me Chair—that Friendly Societies happened when our communities were friendlier—

Miss Mc Donald: All right.

Hon. Mc Leod:—and when we did not have any provisions for people whenever they got sick, when they got old and so on. Today, we have—unlike those times when I would have gone to the lodge to pay my old lady’s 12-cent card, in the friendly society—national insurance, you have banking accounts, you have all of these, you know, and, essentially, people have stopped subscribing to friendly societies but there are friendly societies, and some of them with a lot of rich and important assets. We hear too that there are some smart persons who are jibbing legitimate members of these friendly societies.

What we are attempting to do now is to evaluate exactly what exists and determine how we are going to help those persons who have interests in these friendly societies. Now, there are some of them who do not want to release their ownership and control of these friendly societies and you have a co-operative sector that can do a lot more than what it is now doing and one would want to determine whether these friendly societies should not be incorporated into the co-operative sector so that good business can be done that will benefit people in a more fundamental way.

Mr. Chairman: We go on to Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases. Item 001, General Administration.

Mr. Jeffrey: Mr. Chairman, please do not go so fast. I want to look at Sub-Items 23 and 27.

Hon. McLeod: 23.

Mr. Chairman: Under what?

Mr. Jeffrey: Goods and Services, I am looking at Fees, page—

Mr. Chairman: No, no, we passed that long time.

Mr. Jeffrey: Mr. Chairman, my hand was up.

Mr. Chairman: Your hand was up?

Mr. Jeffrey: Yeah.

Mr. Chairman: All right, okay. Let us go back to the hon. Member. Which Sub-Item under Goods and Services you want us to go at?

Mr. Jeffrey: Yeah.

Mr. Chairman: Which Sub-Item?

Mr. Jeffrey: Page 198.

Mr. Chairman: Which Sub-Item on the page?

Mr. Jeffrey: Fees and Official Overseas Travel.

Mr. Chairman: All right.

Mr. Jeffrey: Could you provide us with a breakdown of the Fees that are expected to be paid in 2015? That is one. As far as Official Overseas Travel, Mr. Chairman, we notice that in 2013 and 2014, there was no money spent but in 2015, \$96,500 is budgeted. How are these events selected and prioritized in terms of attendance?

Mr. Chairman: Yeah. Hon. Minister, could you supply that?

Hon. McLeod: Did he say that in 2015—we spent how much?

Mr. Jeffrey: No, no. I am saying that you budgeted \$500,000.

Hon. McLeod: \$500,000?

Mr. Jeffrey: Um hmm. In Fees. We want to get a breakdown.

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Hon. Mc Leod: Now, we have some outstanding moneys that are owed and that relate to the investigation into the HCU and the issues surrounding the liquidation of non-functioning co-operatives. Okay?

Mr. Chairman: Okay?

Mr. Jeffrey: All right.

Mr. Chairman: So we go to Sub-Head 03—

Mr. Jeffrey: No, no, wait, wait, one more, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: One more?

Mr. Jeffrey: Official Overseas Travel.

Hon. Mc Leod: Aha.

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Jeffrey: What is responsible for 2015's \$96,500, when 2013 and 2014 you had a nil figure.

Hon. Member: What is the nil figure?

Mr. Chairman: You have no figure.

Hon. Mc Leod: Okay. Mr. Chairman—

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Hon. Mc Leod:—in 2011/2012, Trinidad and Tobago was elected to the governing body of the International Labour Organization and not just to represent Trinidad and Tobago but also the other 14 members of Caricom. So we are now at the level of policymaking and guiding the International Labour Organization and that involves quite a bit of travel, at least twice per year. We take with us, to these meetings, the social partners, representatives of the employers and representatives of the trade unions.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, thank you very much. We go to Minor Equipment Purchases: Item 001, General Administration; Item 002, Co-operatives; Item 003, Friendly Societies and Item 004, Occupational Safety and Health Authority. Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies: Item 001, Regional Bodies; Item 003, United Nations Bodies; Item 004, International Bodies; Item 005, Non-Profit Institutions—I recognize the Member for La Brea.

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Mr. Jeffery: 05, National Association Co-operative Society. I was kind of taken aback—

Hon. Mc Leod: Tell me the page, please.

Mr. Jeffery: Page—

Mr. Chairman: 201.

Mr. Jeffery:—201.

Hon. Mc Leod: Um hmm.

Mr. Jeffery: In 2013, you had a nil figure—

Mr. Chairman: I recognize you.

Mr. Jeffery:—all right, and again in 2014. I am heartened that you have a figure of \$7,000 in 2015. But given the situation with the intended legislation with the co-operative—with the credit union movement and so on, I thought that \$7,000 seemed rather inadequate for the work at hand.

Mr. Chairman: Minister, would you like to—all right, I will go to the Member for Port of Spain South.

Hon. Mc Leod: Are you okay?

Mr. Jeffery: No. I did not get the information.

Mr. Chairman: I go to the Member for Port of Spain South, then the Member for Laventille—

Hon. Mc Leod: About \$7,000?

Mr. Jeffery: \$7,000—“that is chicken feed for dem people man”.

Mr. Chairman: The Member for Port of Spain South, then Laventille East/Morvant and then Laventille West.

Mr. Jeffery: The man—

Hon. Mc Leod: I will come to you.

Miss Mc Donald: Under 005: Sub-Item 02—Minister, are you listening?

Hon. Mc Leod: Yeah, I am listening.

Miss Mc Donald: Good. Under 005: Sub-Item 02, Grants to Friendly Societies to cover deficits arising out of Free Card Privileges—

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Hon. Mc Leod: Um hmm.

Miss Mc Donald:—\$198,000 in 2015 up from \$92,000.

Hon. Mc Leod: Um hmm.

Miss Mc Donald: Tell me something, a dying institution, what is this Free Card Privileges that has incurred this \$198,000?

Hon. Mc Leod: A number of things we have inherited. Cabinet, in Minute No. 202 of 1982 approved a Free Card subsidy to friendly society members. Those are persons with over 30 continuous years of membership in any friendly society or lodge.

Miss Mc Donald: That is good.

Hon. Mc Leod: Yeah, but hear—

Mr. Chairman: I think you have answered the question. We go on to the Member for Laventille East/Morvant. [*Interruption*] That is very good. Let us go. [*Interruption*] Yeah, let us go to the Member for Laventille East/Morvant.

Miss Cox: Under Other Transfers.

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Miss Cox: National Entrepreneurship Development Company.

Hon. Mc Leod: Um hmm.

Miss Cox: I am surprised to see a decrease in allocation—

Hon. Mc Leod: Where are you?

Miss Cox:—\$6.6 million.

10.50 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: We are now under, Other Transfers, page 201—

Hon. Members: The last item.

Miss Cox: I am surprised to see a decrease in NEDCO.

Hon. Mc Leod: You are surprised to see a decrease.

Miss Cox: In NEDCO, and I want to know what accounts for that decrease?

Hon. Mc Leod: Okay, we would have liked, really, to have a bigger allocation than is put here, but NEDCO is really coming into its own. It is on a transformative path, so that where as we would have, up to 2010, we would have had a delinquency ratio of 89 per cent, nonperforming loans, because loans were just given to people. I mean, there were some people on behalf of NEDCO appointed by certain other people, right, who were looking for persons who wanted loans. They had no business plan, no nothing. We have been able to reduce that, significantly, to about 39 per cent, and we are still drilling down into that, because if people have loans, if they have business plans, they are going into business, the only excuse that they must have is if the business crashes. They must pay their loans, and we are not giving any handouts to anybody, we are not going to continue the operation of any slush fund.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, hon. Minister. We are going to Development Programme now. We go on to Item 003, Economic Infrastructure; Item 004—[*Interruption*]

Miss Mc Donald: Mr. Chair, 003.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, 003.

Miss Mc Donald: Under 011, Minister, Establishment of Community-Based Business Incubators, I noted that you have spent in 2013 \$6.9 million; 2014 seems like \$9.4 million, and there is an estimate of \$12 million for 2015. I am wondering, for Port of Spain South, I have not heard about this Community-Based Incubator in Port of Spain South, especially East Port of Spain. We would like to get some business initiatives in there.

Hon. Mc Leod: Now, this is something that is growing, yeah. And—[*Interruption*]

Miss Mc Donald: We could help you grow it.

Hon. Mc Leod: And we have established incubators in Penal, Siparia, in Sangre Grande, in Barataria/San Juan. We have gone to Diego Martin, we are in Point Fortin. I do not have any in Pointe-a-Pierre and I do not have any in La Romaine. [*Crosstalk*]

Miss Mc Donald: So what does it involve?

Hon. Mc Leod: We are looking at almost every area where there is need for such “Enterprises”. So we are going bit by bit. This is something that we established in 2012, and it is growing, it is doing very well, and I want again to complement the people.

Mr. Chairman: Item 05, Multi-Sectoral and Other Services.

Mr. Jeffrey: Mr. Chairman, “meh hand up again”.

Mr. Chairman: Infrastructure Development Fund—okay, final question before we close up. Final question.

Mr. Jeffrey: Mr. Chairman, Item 003, Implementation of the Fair Share Programme, \$1.5 million in 2013, it went down to \$500,000 in 2014 and nil for 2015. Why is there no allocation for 2015? Is it that the FairShare Programme has failed?

Hon. Mc Leod: No, the FairShare Programme as a matter of fact has begun to get wings and it is beginning to fly. And it is accounted for in the recurrent budget.

Mr. Chairman: All right.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 30 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Miss Mc Donald: Mr. Chair, you are ignoring me. When did we do IDF?

Mr. Chairman: You can speak with me after. [*Laughter*] Thank you very much hon. Minister and your team.

Hon. Mc Leod: I thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman: We now go on to the next item; that is the Ministry of Public Administration. You will talk to me after.

Miss Mc Donald: He did not call IDF.

Mr. Chairman: I called IDF. You were not listening. [*Laughter*] Let us go to the Ministry of Public Administration.

Hon. Members, we have before us, Head 31, the Ministry of Public Administration. Head 31, Ministry of Public Administration, \$430,305,500. I now invite the hon. Minister of Public Administration, if she so desires, to make a brief opening statement as it concerns the Ministry’s overall priorities for 2014/2015. Hon. Minister.

Hon. Mrs. Seepersad-Bachan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, given the lateness of the time, I will not spend more than two minutes by just saying first of all, just to re-establish that the Ministry of Public Administration is responsible for Human Resource Management Policy, training and development of public

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officers. We all know, and we have been saying this for quite some time now, that the HR function in the public service is fragmented. As you know we have these institutions, such as the Public Service Commission, Teaching Service Commission, Police Service Commission, Judicial and Legal Service Commission, all supported administratively by the Service Commissions Department.

These institutions are independent, constitutionally, and they are responsible for the appointment, promotion, transfers and discipline of public officers. The Personnel Department is responsible for terms and conditions of public officers and contract officers. Sometimes even we would talk about classification of jobs; we speak sometimes of job evaluation as we have heard here today. And I say this because they are also named, the Chief Personnel Officer is named in the Constitution with this responsibility. The framers of our Constitution in their wisdom, designed our Constitution as such with these institutions to ensure that the political directorate cannot influence appointments, promotions, et cetera.

Today, it is well established as we have heard throughout, how many times we have looked at the deficiencies in our HRM, Human Resource Management, of the public service. We know that these institutions are not meeting the requirements of a modern 21st Century, citizen centric, public service.

Mr. Chairman, I say this because our focus here, since we have started over the last two years, is that we have established our Gold to Diamond, our journey, which is a 10-year programme. But very much in this particular budget we have focused on our development programme in reforming these institutions, the Service Commissions Department, the Personnel Department, the Ministry of Public Administration. And therefore, I hope Members will support the development programme. We recognize that in order to meet the needs of a 21st Century public service there is much urgent reform required of these Service Commissions and the Service Commissions Department, among other public service transformation initiatives designed to take our public service into the 21st Century.

Mr. Speaker, I welcome my Permanent Secretary, Gillian McIntyre; Deputy Permanent Secretary, Prabha Maharaj and other Members of the public service. We are ready for our questions.

Head 31.

Question proposed: That Head 31 stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the question is \$430,305,500 for Head 31, the Ministry of Public Administration is comprised of moneys proposed for its 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 Member for Point Fortin.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Thank you, Chairman. I want to go to Sub-Item 08, and also at the same time I am posing this question as well to a number of items in terms of Salaries and Cost Of Living Allowance as well, where it is indicated that there are a number of vacant positions. I juxtapose this on the fact that I am not sure that this Ministry has what it takes to fulfil its objectives, especially given the fact that with the last Global Competitiveness Index, 2014, the most problematic factors for doing business in Trinidad was the inefficient government bureaucracy.

So my concern is Sub-Item 08 and further items down the road which I do not then have to detail—do you have the personnel to even transform the public service—

Hon. Mrs. Seepersad-Bachan: I just want to say—[*Interruption*]

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon:—to have the citizen centric public service that you want to have.

Hon. Mrs. Seepersad-Bachan: First of all, I want to say that the public service transformation is not just the job of the Ministry of Public Administration.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: That is right.

Hon. Mrs. Seepersad-Bachan: The Ministry of Public Administration does not have direct control over other Ministries, and I think sometimes that is erroneously communicated to the public. I mean, sometimes I think, even at the last meeting here on Tuesday evening that, you know, Members felt that probably the Ministry of Public Administration is responsible for vacancies and appointing people into vacant contract positions. That is indeed not so. What the Ministry does is prepare these initiatives, policies, measures, programmes, procedures, training which other Ministries must now adopt in order to implement.

But Member, I just wanted to go to what you are talking about in Sub-Item 08, and I noticed that that was something that kept coming up over and over, and I just wanted to really raise this issue. This is a book that I noticed no one was reading from, but it identifies all the posts for every head—[*Interruption*]

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: I am just concerned about yours.

Hon. Mrs. Seepersad-Bachan:—all the public service positions. And if you note in there, we will find, for example, I will tell you from my Ministry, so I do not want you to be confused with the whole public service. As detailed here under 01, Personnel Expenditure, Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance, you will find it under every Head, whether it is Public Service Academy, PMCD, et cetera, every division.

In addition to that, you will have vacant posts without incumbents. I think a lot of people were confusing it. Salaries and cost of living allowances include all posts that are established positions that are current and may have acting in them as well. But the vacant post, what we call—sometimes we call them vacant, vacant, meaning there is no one in it, but there are several reasons for having this vacant, vacant with no one in it. Most of the times and I had mentioned this in my contribution in the debate, a lot of the times these positions are no longer relevant. They are obsolete. As I had indicated, we are talking about a number of positions—[*Interruption*]

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: My question. My direct question is, is this hampering your delivery of excellent public service?

Hon. Mrs. Seepersad-Bachan: Member, so coming back to just this point, what you will find throughout the public service is that you have a proliferation of contract positions to make up for the skill sets that are not available on the establishment. So, if I just give you an example of my own Ministry, we will note that I have 252 positions. If you look in this book you will see that there are 252 established positions appointed by the Service Commissions. And in there you will find that we have 83 substantive holders, 75 of these positions are vacant posts with bodies in them, some of them acting but you have 94 positions without bodies. And these 94 if you look at it you will see that there are several of these that need to be abolished.

So when Members were telling you here about when you are referring to vacant posts a lot of the times it is because these posts have to be abolished. How is it dealt with, if you go now to Goods and Services and look under Contract Employment you will see that is where we have been able to bring in the skill sets required.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: I will question you on the Contract Employment when we get there.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, let us go.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: But I still did not find out whether or not, I just want to get a yes or no answering from you, is the fact of these vacant positions affecting the modernization of the public service?

Hon. Mrs. Seepersad-Bachan: Well, again too, we are continuing to build the capacity within the public service, and that is not only in the Ministry of Public Administration. And if we want transformation we would like to have it throughout all the Ministries. And you will see that is why we have designed new positions, new job specifications, we have been going through a lot of training and development, including the Ministry of Public Administration.

Mr. Chairman: We go to Item 006, Public Management Consulting Division; Item 007, Public Service Academy; Item 009 Public Service Transformation Division; Item 010, Scholarships and Advanced Training Division. I recognize the Member for Point Fortin.

11.05 p.m.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Item 010, under Scholarships and Advanced Training Division, I note a substantial increase from \$2 million to \$3.5 million in salaries and appointment of persons to particular positions. What positions are these, and to achieve what objective?

Hon. Mrs. Seepersad-Bachan: Again, there are what we call established positions. We have had 16 additional public service positions approved through the reorganization of the Scholarships Division. As you noted, I also mentioned about the Scholarships Division going through a major modernization programme in order to allow for the e-platform that we have implemented—STATIS—and, therefore, because of wanting to improve our customer service—because as well as the number of scholars that we are now dealing with, it has doubled—tripled—over the last couple of years—over the last decade, we have to now step up in this—

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Right. So that means you have a number of vacant positions.

Hon. Mrs. Seepersad-Bachan: Well, we have just filled 16.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Out of?

Hon. Mrs. Seepersad-Bachan: But this was a reorganization. It was not there that it was vacant all the time. We organized, put in a new structure and identified 16 new positions.

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Mr. Chairman: Item 015—

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Okay. Under 010 as well. Is there a new Cabinet-appointed committee under this Scholarships Division? I am concerned because that is a division that has not always worked to the best. So what is that new committee?

Hon. Mrs. Seepersad-Bachan: Well, you will find it under Goods and Services, I think, under Remuneration.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Under Item 14, Scholarships and Advanced Training.

Hon. Mrs. Seepersad-Bachan: Remuneration. Yes, there is a Scholarships and Advanced—Scholarships committee. It is a selection committee. As I had explained, you know, they carry out the interviews after you have gone through a process of eligibility of the candidates, determining if they are eligible based on specified criteria, then determining if they have a pass mark based on their academic qualifications, experience, likelihood to come back and make a contribution to the development based on their study plan. And then if they are shortlisted, they are interviewed by this committee.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Okay.

Hon. Mrs. Seepersad-Bachan: And if you notice, it has gone up as well because we have been holding more selection committee meetings based on—

Mr. Chairman: All right, let us go. We are going to Item 015. Thank you very much. Item 015 is Strategic Services and Information Technology. We go to Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services. 001, General Administration.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Chair.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member?

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Chair, line 05, Telephones. This is increasing from an actual of \$2.8 million to \$5 million for telephone expenses. Are you opening a call centre or something? What is this about? It is an increase of \$2.2 million in telephone expenses.

Hon. Mrs. Seepersad-Bachan: We have a number of divisions like PMCD which is located in Chaguanas. A number of these divisions had their own PBX. We have moved towards centralizing. So you will see stationery and supplies and telephones would have gone up, and you will see that there is a—

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Substantial.

Hon. Mrs. Seepersad-Bachan: You will see that there is like a \$450,000 decrease in PMCD for PBX for telephones because it is now consolidated in this section under Goods and Services, General Administration. In addition to that, as you know, we are putting a number of new digital data SIMS in smartphones et cetera, and Flagstaff, where we have a number of units available for consultants and so on, when they are visiting Trinidad and Tobago, we have just installed Internet services. So you will find that is why the cost has gone up.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: 16, Contract Employment has gone up to \$11 million. I am concerned about Contract Employment. Correct me, please. I am understanding that some contracts are for six years.

Hon. Mrs. Seepersad-Bachan: No, there are no contracts for six years, and I am just saying that. That is a standard policy across the public service. Contracts are for three years.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Yeah. Well, I have asked you to correct me.

Hon. Mrs. Seepersad-Bachan: What we are moving to, we have suggested that instead of these—because the time—did you just hear many Ministers today speak about how long it takes to get renewals? We have moved to what is called six-year contract plans, and that is where Ministries now can say, “All right, I have a six-year plan and I would need this contract position for six years”, but it does not mean that a person gets a contract for six years. It could be two, three-year contracts, the maximum.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: The maximum is three years.

Hon. Mrs. Seepersad-Bachan: Three years, yes.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Do you have a number of—do you intend to hire many more people under this line 16? Because you are going up to \$11 million.

Hon. Mrs. Seepersad-Bachan: Okay. This here is where we have hired, what you call public management analysts. You mentioned how are we getting the cadre of skills. This is how we are doing it. We are using a lot of the associate professionals who are returning scholars, transitioning them into the public management analyst positions so that we can develop a cadre of skills of change management expertise who can go through the public service to help with transformation.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Change management experts, new persons?

Hon. Mrs. Seepersad-Bachan: Yeah. Well, you know, we find young people. You know, they are very excited; they are very enthusiastic and they tend to support projects.

Mr. Chairman: Item 006, Public Management Consulting Division; Item 007, Public Service Academy; Item 009, the Public Service Transformation Division; Item 010, Scholarships and Advanced Training Division; Item 015, Strategic Services and Information Technology.

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair, you are not looking down this way.

Mr. Chairman: Would you like to raise a matter?

Miss Hospedales: Yes, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, I recognize you.

Miss Hospedales: Item 010, Sub-Item 16, Contract Employment. Could the Minister indicate the number of persons that are on contract and if there are any vacancies and in what unit?

Hon. Mrs. Seepersad-Bachan: This is Scholarships and Advanced Training Division? In fact, I can pass to you, Member, all the contract positions we have in each of the divisions, who are employed. And just to give you an overall, we have—

Mr. Chairman: Right. I think that you can pass that in writing.

Hon. Mrs. Seepersad-Bachan: Yes, but—

Mr. Chairman: We go on to Item 015—

Hon. Mrs. Seepersad-Bachan: But, Mr. Chairman, just to let her know, yes, we have engaged under the contracted services—because you did say on contract positions. We have been, because we have had to beef up the Scholarships and Advanced Training Division.

Mr. Chairman: Item 015, Strategic Services and Information Technology; Item 018, Strategic Human Resource and Management Division (ICT) Secretariat; Item 019, Diamond Division. We go to Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases. Item 001, General Administration; Item 006, Public Management Consulting Division; Item 007, Public Service Academy; Item 010, Scholarships and Advanced Training Division; Item 015, Strategic Services and Information Technology; Item 018, Strategic Human Resource and Management Division (ICT) Secretariat; Sub-Head 04: Current Transfers and Subsidies; Item 001,

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Regional Bodies; Item 002, Commonwealth Bodies; Item 003, United Nations Organizations; Item 011, Transfers to State Enterprises.

We go now to the Estimates of the Development Programme Sub-Head 09, Development Programme. Item 004, Social Infrastructure. Yes I recognize the Member for Point Fortin.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: 019 and 020, Programme of Development Scholarships and Post Graduate Scholarship. Could you provide in writing for me, the details of the particular disciplines that are covered here, and whether or not—please indicate whether these are in line with the country's needs. But you can put that in writing to us.

Mr. Chairman: All right, thank you. We go to Item 005, Multi-sectoral and Other Services; we go to Infrastructure Development Fund. I recognize the Member for Point Fortin.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Again, this E-Government and Knowledge Brokering Programme on 046, what is the measurement of success? You have spent \$40 million in 2014 and you are asking for another \$50 million. What is your measurement of success of this?

Hon. Mrs. Seepersad-Bachan: Well, we can also provide you in writing. I had named some of the projects that we were involved in, you know, in terms of this particular programme.

Mr. Chairman: And you want to provide those in writing?

Hon. Mrs. Seepersad-Bachan: You want it in writing, or you want it—

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Please do. Put it in writing.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, put it in writing. Thank you.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Chair, one other item. Chair, maybe she can provide in writing for me as well, 053, this Productivity Improvement Programme, which, again, I am concerned about because I think we have a poor reflection in terms of the Global Competitiveness Index. So I am concerned about our productivity levels and so on. What was that increase of the \$7 million for?

Hon. Mrs. Seepersad-Bachan: Chairman, this is the programme that we call the Diamond Certification Programme. It was designed according to the Global Competitiveness Index. It was designed in accordance with the Ease of Doing Business Report and our own local surveys that were done here; the MORI polls, et cetera. We have about 32 pilots on board right now, which are actual Government

services that are going for diamond certification. That is the programme that we are running right now. It includes schools; it includes—

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: And this is the Productivity Improvement Programme?

Hon. Mrs. Seepersad-Bachan: Yes. This is part of the Productivity Improvement Programme.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Okay. Send me the details about the increase in \$7 million. Let us see exactly the details of that.

Hon. Mrs. Seepersad-Bachan: It is to pay for independent assessors to assess these institutions. It pays for the training—

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Put it in writing.

Hon. Mrs. Seepersad-Bachan: Okay, sure.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Thank you.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 31 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, hon. Minister, and your team.

Hon. Mrs. Seepersad-Bachan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the members of our team from the Ministry of Public Administration.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much. Head 34, the Ministry of Transport. And we ask the Ministry of Public Utilities to stand by.

Hon. Members, we are on Head 34 right now, the Ministry of Transport, \$1,157,755,500. I will now invite the hon. Minister to make a few opening remarks, if he so desires, on his priority areas of his Ministry for 2014/2015. Hon. Minister?

Hon. Cadiz: Thank you, Chairman. It is 11.16 and, therefore, I will pass on that. But thank you very much and let us go right into it.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much.

Head 34.

Question proposed, That Head 34 stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, this sum for Head 34 for the Ministry of Transport is comprised of moneys proposed for expenditure under the following Sub-Heads and Items to be found in the *Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure*

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and the *Draft Estimates of Development Programme*. Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure; Item 001, General Administration; Item 002, Transport; Item 003, Maritime Services.

We go to Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services; Item 001, General Administration; Item 002, Transport Division; Item 003, Maritime Services. We go to Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases; Item 001, General Administration; Item 002, Transport; Item 003, Maritime Services. We go to Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies; Item 001, Regional Bodies; Item 003, United Nations Organizations; Item 005, Non-Profit Institutions; Item 006, Households; Item 008, Subsidies; Item 009, Other Transfers; Item 011, Transfers—

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman—

Mr. Chairman: Which one you—

Mr. Imbert: Page 222, 008.

Mr. Chairman: And which Item are you under?

Mr. Imbert: It is only one.

Mr. Chairman: Subsidies, okay. Thank you. The hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Imbert: Could the Minister explain why the subsidy on the coastal steamers has increased from \$180 million in 2013 to \$240 million in 2015?

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister of Transport.

Mr. Imbert: By \$60 million.

Hon. Cadiz: Mr. Chairman, the Government provides a ferry service between Trinidad and Tobago comprising two passenger vehicle ferries and one cargo ferry. In December of last year—of 2013—we had a major failure on the current freight ferry known as the *Warrior Spirit*. We lost an engine on it and the owners of the ferry, or the agents, took in excess of two months before they could repair the engine. That vessel has become very, very unreliable and, therefore, it was felt that the responsibility that we have in providing a reliable and, in addition to that, a safe service to and from Tobago, we would have to engage another ferry, which we have, in fact, done.

11.20 p.m.

And therefore, we will see the increase there of roughly just over \$50 million for that, and those funds are mobilization, the charter hire, some infrastructure works and that is where we are with that.

Mr. Imbert: Could the Minister clarify, you said that line item include some infrastructure works? Is that true?

Hon. Cadiz: Yeah, there are some works that have to be done because the ferry that we have, which is—the name of the ferry is the *Superfast Galicia* and she is a larger vessel than what was currently being used. In fact, the *Warrior Spirit*, the size of the *Warrior Spirit* had actually outlived its usefulness with Tobago, especially with the Tobago distributors and other people who use the ferry to move vehicles up and down. It became a major problem with the size and there was a waiting list, et cetera, et cetera.

So it was felt that if we were going to charter a new ferry, that we should, in fact, be looking for a larger ferry considering that the *Warrior Spirit* had already reached its maximum years ago. Hence the reason, in going out for the larger ferry, we had some infrastructural works that we had to do.

Mr. Imbert: All right. Are these infrastructure works at the Port of Port of Spain? And if the answer is yes, when did the work start; is it finished or is it still in progress?

Hon. Cadiz: All right. The infrastructural works, we had already started prior to the replacement ferry coming in, we had actually started to do work in what is known as the old rum bond. The old rum bond area on the port, which is the loading area for the freight ferry for Tobago, was in a bad state of disrepair. It had not been properly done from the inception. Part of the jetty was still wooden—imagine that, after all these years—and therefore, a contract was actually issued, I think, in September or October or it was tendered in September, 2013.

Mr. Imbert: This is before you bought the boat?

Hon. Cadiz: Long before.

Mr. Imbert: So how are you tendering works for a boat that you had not yet acquired? I am dealing with the infrastructure work in this line item.

Hon. Cadiz: No, I think the Member should listen to what I am saying before he makes a comment.

Mr. Imbert: You are not making sense.

Hon. Cadiz: What I am saying is that the loading area for the *Warrior Spirit*, up to September 2013, had started to collapse and therefore, the replacement ferry for the *Warrior Spirit* was not even contemplated in September 2013 but the work had to be done anyhow. When we went out for the larger ferry, we determined

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then the repair work on the Tobago ferry loading area had already started. When the larger ferry was contracted, it was felt that we would go ahead and expand the works one time on the Tobago ferry loading area because any future ferry that had to come to do the run would obviously have to be a larger ferry, and therefore we decided to take the bull by the horns and to go ahead and do that one time.

Mr. Imbert: But you are not answering the question. Is the work in Port of Spain?

Hon. Cadiz: The work in Port of Spain is in progress.

Mr. Imbert: Has it started? Is it finished or is it in progress?

Hon. Cadiz: The work is in progress and has been in progress. Okay.

Mr. Imbert: Fine. Is this the same work that the Prime Minister came into this Parliament months ago and said would be finished in a couple of weeks so that this Galicia vessel could berth properly? Are you saying that the Galicia vessel cannot berth properly because the infrastructure work is not done?

Hon. Cadiz: The Galicia is being berthed at the berth—shed three on the—

Mr. Imbert: I am talking about the location for the loading of cargo that it is supposed to be loaded at. Has the work been done or not?

Hon. Cadiz: The Galicia has a very safe berth off of shed three on the Port of Port of Spain. Okay? There were minor works that had to be done in order to utilize the ferry properly and those works were started and those works have been completed, Chairman. Okay? So the works that the Prime Minister spoke of when she did, however long ago, those works were started and completed and the Galicia is operating in a very safe manner at the Port of Port of Spain.

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

Mr. Imbert: No, Mr. Chairman, I am not finished, I am still on this item because the Minister is not dealing with my question. Are you telling me that the permanent berth for the Galicia which would allow containerized cargo to be loaded on this vessel efficiently and quickly has been completed or is it not completed? And is it not a fact that it is berthing down close to the Cruise Ship Complex and because it does not have a proper berth, the boat is not being used efficiently, and only two or three containers can be loaded per day on this vessel which could carry much more cargo, and therefore, the expenditure on this vessel is a complete waste of time? Could you answer that, please?

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Hon. Cadiz: All right. I will try my best to try to explain to the Member what is happening here, again.

Mr. Imbert: He is not speaking the truth.

Mr. Chairman: No, you cannot say that.

Hon. Cadiz: No, no, excuse me, excuse me. I ask him to retract that, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Member, please, you know better than that.

Mr. Imbert: I am waiting for my answer.

Hon. Cadiz: I am waiting to hear the retraction.

Mr. Imbert: Retract what?

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, you cannot say the Member is not speaking the truth. You know that is unparliamentary.

Mr. Imbert: Okay, I retract that.

Hon. Cadiz: If he does not want to retract that, I will not answer him.

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, he has withdrawn it, let us move on.

Hon. Cadiz: Very simple.

Mr. Imbert: Get to the point; answer the question.

Mr. Chairman: He has withdrawn it.

Hon. Cadiz: The berth—[*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: Yes, but let us—

Mr. Imbert: Answer the question. Is the boat loading properly or not?

Mr. Chairman: All right, listen—Member for Diego Martin Central—because it seems like—the hon. Minister is trying to answer as best he can and he is not satisfying the Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Imbert: No, he is not.

Mr. Chairman: So I have to move on. The Member for Diego Martin Central.

Mr. Imbert: He is speak inaccurately. [*Continuous crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: Yes, let us have one meeting, please.

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Mr. Imbert: Not saying the whole truth; not speaking the whole truth.

Mr. Chairman: Please, please.

Dr. Browne: Same Sub-Item, Chairman and Minister, during this fiscal year, you indicated that you were evaluating two LNG fast ferries. What fuel does the Galicia use? That is the first question.

Hon. Cadiz: You want the answer now? Diesel.

Mr. Chairman: The next question.

Dr. Browne: That is not LNG.

Hon. Cadiz: Not that I am aware of. No, I think there is a major difference between LNG and diesel.

Dr. Browne: Exactly. What is the status of the evaluation of those two LNG fast ferries?

Hon. Cadiz: I think the Member is jumping the gun here. There are ferries—

Dr. Browne: It is a question. You could call it jumping the gun. You cannot characterize my question as jumping the gun. Answer the question.

Dr. Moonilal: Who you think you talking to?

Dr. Browne: I am talking to him.

Mr. Chairman: No, this matter—

Hon. Cadiz: This has nothing to do with LNG.

Dr. Browne: Yes, the fast ferries, the coastal steamers.

Mr. Chairman: No, I think you are jumping the gun. I think you better cool it. We will come to that area. You are going too fast.

Dr. Browne: No, I am not jumping the gun.

Mr. Chairman: No, well you are going too fast.

Dr. Browne: Okay, fair enough.

Mr. Chairman: We will come to that particular matter of the LNG fast ferry. But let me look at the Member for St. Joseph and then come back to the Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Hon. Minister, going back to what you have just recently said on the *Superfast Galicia*, could you tell us what is the container capacity of that ferry and how many containers per trip does that ferry currently carry?

Hon. Cadiz: The *Superfast Galicia*, she has a capacity of 7,320 tonnes.

Mr. Deyalsingh: How many containers would that—

Hon. Cadiz: Well, it all depends on how many containers—

Mr. Deyalsingh: Average, average.

Hon. Cadiz: Well, you cannot average it because if all your load is containers, she will take only containers but if she is taking containers, she is taking trucks, she is taking cars, she is taking—all kinds of other loads, it does not matter.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Mr. Chairman, let me just rephrase it then. Of the 100 per cent cargo capacity of the *Superfast Galicia*, what percentage of that is currently used on a trip by trip basis?

Mr. Chairman: Could you supply that information now or you could—

Hon. Cadiz: Yes, I could supply that information to him.

Mr. Chairman: You could supply it now.

Hon. Cadiz: No, I will give it to him.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Thank you.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, on the same item, could the Minister tell me how long the *TT Express* has been operating on three engines or not operating on all engines? Does this include the acquisition of spare parts that will allow the ferry to go back to full operations or are we going to have another year with the ferry taking four hours to get to Tobago instead of two? Could the Minister answer that?

Hon. Cadiz: Chair, which line item is that?

Mr. Chairman: We are on Subsidies, hon. Member.

Mr. Imbert: Yes, yes, this is for coastal steamers. So could the Minister tell us how much of the \$240 million is for repairs, critical repairs to the fast ferry; how long has this fast ferry been running on three engines or inadequately and how long does Trinidad and Tobago have to wait to get the Express running back on four engines properly so it makes the trip in two and a half hours instead of the current four hours which it has been doing for the last year under this Minister?

Hon. Cadiz: That vessel will be going on dry dock very shortly. In fact, we are making arrangements now to take her out of service to go on dry dock. She has a major engine repair that has to be done and she has to be out of the water to do it, so that will be done as soon as she gets up on the dry dock, we will fix it.

Mr. Imbert: Not answering the question.

Mr. Chairman: We go to Sub-Head 06, Current Transfers to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies; Item 004 Statutory Boards. Hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, does this \$108 million for the Port Authority, could the Minister explain to me why for 2014, you had to contribute this amount of money to the Port Authority? Why is the Port Authority running at a loss under this administration?

Hon. Cadiz: I seem to remember the hon. Member was at one time also in charge of the—

Mr. Imbert: I am talking in 2014. Mr. Chairman—

Hon. Cadiz: And he fully understands that the service—

Mr. Imbert:—I am speaking about 2014.

Hon. Cadiz: That the service is subsidized.

Mr. Imbert: Why is the port running at a loss in 2014?

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, but allow him to answer the question, please.

Mr. Imbert: But he is talking about 2010.

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, but let him answer the question. You cannot ask a question and then tell him how to answer it.

Mr. Imbert: But he is not answering it properly.

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, but let him answer it.

Mr. Imbert: “He ducking, he dodging.”

Mr. Chairman: Please, please, Minister, you have my protection.

Hon. Cadiz: The Port Authority, as the Member is very very well aware, has the—the efficiency at the Port of Port of Spain is not what it is supposed to be and successive administrations have failed—okay?

Mr. Imbert: We are talking about 2014.

Hon. Cadiz:—have failed to do certain things on the port and I will give you one instance. The big ship-to-shore cranes that you see lifting containers off vessels and to put them on land, the lifespan of those cranes is roughly 20 years.

We are running 35-year-old cranes. So the previous administration failed miserably to actually change out the equipment and the answer to the question to the Member—

Mr. Imbert: Answer the question, I am talking about 2014.

Hon. Cadiz: Two of us cannot speak at the same time.

Mr. Chairman: Well, he has answered the question to the best of his ability and he is answering the question. If you do not want to hear it, I will go to Sub-Head 09 Development Programme. [*Crosstalk*] The hon. Minister is—

Mr. Imbert: No, no, Mr. Chairman, there is another Sub-Item here, Public Transport Service Corporation. Does this \$290 million include the acquisition of any buses?

Hon. Cadiz: Which heading is that—sorry?

Mr. Imbert: Same page.

Mr. Chairman: Public Transportation Service Corporation, page 223, Sub-Item 52.

Mr. Imbert: And the question is: Does the \$290 million for the PTSC include the acquisition of any new buses?

Hon. Cadiz: Not under that Head, no.

Mr. Imbert: So this whole \$290 million is a subsidy?

Hon. Cadiz: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: Three hundred million dollars subsidy of the PTSC?

Hon. Cadiz: That is where we had recent negotiations.

Mr. Imbert: All right. Okay.

Hon. Cadiz: Again, labour negotiations that a previous administration failed to do.

Mr. Imbert: Okay. Let us go to another item.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, let us deal with Sub-Head 09, Development Programme.

Dr. Browne: Mr. Chairman, further questions under 06, with respect to the Port Authority of Trinidad and Tobago, can the Minister inform if there is currently Chairman at the Port Authority—substantive Chairman?

Hon. Cadiz: There is an acting Chairman that we have already proposed that the acting chairman be confirmed as the Chairman.

Dr. Browne: With respect to the Item 52, Public Transport Service Corporation, is there currently an HR manager at the PTSC since the dismissal of the last HR manager under this item?

Hon. Cadiz: There is a person in an acting position.

Dr. Browne: There is no HR Manager?

Hon. Cadiz: There is a person acting as HR manager, so there is.

Mr. Chairman: There is a person acting as HR manager.

Dr. Browne: Is there a manager of security, manager of operations, manager of estate planning and business development, manager of legal services, manager of financial—[*Crosstalk*] We were informed that there are none.

11.35 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: We are going on to Sub-Head 09, Development Programme; Item 003—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Browne: We are informed that there are none.

Mr. Chairman:—Economic Infrastructure, Item 005. Hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East, please, you have the floor.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Speaker, tell the Member for Oropouche East to stop attempting to usurp your role. Page 105.

Hon. Cadiz: Page what number?

Mr. Imbert: Page 105, Estimates of Development Programme, 050: Purchase of 100 New Buses. Now, Mr. Speaker, I am going to ask a number of questions in one go.

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: I notice an expenditure in 2013 of \$12 million. I notice an allocation in 2014 of \$20 million but no money spent in 2014, and I notice an allocation in 2015, of \$30 million. First part of the question, could the Minister tell us whether all of this expenditure is for the same 100 buses? That is part A.

Part B, if \$12 million spent in 2013 was on some buses, how many buses were acquired? Who were they acquired from? What is the procurement procedure and was the supplier of these buses a world-ranked supplier?

And going forward now, the \$30 million in 2015, could the Minister indicate whether arrangements have been finalized to procure buses in 2015? If so, where are the buses coming from and what was the procurement procedure or what is the intended procurement procedure? And is a world-ranked supplier identified?

Mr. Chairman: I propose that you put everything in writing for the hon. Member.

Mr. Imbert: “Yuh ducking fuh de man?”

Mr. Chairman: Yes, yes, I will ask him to put it in writing for you.

Hon. Cadiz: I will take—*[Interruption and crosstalk]*

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Arouca/Maloney. That is a very long—he cannot say all those things tonight. He would have to put it in writing.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, can I just get one part of the question answered?

Mr. Chairman: Could you answer one part of the question tonight?

Hon. Cadiz: No, because it is better we do a comprehensive answer.

Mr. Imbert: “Yuh doh want tuh answer.”

Mr. Chairman: All right, Member for Arouca/Maloney and then the Member for Diego Martin Central. He would put it in writing for you. Member for Diego Martin North/East, you would get it in writing.

Mr. Imbert: “I never hear more!”

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair, under the same Item: 050, I would like to find out whether those buses are CNG buses.

Dr. Moonilal: “Yuh go geh de answer tuh dat.”

Mr. Chairman: All right, you would get the answer to that. Hon. Member for Diego Martin Central.

Hon. Cadiz: I can answer that immediately, yes.

Mr. Chairman: The answer is yes, Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Dr. Browne: Item 050, is the decision to purchase these buses part of the—has it benefited from a bus rationalization committee within the Ministry as announced by the Minister during this fiscal year? Is that committee in place?

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Hon. Cadiz: The bus rationalization committee is meeting and will present their first draft of their report in about a month's time and then we will work from that.

Dr. Browne: Who are the members on that committee, Minister?

Mr. Chairman: Final question for the Member for St. Joseph and then we close off.

Dr. Browne: Who are the Members of that committee, Minister?

Mr. Chairman: He will provide that for you in writing. Let us proceed.

Dr. Browne: Thank you.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Chair, same Item 050: 100 buses for \$300 million. Could the hon. Minister state in writing or orally now, the country of origin of these buses, whether the procurement process is via a government-to-government arrangement, or if it is through a local agent and who is the local agent?

Mr. Chairman: All right, all right, very good. So we go to Item 005, Multi-sectoral and Other Services, Infrastructure Development Fund.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 34 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, I wish to thank you and your team. Thank you very much.

Hon. Cadiz: I would also like to thank my very hard-working team at the Ministry of Transport.

Mr. Chairman: We now call on the Ministry of Public Utilities to appear before this Standing Finance Committee.

May I advise hon. Members that after the Ministry of Public Utilities, we have the Ministry of Community Development, the Ministry of Legal Affairs and the Ministry of National Diversity and Social Integration and that is the end of our proceedings for this evening and we return at 10.00 a.m. sharp tomorrow morning.

Miss Mc Donald: 10?

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, we have a lot of work to do tomorrow.

Miss Mc Donald: I thought it was 11.

Mr. Chairman: No, no, no. I am the Chairman of this committee and I have work to do. Yeah, I have work to do. I have to complete 50 Heads by at least 4 o'clock tomorrow and I am coming at 10 and if I have a quorum of 12, I am doing the people's business. Okay, let us go.

Head 39:

We are now on Head 39: Ministry of Public Utilities \$805,113,400. I would invite the hon. Minister of Public Utilities, if he so desires, to make a brief statement given the period that we are now at 11.41. If you wish to make a brief statement you are welcome. Would you like to make a statement?

Hon. Baksh: No.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, we go straight ahead.

Question proposed: That Head 39 stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the sum of \$805,113,400 for Head 39: The Ministry of Public Utilities 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 005, Electrical Inspectorate; Item 006, Government Printery. We go to Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services; Item 001, General Administration. I recognize the hon. Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair, Sub-Item 42 under the street lighting, could the Minister indicate what has accounted for the gradual increase of the allocation from \$88.9 million in 2013, to \$93 million in 2014 and now \$100 million in 2015?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister of Public Utilities, would you be able to respond to that question?

Hon. Baksh: Chairman, yes. You would be aware that a number of construction of new roads have been done in the country, also we have recognized that a number of other areas like side roads, streets under local government, and so on, that need street lights and as such we are increasing the programme to deliver these lights for this year.

Mr. Chairman: We go to Item 005, Electrical Inspectorate. We go to Item 006, Government Printery; Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases; Item 001, General Administration; Item 005, Electrical Inspectorate; Item 006, Government

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Printery; Sub-Head 04, Current Transfer and Subsidies; Item 001, Regional Bodies; Item 003, United Nations Organizations; Item 004, International Bodies; Item 006, Educational Institutions; Item 007, Households; Item 009, Other Transfers. I recognize the hon. Members for Diego Martin North/East and Arouca/Maloney.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chair, page 245, 009: Other Transfers, 13, I do not know if it is a misprint, it says “Repayment of Loan to the National Gas Company”. T&TEC is lending money to NGC?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, the hon. Member wants some clarification.

Hon. Baksh: We would submit this in writing.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, they would commit that to writing.

Mr. Imbert: Could you tell me why it says “loan to NGC”?

Hon. Baksh: Okay, what has happened there, is really a book transaction where it goes from the NGC to the Ministry and then the Ministry to T&TEC.

Mr. Imbert: But it says “loan to”.

Mr. Chairman: Well, he would explain in writing what that means.

Hon. Baksh: It goes a certain route.

Mr. Chairman: So we deal with the Member for Arouca/Maloney and then the Member for Point Fortin.

Mr. Imbert: “How you lending money to NGC? That ain making no sense.”

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chairman, I am referring to 04, Trinidad and Tobago Postal Corporation. I would like the Minister to indicate to us whether there is a shortage in the postal workers at the TPost and if they have an assessment of the needs with reference to the staffing for postal workers in that particular organization? The reason I am asking is that there are instances—there are a number of complaints particularly from my constituency—where the mail is being delivered a week, two weeks, and sometimes one month late.

Hon. Baksh: We have a problem where people are going out by attrition and we are now taking on some additional on a temporary basis to fill that requirement. Also, there has been a problem with regard to the transportation mode for some of those officers, in that we had a problem where motorbikes were purchased and were the wrong motorbikes and they now have to dispose of them and are now in the process of tendering for scooters, as against motorbikes. Those motorbikes were like trail bikes, which were not appropriate for the trail.

Mr. Chairman: No, I recognize the Member for Point Fortin first and then the Member for St. Joseph.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: What is your rationalization for an increase of \$5 million when in fact all signs are that entity is an unprofitable one?

Hon. Baksh: I am advised that we have to provide additional funding so that they could provide the extended services that we require at this point in time and in the future as well.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Extended services?

Hon. Baksh: Yes, because you are extending. You have growth poles in different areas. You would understand that we are just doing the S42 new numbering, postal code for different areas.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Yes, yes.

Hon. Baksh: We started in your constituency.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: That is right.

Hon. Baksh: And it is moving across the country. We have completed two others. We are now going further with it.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Member for St. Joseph.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Hon. Minister, in response to your question about the motorcycles, which you volunteered, could you tell me the approximate cost of those mis-purchased motorcycles?

Mr. Chairman: No, you cannot say mis-purchased. You know about the purchase of the motorcycles.

Mr. Deyalsingh: The purchase that was then found not to be appropriate.

Hon. Baksh: Five hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Has anybody been held accountable for that purchase of half a million dollars and what was—*[Interrupted]*

Hon. Baksh: It is being addressed at this point in time.

Mr. Deyalsingh:—and what was the sanction?

Hon. Baksh: It is being addressed. I could not say the outcome of it as yet.

Mr. Chairman: It is being addressed at this time. Let us go to Sub-Head 09, Development Programme.

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Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chairman, I have a question.

Mr. Chairman: Are you on Development Programme?

Miss Hospedales: Sir, I am on Other Transfers.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, I go back to facilitate the hon. Member for Arouca/Maloney. We go back to Item 09, Other Transfers.

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair, under 04, again, Trinidad and Tobago Postal Corporation, I would like to find out from the Minister whether or not the allocation of \$50 million is adequate for the operationalization of TTPost and if there are any plans, with respect to restructuring that particular organization?

Hon. Baksh: Mr. Chairman, I think at this point in time that funding is adequate.

Mr. Chairman: We go to Development Programme Head 09, Item 003, Economic Infrastructure. I recognize the Members for La Brea and Diego Martin Central.

11.50 p.m.

Mr. Jeffrey: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, 586 and 591.

Mr. Chairman: Oh, the Member for Diego Martin North/East too, sorry, Sir. *[Laughter]*

Mr. Jeffrey: In that estimate for 2015 of \$12 million, I will like to know whether the lighting of the following recreation grounds: Erin Recreation Ground; Lot 10 recreation ground; Vance River recreation ground; Palo Seco Settlement recreation ground; La Brea community recreation ground and No. 8 Road recreation ground, whether or not any provision is made for any of these grounds. That is the first question, and my second question, 591, how much power—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Chairman: Please! Please! Please!

Mr. Jeffrey:—591, how much power will be made available from the TGU Power Plant for the industrial development of the Union and Labidco Industrial Estates?

Hon. Baksh: Chairman, with regard to 586, Lighting of Parks and Recreation Grounds, the Member gave me a long list. I could tell him that we are dealing with some of those. What I am actually doing is bringing some equity to this programme to ensure that every constituency gets a fair share of this programme. *[Desk thumping]*

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Mr. Chairman: So you are being considered a little more. What is the second part?

Hon. Baksh: The national transmission to—we have the full capacity, there is 720 from the TGU Plant. Right now we are trying to bring the—right now it is not on stream, on the national grid, and we are trying to bring some of this by the end of the year, in December 2014. I could not—

Mr. Chairman: No, I think he asked specifically what is going to happen with Union Estate, in terms of the amount of power required there.

Hon. Baksh: Okay. I am advised that the capacity of 400 megawatts will be available for the estate.

Mr. Chairman: Four hundred megawatts would be available for the estate. I recognize the Member for Diego Martin Central.

Dr. Browne: Minister, Sub-Item 581, National Street Lighting Programme, the extended Diego Martin Highway is still in darkness, and the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure is blaming T&TEC. This receives \$6 million in 2014 and you are getting \$17 million requested for 2015. Does this \$17 million specifically include provision for the lighting of the extended Diego Martin Highway which remains in darkness?

Hon. Baksh: This is part of the programme that we are embarking upon.

Mr. Chairman: It is part of the programme they are embarking upon. So hopefully, the Diego Martin Highway will be lit very shortly. I recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Imbert: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: And the Member for Fyzabad.

Mr. Imbert: There is an allocation for the bulk power, \$40 million. Could the Minister explain what that is please?

Hon. Baksh: This is a new item, and it is carded here for the Piarco/San Rafael substation.

Mr. Imbert: It is for the construction of the Piarco [*Interruption*]

Mr. Chairman: Member for Fyzabad!

Mr. Imbert: Could you just answer—

Mr. Chairman: Wait, wait. Just hold one second for me.

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Mr. Imbert: The \$40 million for bulk power.

Hon. Baksh: 4-0?

Mr. Imbert: \$40 million for bulk power. Are you not seeing that?

Hon. Baksh: Okay. You have one, the \$40 million is for Westmoorings and the 140 is for the Piarco/San Rafael substation.

Mr. Chairman: The \$40 million is for Westmoorings. I recognize the Member for Fyzabad, please.

Mr. Sharma: Thank you, Chairman. With respect to street lighting as referred to in 586 and 591 and elsewhere, would this include solar lighting?

Hon. Baksh: Not from this programme.

Mr. Chairman: Not? All right. We go on to Item 04, Social Infrastructure; we go to Item 005, Multi-Sectoral and Other Services. Hon. Members, the question is that the sum of \$805,113,400 for Head 39, the Ministry of Public Utilities stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 39 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the sum of \$805,113,400 for Head 39, the Ministry of Public Utilities now stands part of the Schedule.

Thank you very much. I understand you have to remain for the Ministry of Community Development. I thank your officers for being with you.

Let us go to the Ministry of Community Development now, please.

Head 62.

Question proposed: That Head 62 stand part of the Schedule

Mr. Chairman: Head 62, the Ministry of Community Development, the officers can now come forward, and the Minister remains where he is.

Then we go to the Ministry of Legal Affairs and then the last one would be the Ministry of National Diversity and Social Integration.

Hon. Members, Head 62, the Ministry of Community Development, \$182,916,762. I will go to the question. Hon. Members, the question is that the sum of \$182,916,762 for Head 62, the Ministry of Community Development stand part of the Schedule. Hon. Members, this particular sum is comprised of

moneys proposed for the expenditure under—for expenditure rather, 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, Community Development; Item 006, Best Village. We go to Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services; Item 001, General Administration; Item 002, Community Development Division; Item 005, Mediation Centres; Item 06, Best Village.

Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases; Item 001, General Administration; Item 002, Community Development Division; Item 005, Mediation Centres; Item 006, Best Village; Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies. Item 005—I recognize the Member for Point Fortin.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Just 01, 005/01, Point Fortin Civic Centre. Why was there no allotment for 2014, sorry, or no funds expended at all?

Hon. Baksh: I understand there is a problem there with the contractor and, of course, they have to replace that one; they have a new one now. I am sorting out some difficulties with the contractor and the project manager. So as soon as that is settled, we are going to resume construction on that job.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Is this Head to deal with actual construction or is this to keep the institution going in the meantime?

Hon. Baksh: No, no, this is for construction.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: For construction. Okay, so it will resume.

Hon. Baksh: Yeah.

Mr. Chairman: All right. Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies; Item 005, Non-Profit Institutions; Item 006, Educational Institutions; Item 007, Households; Item 009, Other Transfers; Sub-Head—I recognize the hon. Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair, on behalf of my constituents, all who are senior citizens, who require the GAPP service. I will like to find out exactly what is the problem in terms of the actual assignment of geriatric nurses to the elderly who have applied. Some people are actually on the waiting list for as long as a year, and are still waiting.

Hon. Baksh: There is a limited number of caregivers and there is a very high demand for this service at this point in time. It will take a little longer time to reach out to some of those persons.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. We go on to Development Programme, Sub-Head 009, Item 004, Social Infrastructure; Item 005, Multi-Sectoral and Other Services. I recognize the hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, could the Minister confirm that the long awaited Bagatelle Community Centre will be constructed in fiscal 2015? That is 003, Construction of Community Centres. Do you have any money in there for the Bagatelle Community Centre, and if you do, do you anticipate it will be completed in this fiscal 2015?

Hon. Baksh: Mr. Chairman, I am just trying to get the information. I am advised that work has started since July 2014, and it is scheduled to be completed by the second quarter of fiscal 2015.

Mr. Imbert: So there is money in there to complete this centre?

Hon. Baksh: Yes, yes.

Mr. Imbert: Okay, right.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. We go to the Member for La Brea and then the Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Mr. Jeffrey: Still under the same item. In the case of the Palo Seco Settlement and Los Charos community centres, are those two community centres catered for in your allocation? And also, what is the position with respect to the Rancho Quemado Community Centre?

Hon. Baksh: Chair, one, the Palo Seco Settlement, the current status there is that the centre is 89 per cent completed, and the original contractor is unable to continue with the construction work. A new contractor has been contracted to complete the remaining works.

Mr. Jeffrey: And Los Charos?

Hon. Baksh: Palo Seco, Los Charos, work is—the centre is almost completed, 95 per cent completed. So that I think, by year end or early 2015, this should be completed.

Mr. Chairman: What was the other one?

Mr. Jeffrey: Rancho Quemado.

Hon. Baksh: I am advised that this should start in the next fiscal year, 2015.

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

Miss Hospedales: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Through you, I would like to find out from the Minister, why were the contracts for the Bon Air Gardens Community Centre and Trincity Community Centre cancelled, and exactly when would these two community facilities be constructed?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister of Community Development, do you have that available or do you want to put that in writing?

Hon. Baksh: Okay. I am advised here that it was reprioritized because of the lack of funding and so on, and it will be on the 2015/2016 programme.

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

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair, I just want to state that I was told in 2011 that those facilities would have been constructed in 2013. So now I am hearing that they are going to be constructed in 2015.

Mr. Chairman: Well, okay. Well, let us hope that the Minister keeps his word. Hon. Member?

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Through you, to the hon. Minister, are there plans for the Granville Community Centre.

Hon. Baksh: It is due for construction in 2015.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the question is that the sum of \$182,916,766 for Head 62, Ministry of Community Development stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 62 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much hon. Minister. Thank you to the team.

Head 24.

Question proposed: That Head 24 stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: We now go to the Ministry of Legal Affairs, and thank you, I know you have waited a long time, but thanks for your patience.

Hon. Member: Seven hours.

Mr. Chairman: Seven hours, thanks for your patience.

We go to the Ministry of Legal Affairs. We have—that is Head 24, the sum is \$191,847,900. Hon. Members, the question is that the sum of \$191,847,900 for Head 24, the Ministry of Legal Affairs stand part of the Schedule. Hon. Members, this sum of money is 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, Law Revision Commission; Item 007, Intellectual Property; under Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services.

Miss Mc Donald: Mr. Chair, through you. AG, could you tell me what could have triggered the removal of the transfer of Consumer Affairs Division, Research and Planning, Consumer Outreach and Protection away from the Ministry of Legal Affairs?

12.05 a.m.

Hon. Ramlogan SC: That is a matter of prime ministerial prerogative. I would not be able to answer that.

Mr. Chairman: Let us go to Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services: Item 001, General Administration; Item 002, Law Revision Commission; Item 007, Intellectual Property Office.

We go to Head 03, Minor Equipment.

Miss Mc Donald: I am at Goods and Services.

Mr. Chairman: You are under Goods and Services. I recognize the Member for Arouca/Maloney and then you, the Member for Port of Spain South.

Miss Hospedales: Sir, I almost thought I was invisible at one point.

Mr. Chairman: No, no, no. You are seen.

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair, Sub-Item 16, under Contract Employment, could the Minister indicate exactly how many persons are on contract in this particular Ministry and the number of vacant contract positions as well?

Hon. Ramlogan SC: Chair, there are approximately 300 persons on contract.

Mr. Chairman: You want to put that in writing for us?

Hon. Ramlogan SC: I think we can—

Mr. Chairman: I do not want you to give her the wrong information because it is on the record, you know.

Hon. Ramlogan SC: You will get that in writing.

Mr. Chairman: Let us deal with the Member for Port of Spain South's question.

Miss Mc Donald: I am just interested in the contract employment under 16. I am also looking at Promotion, Publicity and Printing, that is 62. I do not know if the AG has any answers for those—what could have sent it up from approximately \$1.6 million to \$6 million.

Mr. Chairman: Sure, the hon. Attorney General.

Hon. Ramlogan SC: Chair, much of this funding actually was approved in the last mid-year review to settle outstanding bills and it is transferred over. The bills were incurred as part of a campaign, which was launched by the then Consumer Affairs Division, which was, at the material time, part of the Ministry of Legal Affairs during the fiscal year. That campaign was intended to influence consumers, to modify consumer behaviour so that they could exercise more responsible spending to demand a higher quality of service from providers of goods and services.

It was also used to promote the initiatives of the Registrar General's Department where a lot of work has been going on with respect to the Land Registry and changes in terms of our birth certificates where we had a massive nationwide programme to allow people, who had one name on their birth certificate, or none at all, to rectify that. That was the explanation for that.

Mr. Chairman: So we now go to:

Sub-Head 02: Goods and Services

Item 001: General Administration

Item 002: Law Revision Commission

Item 007: Intellectual Property Office

Sub-Head 03: Minor Equipment Purchases

Item 001: General Administration

Item 002: Law Revision Commission

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Item 007: Intellectual Property Office

Sub-Head 04: Current Transfer and Subsidies

Item 005: Non-Profit Institutions

Item 007: Households

Item 009: Other Transfers

Miss Mc Donald: I have a question there, under Police Complaints Authority. AG, I know this has been transferred from the Ministry of Justice and there is an allocation of \$14 million for the PCA, but I am wondering: how much did the PCA request from the Minister of Finance and the Economy? I know they always talk about the fact that they are strapped for funds.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Attorney General.

Hon. Ramlogan SC: What I can tell you is that you will see, from the estimates, the allocation for the PCA has been increased by \$3 million, so that it has gone up. I do not know what the PCA requested. The request was \$27 million.

Miss Mc Donald: Twenty-seven?

Mr. Chairman: Okay, we go to Current Transfers and Subsidies; Item 005, Non-Profit Institutions. Are you on non-profit?

Miss Hospedales: I am on Other Transfers.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, “we coming”.

Item 007: Households

Item 009: Other Transfers

Hon. Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair, I would like to find out the number of approved applications under the Criminal Injuries Compensation and if they can indicate the amount given to each applicant?

Mr. Chairman: Could you put that in writing and make it available?

Hon. Ramlogan SC: We most certainly can, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: We go to Item 010, Other Transfers Abroad; Development Programme, Sub-Head 09; Item 005, Multi-Sectoral and Other Services.

Miss Mc Donald: Sir, I have two questions.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, hon. Member.

Miss Mc Donald: 016, National Consultation on Constitutional Reform. I am seeing an actual for \$8.2 million then a revised estimate in 2014 to \$9.5 million. I recall that the Minister of Legal Affairs had said in this Parliament that the total for this constitutional reform amounted to some \$13.5 million. So I am wondering, when I look at this figure, I am getting to a total of something like \$18.7 million, exactly what is happening here. We got a definitive figure from the substantive Minister, not the AG, of \$13.5 million, but now these figures are throwing up something different. We just had the budget debate and it was very clear, \$13.5 million.

Hon. Ramlogan SC: Chair, I can give the actual expenditure on the national consultations for the Constitution reform exercise for 2013. The actual expenditure was \$8,205,322. The actual expenditure for 2014, as at September 23, is \$2,694,724 and that brings the total expenditure to date to \$10,900,046. Outstanding commitment in the Vote Book is \$19,025.

Miss Mc Donald: I would like to get something in writing from the Minister, please.

Mr. Chairman: On what?

Miss Mc Donald: On exactly how much is this breakdown because I am getting different figures there.

Hon. Ramlogan SC: Sure.

Mr. Chairman: Could you provide a breakdown?

Miss Mc Donald: I am getting different figures there.

Mr. Chairman: All right. Okay, you will get it in writing.

Hon. Members, the question is—

Miss McDonald: I have another question. I said I had two.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, I am awaiting your second question.

Miss Mc Donald: This National Smart Card System, I notice a new project. What is it about?

Mr. Chairman: What Sub-Item are you referring to?

Miss Mc Donald: 019.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you.

Miss Mc Donald: And a million dollars have been budgeted for this project. It is a new project. Exactly what that million dollars is about, this Smart Card System?

Mr. Chairman: AG.

Hon. Ramlogan SC: Well, Chair, I would put that in writing so that we can explain to the Member what this matter consists of.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 24 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much AG. We shall see you first thing in the morning at 11.00 a.m. We now come to the Ministry of National Diversity and Social Integration.

Head 74.

Question proposed: That Head 74 stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we are now at Head 74, the Ministry of National Diversity and Social Integration, \$101,043,772. This sum 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

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Speaker, could we go straight to Development Programme?

Mr. Chairman: Okay no, I have to announce all.

Sub-Head 02: Goods and Services

Item 001: General Administration

Item 002: National Archives

Sub-Head 03: Minor Equipment Purchases

Item 001: General Administration

Item 002: National Archives

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Sub-Head 04: Current Transfer and Subsidies

Item 001: Regional Bodies

Item 004: International Bodies

Item 005: Non-profit Institutions

Item 009: Other Transfers

Estimates of the Development Programme

Sub-Head 09: Development Programme

Item 004: Social Infrastructure

The hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Imbert: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Sometime previously in this committee, I was told an untruth, because I was told that the deletion of the restoration of Stollmeyer's Castle and Whitehall, from the Office of the Prime Minister, would be accommodated with an appropriate allocation in the Ministry of National Diversity and Social Integration. But when I go to page 309, where I see Public Buildings, I do not see any allocation for the restoration of Whitehall and Stollmeyer's Castle.

Mr. Chairman, if you drive around the savannah, trees are growing out of the windows in Whitehall. Cows are grazing on the roof. There has been a rusty galvanize fence in front of Stollmeyer's Castle now for months.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, I think that you have made your point.

Mr. Imbert: Could the Minister tell us—

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, could you tell us whether any allocation has been made?

Mr. Imbert: I have to phrase my question. Why has the Government abandoned the restoration of Whitehall and they have no allocation for it?

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister.

Dr. Gopeesingh: *[Inaudible]*

Mr. Imbert: Not you; I am not asking you.

Mr. Chairman: Allow the Minister to respond, please.

Hon. Samuel: Chair, to answer the hon. Member, the Government has not abandoned the restoration of any of the heritage buildings. Thus far, under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, through UDeCOTT, UDeCOTT has been working on Stollmeyer's Castle, first of all. Stollmeyer's Castle is about 85 to 90 per cent complete and that Whitehall, likewise, is still under the jurisdiction presently of UDeCOTT as we work in tandem with UDeCOTT to do the completion of it. I just want to—

Mr. Imbert: Minister, there is no allocation for Whitehall in the estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Allow him to complete his statement.

Mr. Imbert: Where is the allocation? Where is the money for it?

Mr. Speaker: Let him complete his statement. The hon. Minister, continue please.

Hon. Samuel: Mr. Chairman, when the Minister of Housing and Urban Development takes this seat, he will be able to clearly define all of the work that he is continuing to do and surely he will address the fact that UDeCOTT has been working on the facilities and the work will continue as we go along.

Mr. Imbert: So could the Minister then explain why you have an allocation for public buildings and all you have is Mille Fleurs? What about the other buildings?

Hon. Samuel: Because on the other buildings work has been continued and continues to take place on both Stollmeyer's Castle—

Mr. Imbert: You look at Whitehall today? There is no work taking place on Whitehall. It is abandoned.

Hon. Samuel: Both buildings are being taken care of by Housing Development Corporation.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, I cannot handle this. They are in denial. The Government is in denial.

Mr. Chairman: Item 05, Multi-Sectoral and Other Services; Infrastructure Development Fund.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 74 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

12.20 a.m.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much hon. Minister and your staff.

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Hon. Samuel: Thank you Chairman and thank you to the PS, Deputy PS.

Mr. Chairman: I know that you have been waiting very long, but we are very gracious and thankful for your patience. Right?

Hon. Members, tomorrow which is in the morning—because it is 12.20 now—we are dealing with:

1. The Ministry of the Attorney General
2. The Ministry of Local Government.
3. The Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources
4. Ministry of Housing and Urban Development
5. Ministry of Foreign Affairs
6. Office of the President
7. Elections and Boundaries Commission
8. The Public Service Appeal Board
9. The Parliament
- 10 The Auditor General

We will conclude tomorrow, given what we have here. Hon. Members—
[*Interruption*]

Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, Sir.

Dr. Rambachan: I just want to put on record—I mean, I am sure on behalf of all the Members of the committee—our deepest admiration for the fact [*Desk thumping*] that you have sat there from exactly 5.20—seven hours, one minute and 16 seconds thus far. I mean, really [*Desk thumping*] we ought to congratulate you. [*Desk thumping*] Tremendous stamina, Mr. Chairman. [*Crosstalk and laughter*]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, at this time, we will adjourn our Standing Finance Committee to 11.00 a.m. in the morning of Friday 26th—well that is today—at 11.00 a.m.

12.22 a.m.: *Standing Finance Committee suspended.*