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

[Chairman: Mrs. Annisette-George]

10.00 a.m.

Madam Chairman: This meeting of the Standing Finance Committee is now resumed. We are at Head 43: Ministry of Works and Transport, page 266.

Head 43: Ministry of Works and Transport, $2,624,200,000.

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

Hon. Sinanan: Thank you and good morning to all Members. Again, we are quite happy to be here this morning to answer any questions pertaining to the Ministry of Works and Transport. As we are aware, we are entrusted with the responsibility for the development of the infrastructure throughout Trinidad and certain responsibilities in Tobago. We are also responsible for the land, sea and air transportation, which includes the ports: the sea ports and the airport.

We are here this morning to answer any question pertaining to our development programme and our recurrent expenditure as put forward by you. Thank you.

Question proposed: That Head 43 stand part of the Schedule.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Members, the sum of $2,624,200,000 for Head
43, Ministry of Works and 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, the Draft Estimates of the Revenue and Expenditure of the Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies and of the Tobago House of Assembly and the Draft Estimates of Development Programme.

We shall now proceed to consider the Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure. Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure; Item 001, General Administration. Member for Tabaquite.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Hon. Minister, good morning. Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance, there is a decrease of $1,910,000. What is the reason for that decrease, and does it affect the ability of the Ministry to carry out its functions?

**Hon. Sinanan:** No. It does not affect the abilities of the Ministry and that is because of a decrease due to the reduction in payment owed to public servants such as acting allowances and increases.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Okay.

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

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, line Item 14, could you advise how many Cabinet-appointed committees there are?

**Hon. Sinanan:** 14. Sure. Yeah. We have three Cabinet-appointed committees. That is the—you want the three of them?

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** No. You do not have to give it to me now, you could probably send it later.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Okay.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Fyzabad.

**Dr. Bodoe:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, with regard to line Item 01,
Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance, can you indicate the number of vacancies? I know that this line Item comes under each division.

Hon. Sinanan: Yes.

Dr. Bodoe: So I just wanted to get an idea of the number of vacancies. And if you would permit, Madam Chair, if that could be given now or separately, as we go along.

Hon. Sinanan: The total vacancies without bodies is 717.

Dr. Bodoe: Seven—

Hon. Sinanan: 717.

Dr. Bodoe: And out of an establishment of how many?—if I may ask?

Hon. Sinanan: Out of a total of 2,031.

Dr. Bodoe: So, the number of active bodies in the Ministry would be that figure minus the vacancies?

Hon. Sinanan: Yes.

Dr. Bodoe: So effectively about 1,300?

Hon. Sinanan: Around 1,500.

Dr. Bodoe: Can you say what challenges you are experiencing in terms of filling those vacancies?

Hon. Sinanan: Well, those vacancies have to be filled by the Service Commission, and we are in talks with them to have them filled.

Dr. Bodoe: Okay.

Madam Chairman: Member for Mayaro.

Mr. Paray: Thank you, Madam Chairman. Minister, under line Item 04, Allowances, does travelling fall under that Item of Allowances, travelling?

Hon. Sinanan: No.
Mr. Paray: No. I noticed there is not a specific line Item for that. Where would I be able to ask a question concerning travelling?


Mr. Paray: Goods and Services. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Member for Pointe-a-Pierre. Member for Caroni Central.

Dr. Tewarie: Also on the issue of Personnel Expenditure, last year you had indicated that an assessment was being done to determine what—an analysis was being done to ensure that the positions that are available would be filled shortly. First of all, was the analysis, in fact, completed, and are any changes going to be made this year?

Hon. Sinanan: Okay. That was completed however, there was one area that had to be reviewed which we are in the process of completing.

Dr. Tewarie: Okay. And that would influence new policy or change in policy?

Hon. Sinanan: Well, it would, depending on the findings from the report, then we would take it to the next step.

Madam Chairman: Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, line Item 08, could you advise how many vacant posts that you envisage will be filled during this current financial year, indicating that you have put in place—

Hon. Sinanan: We cannot say how many posts will be filled because that is the prerogative of the Service Commission.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: So this also falls in the Service Commission?

Hon. Sinanan: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Member for Chaguanas West.

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, line Item 29, Overtime -
Daily - Rated Workers. I am seeing an allocation of 20,000.

Hon. Sinanan: Yes.

Mr. Singh: That is sufficient for your daily-rated workers’ overtime throughout the length and breadth of Trinidad?

Hon. Sinanan: This is only for under General Admin.

Mr. Singh: Okay.

Hon. Sinanan: Each division will have their own overtime.

Mr. Singh: Okay.

Madam Chairman: Item 002, Highways. Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Hon. Minister, would you kindly indicate if possible, how many employees constituted under line Item 002, for Highways, Wages and COLA for 105 million?

Hon. Sinanan: Under the Highways, the highways establishment is 1,755, and that is daily-rated.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Those are daily-rated?

Hon. Sinanan: Yes.

Dr. Gopeesingh: You have any full-time employees there, under Highways?

Hon. Sinanan: Yes. The monthly is—oh, no, these are the vacancies.

Dr. Gopeesingh: But as you are there, you have vacancies in the—

Hon. Sinanan: Yes, we do have vacancies.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Daily-rated and full time?

Hon. Sinanan: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Member, could you take that in writing?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yeah, if he does not have it, certainly.

Hon. Sinanan: Yes. So, we could submit that in writing to you.
Dr. Gopeesingh: Yeah, okay. So, 1,755 you have as daily-rated under Highways.

Hon. Sinanan: Yes, 1,755.

Dr. Gopeesingh: And if you have the full time—you have it there, or not?

Hon. Sinanan: If we have the—

Dr. Gopeesingh: The full time, under Highways.

Hon. Sinanan: The monthly—I will submit that in writing.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Sure, all right. Go ahead.

Madam Chairman: Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, line Item 02, Wages and C.O.L.A, you had indicated somewhere around 1,755 employees in that line Item. Correct?

Hon. Sinanan: Yeah.

Mr. Lee: What is the function of the Highways Division, as far as the staff? What does the staff do in the Highways Division?—the 1,755 individuals.

Hon. Sinanan: It is 1,755 positions, and the staff on the Highways Division will be involved in road cleaning, maintenance and things along that line. Now, that 1,755 is divided into the divisions throughout the country.

Mr. Lee: Okay.

Hon. Sinanan: So they will be involved in the maintenance of the roadways.

Mr. Lee: Approximately how many vacancies do you have in that area? I think you had mentioned about 400-and-something or something like that; I heard a murmur.

Hon. Sinanan: Highways—and the vacancies is about 494.

Mr. Lee: Right. So the question I would like to ask is, the Highways Division
what is—over 400 individuals are vacant, it would impact on the maintenance of the highways. What is being done? Because this is something that happened last year, again, when we asked. What is being done in the last fiscal year and this year in trying to alleviate those vacancies to ensure that the highways are properly maintained for the travelling public? Because, there are so many different incidences that I view on the highways for lack of maintenance.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yeah. Well, at this point in time we are working with the unions to try to fill these positions, one. And two, we are looking at mechanically, to have some of the work done because you would recognize that the nature of the maintenance, we have to bring in now some sort of mechanical equipment to have the highways maintained in a more acceptable manner.

**Mr. Lee:** And a follow-up question in respect to when you actually do the maintenance with the staff on the highways. Is consideration being given—the timing when you do this maintenance, that it does not really affect the travelling public per se, because I have noticed especially in the north/south area, that maintenance of the highways is being done during times that are very high traffic, and it inconveniences the travelling public going between north and south. I am just assuming that these things are—could you elaborate?

**Hon. Sinanan:** We have recognized that and we are working with the unions in terms of timing because we are bonded by the agreements within the contracts of the employees.

**Mr. Lee:** Okay.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Tabaquite.

**Hon. Sinanan:** And then we also—

**Madam Chairman:** Sorry.
Hon. Sinanan:—we also have to bear in mind, overtime.

Dr. Rambachan: Minister, I have just about three questions. The first one is with respect to Item 02, Wages and C.O.L.A. The $6 million increase for this year, can you just tell me quickly, what is that for? What does it cover?

Hon. Sinanan: Which one is that? Wages and—

Madam Chairman: 02.

Dr. Rambachan: 02, sorry.

Hon. Sinanan: Okay. This is in order to fill vacancies on the daily-rated and the permanent establishment.

Dr. Rambachan: Minister, are you satisfied that you are getting the productivity and the desired number of hours a worker is paid for, from the Highways Division people?

Hon. Sinanan: The truth to that answer is, no.

Dr. Rambachan: Minister, are you aware, for example, that in Mayo, there are over 30 workers there doing nothing for the last couple of months except “making a cook” every morning?

Hon. Sinanan: And I am sure that Mayo may not be the only area.

Dr. Rambachan: I am just giving you one.

Hon. Sinanan: I am looking into it, because I would have had experiences first hand that that is also happening in other divisions, and I am holding the Director of Highways accountable for that.

Dr. Rambachan: Why is it then, Mr. Minister, that the supervisors are not assigning work to the people? I visited and the people said that supervisors are not assigning work, and they do not have tools, and they do not have boots, and they do not have anything to do the work, so they are sitting there the whole
day, and I am telling you, “making cook” and drinking Puncheon.

**Hon. Sinanan:** I do not know what they are drinking—

**Dr. Rambachan:** I am telling you. I can give you pictures of it.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Okay. But this—we do have a challenge of productivity, and there are several reasons for it. Some of it has to do with tools and equipment, some of it also has to do with supervisory positions being vacant, and we intend to address the situation.

**Dr. Rambachan:** So, Mr. Minister, what is the difficulty in doing performance appraisals of your supervisors and dealing with the inefficiencies or the ineffective supervision?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yeah. Well, I cannot do an appraisal if there are vacancies, I have to fill it and then do the appraisals. And I can give you the assurance that I am not satisfied with the productivity that we are getting, and it is an area that I have asked the Director of Highways, to please, address.

**Dr. Rambachan:** You are saying, Mr. Minister, that because you have supervisory positions that are vacant, the workers are sitting there with no one to assign work to them and therefore, we are losing a lot of these wages that we are paying here?

**Hon. Sinanan:** I do not want to bring a debate into what is happening.

**Dr. Rambachan:** No. I am asking questions, as I am allowed to.

**Hon. Sinanan:** However, there are several reasons why we have a pretty low productivity level, and we are addressing them.

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

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, you indicated that this line Item is responsible for cleaning and so forth of highways,
right? I just wanted to ask, does this line Item here, 002—

Hon. Sinanan: Which line Item?

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:—002, Highways, is this responsible—is this Vote responsible for the Manzanilla stretch, the clearing and upkeep of the Manzanilla stretch? Highways. [Interruption] I know, I am asking.

Hon. Sinanan: This is the staff.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: I understand that. But I am asking, if this Vote is responsible?

Hon. Sinanan: No. No. It is the staff.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: I know it is the staff.

Hon. Sinanan: Yes.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: And if this is, then I can ask the question relating to the staff.

Hon. Sinanan: Well, it will have some of the staff.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Does the staff—Okay.

Hon. Sinanan: It will be some of the staff there.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Excellent. Minister, in light of the fact that you have indicated that there are 494 vacancies, does this impact upon the area of Manzanilla in light of the fact that there are—

Hon. Sinanan: That is throughout Trinidad and Tobago, in all the regions, so I will presume that there will be vacancies in that area.

Madam Chairman: Member or Fyzabad.

Dr. Bodoe: Sorry. I just want to tie this question back to line Item 02, Wages, and Overtime, 02 and 03, and you indicated that going forward you are constrained by the terms and conditions set by the unions and so on. Might I
suggest that in many developed countries, you have routinely, work taking place after traffic hours in the night and on weekends and so on. Would you perhaps want to give consideration that when you are renegotiating these terms and conditions, that perhaps weekends be considered as normal working days, and after hours as normal working time, to minimize the overtime, and also to allow these workers flexibility to have other jobs during the day?

**Hon. Sinanan:** That will entail some serious negotiations with the unions.

**Dr. Bodoe:** But you understand where I am coming from?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yes. I understand and it is a valid concern.

**Dr. Bodoe:** Thank you.

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

**Mr. Lee:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, line Item 29, on page 267, within—on the Highways, Overtime - Daily - Rated Workers. In 2018, you had budgeted 800,000, you spent 320—oh, the Revised Estimates, sorry. 2019, you retained the 800, so it is an increase of 480. How—yeah, that increase.

**Madam Chairman:** One question at a time.

**Mr. Lee:** It is the same question.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yeah. Okay. We have to recognize that when these figures would have been picked up, it would have been in the early months of the financial year, so those may not be the Actual figures at the close of the financial year.

**Mr. Lee:** I want to tie that back into 2017. 2017, the Actual was 293,000 spent on Overtime. You have come back to an increase of 800,000 in 2019, a figure, a budgeted estimate of 2019—

**Hon. Sinanan:** Right.
Mr. Lee:—480,000. Do you envisage spending that amount of overtime in 2019?

Hon. Sinanan: This is basically what we budgeted for. So if it is required we will use it, if it is not required, it will not be used. Yeah. We try to keep it at a minimum to ensure that we do not pay extra.

Mr. Lee: Okay.

Madam Chairman: Item 003. Member for Chaguanas East.

Mr. Karim: Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, line Item 02, there is a substantial decrease of almost 25 per cent of $4 million. What do you consider to be the causes and consequences of this substantial decrease?

Hon. Sinanan: Okay. The exercises done to establish a permanent daily-rated cadre for the TMB, total—temporary daily-rated employees were 221.

Mr. Karim: And the consequences of such a substantial cut? How do you see this impacting in terms of—

Hon. Sinanan: How do we see it impacting? With more employees we expect a better service, obviously.

Mr. Karim: With that decrease of 4 million?

Hon. Sinanan: Yeah. The figure went down, but we still expect the daily-rated cadre to increase their performance. The thing about it is that what we are doing now in that department and the Traffic Management Branch, we are actually working with the employees in the branch to improve their productivity.

Mr. Karim: What do they do, Minister?

Hon. Sinanan: The Traffic Management Branch, yeah, they do the maintenance on the roadways in terms of signage, ensuring the painting of roadways and so. There was a challenge in terms of some material for them, we
have corrected that. And if you look at most of the roadways now, you have a lot of maintenance in terms of traffic lights, in terms of the zebra crossing and so. And in 2019, we expect to have a significant amount of roll out in that department.

Mr. Karim: Okay. Because well, I was going to ask another question, but the question is, if you want any help with paint, because I had to get my own paint to paint the zebra crossing in my constituency. So, we will be happy to buy it, and if you want, you could help us with the labour.

Madam Chairman: Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Minister, are the traffic wardens part of this traffic management division?

Hon. Sinanan: No. That is a separate unit.

Dr. Gopeesingh: And it comes under where?

Hon. Sinanan: Traffic wardens.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Right. Now, you mentioned the painting of the highways and the signs and so on, are there contracts awarded as well in addition to those you have under the traffic management unit?

Hon. Sinanan: No. If you have a contract, basically, for a road paving like a highway or so, that will be part of that contract. But what they do here is more the maintenance of the existing roadways.

Dr. Gopeesingh: All right. Can I just ask? Under that system of painting the white lines and so on, I have noticed from driving that the white lines, particularly in the night and when on rainy days, the white lines are not visible at all. Is there something wrong with the paint or is there something that you need to make more luminescent so that it could be better? I know you are
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trying, but how can we improve it?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Member, we can improve it, once this information comes back to the Ministry, we will send our technical team to ensure that the white lines are visible. So if from time to time you recognize that, you can just pass the information to us and we will have the engineers ensure—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Minister, I will tell you now, the north/south highway and the east/west highway as well, I mean, forgive me, sometimes—my sight is good, and I have difficulty if I take the middle lane, I do not know where I am.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Okay. Well, we will look into it.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Look at that for us, please?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Sure.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 004, Central Planning Unit; 005, Drainage. Member for Chaguanas West.

**Mr. Singh:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Could the hon. Minister indicate the complement of staff in the drainage department? And in particular if you have information on the Guayamare area about how many vacancies there are? If there are any vacancies in that location?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Through you, Madam Chair, could I have that forwarded to the Minister, please?

**Madam Chairman:** So you will give that in writing?

**Mr. Singh:** Sure. No problem.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Chaguanas East. Caroni Central.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Under 005, 02, we have an increase there in terms of allocations for Wages and C.O.L.A., and it also occurs—I know we are not there yet—in 007.
Hon. Sinanan: Could you just repeat? 005, you said?

Dr. Tewarie: Yes. So, I wanted to ask, if there were some kind of special initiatives being taken in the Drainage Division given the increase in allocation for personnel?

Hon. Sinanan: You said 002?

Dr. Tewarie: Yeah. Wages and C.O.L.A., up by five.

Hon. Sinanan: 02, you mean?

Dr. Tewarie: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Under 005.

Hon. Sinanan: 005, 02.

Dr. Tewarie: Yes.

Hon. Sinanan: Right.

Dr. Tewarie: And then it is also in 02 under 007. I know we are not there yet, but—

Hon. Sinanan: But it is the same allocation as last year, under 02.

Dr. Tewarie: Ah?

Hon. Sinanan: 02, is the same allocation as last year.

Dr. Tewarie: No.

Hon. Sinanan: It is the same allocation. You see, there is a timing issue as to when they would have taken this up. But if you look at the—

Dr. Tewarie: So people were probably not hired the year before? Is that what you are saying?

Hon. Sinanan: No. No. No. It is just that when they took it up, the figures would have been in March when you submit these figures to the Budget Division.

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Dr. Tewarie: Okay.

Hon. Sinanan: So, if you look at the figure in 2018, it was 52, in 2019, it is the same figure, so there is no reduction in the figure or there is no reduction or increase.

Madam Chairman: Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Tewarie: No. There is an increase in the Estimates.

Dr. Gopeesingh: What is the function of this Drainage Division? Well, of course, we know it is drainage for the country, but we know that there is contracted work given out for additional drainage throughout the country. So where is this Drainage Division located in terms of its work level?

Hon. Sinanan: They also do maintenance of watercourses and so, and they also do some contracted services which is in another area. So this Drainage Division also does maintenance with the different crews and so in the watercourses.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Can you give one or two little examples?

Hon. Sinanan: Well, there are certain areas that you cannot clean mechanically, so you will have the maintenance teams in the Drainage Division, will go into some of the watercourses and so. So like in central you have the Caroni irrigation area, the St. Augustine area, the Kelly area and the El Socorro area. In the east you have the river control gang, and the construction gang and the administration. And in south you have the general—you have the construction, the Oropouche lagoon, Cedros and Erin.

Dr. Gopeesingh: So it is the absence of mechanical aspects of it—

Hon. Sinanan: Yes.

Dr. Gopeesingh:—but it is more manual.
Hon. Sinanan: For areas that manual is required.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Member for Tabaquite.

Dr. Rambachan: Minister, with respect to Item 02, the 52 million that you have budgeted, do you have a programme of works that one can examine and follow-up, to see how effectively this $52 million is being used in what we call “manual work”?—or—that is the first question.

Hon. Sinanan: Yes, we do and we could have that available to you.

Dr. Gopeesingh: So we could understand—

Hon. Sinanan: Yes. Sure.

Dr. Rambachan: And secondly, are any of these workers under Wages and C.O.L.A. here, involved in the driving of equipment for the Ministry?

Hon. Sinanan: In some areas.

Madam Chairman: Item 006, Mechanical Services. Member for Mayaro.

Mr. Paray: Thank you, Madam Chairman. Minister, 01 and 02, could you give me an idea what is the total amount of both full-time employees and I assume the Wages and C.O.L.A. for daily-rated? What is your total staffing in that Mechanical Services Division?

Hon. Sinanan: Okay. For daily-rated it is 154, and I will have the other figure submitted to you.

Mr. Paray: The follow-up to that question, my understanding is that you have about, between 60 and 70 per cent of machinery and heavy equipment that are non-functional or not working. And I am looking at $15 million in salaries and wages going to this department. How do you justify that number in terms of the salary, and then you have 70 per cent of heavy equipment down for servicing?
Hon. Sinanan: Unfortunately, because of the agreements, once the equipment goes down, we just cannot send home the employees, so what we try to do is to utilize them in other areas.

Mr. Paray: What sort of other area are you referring to in this area?

Hon. Sinanan: You see, each division will have a mechanical workshop, so you try to move them around in the different areas. However, what the Ministry is putting place right now is a comprehensive listing and a policy going forward to have that 70 per cent that you are speaking about, reduced. Because we do recognize that we have a lot of valuable pieces of equipment that are down for minor repairs, and we are expecting this year to have that corrected.

Mr. Paray: In terms of line Item 08, there is a vacant post. Do you have any idea of what is the vacant post in that particular department that you will be trying to fill in this fiscal year?

Hon. Sinanan: Yeah. Forty-eight positions.

Mr. Paray: 48, and then that adds on to my initial conversation of having, you know, these posts filled and then there is not the work for them, so that is really a concern to me, Minister. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Under line Item 02 on the same 006, are you comfortable with the manpower that you have which might be required to do the daily issues of landslips et cetera, North Coast Road along the—

10.30 a.m.

Hon. Sinanan: Well, the Ministry intends to fill the vacant position on the establishment. So, with additional staff we would be in a better position, obviously, to respond to some of the challenges that we face.
Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes, because you see just like Lady Young Road you will see landslides there. When you observe it, it takes sometimes two months for them to clear the debris and so on.

Hon. Sinanan: Okay. Again, I do not want to make this into a debate, but the challenge is not necessary just going in and removing it. The Lady Young Road is a little bit technical, that if you go in and you try to remove, you may just find yourself with a lot more coming down, so sometimes you have to sort of fix the top before you try to move the bottom, or else when you move the bottom first everything at the top would come down.

Dr. Gopeesingh: I was just asking the question in terms of the efficiency which is required at a national level for things like these across the country, so you could be comfortable with less traffic.

Hon. Sinanan: Again, the debate on how we deal with landslips is one that will take us the whole day, because we do have a lot of landslips throughout the country. But it is not just about just sending in the equipment and removing the landslip, I mean, it is something that have to do with drainage of water and so.

Dr. Gopeesingh: No, but the question I was directing to you is, are you satisfied with the amount of personnel that have?

Hon. Sinanan: In terms of landslips, yes we remove landslips within 24 hours.

Dr. Gopeesingh: No, the mechanical services. For use of mechanical services. Because that is the heading we are under.

Hon. Sinanan: It is not just the personnel issue, we have a lot to do with equipment as well. So, it is a combination of several issues that we are trying to address right now.

Dr. Gopeesingh: When we come to that aspect we will ask you questions related that one.
Dr. Rambachan: Minister, I heard you say that you are now doing a comprehensive listing of your equipment. While I was Minister there was a comprehensive list of the equipment.

Hon. Sinanan: Well, when I say a comprehensive listing, yes, obviously you will have a listing on your asset listing. But, what we are doing right now is to find out exactly what equipment is down and what is required to get them back up and running.

Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Minister, is there a head of the Mechanical Services Division?

Hon. Sinanan: Yes, you have the Director of Mechanical Services.

Dr. Rambachan: And is that Director a mechanical engineer?

Hon. Sinanan: Yes, he is, and he is in charge of the entire Government fleet.

Dr. Rambachan: And does that mechanical engineer in charge have a Preventative Maintenance Programme that is available for each piece of equipment so that the equipment could be serviced when it was supposed to be serviced?

Hon. Sinanan: Once the resources are available. But, you would recognize being a former Minister of Works and Transport, this is a problem that has been plaguing the Ministry for quite a number of years, and I recognize that something has to be done about this, because this problem is where—that has surpassed several governments over the last 15/20 years where we buy equipment and we do not maintain them. And again, the resources have to be—because maintenance costs money. Okay, and we are addressing it now, it is not a problem that developed within the last three years.

Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Minister, have you seen a Preventative Maintenance Programme for the equipment at the Ministry?

Hon. Sinanan: Not all the equipment. As a matter of fact, we are way behind.
Dr. Rambachan: But does that not say to you, if you cannot see that, that there needs to be a review of the particular director who is in charge, and to make sure that assets of Ministry and the country are properly maintained, that there should be—and I am saying, do you feel it is a matter of competence of the officer?

Hon. Sinanan: No, I have confidence in the officer, however he has to work with the resources that are available to him. And as Minister I am trying to get those resources to him, so that whatever he puts in place that it can function. You can have the best director, the most competent director, but if he does not have the resource available to him, I do not think he can perform.

Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Minister, would you agree therefore that perhaps the country is paying double? That we have bought equipment, the equipment is down, we cannot use, and then we have to hire equipment at a different cost in order to do the same work?

Hon. Sinanan: And that is what we are trying to address right now. There is a problem with that. I think a lot of our services would have been contracted out, and if you look at the pattern of the Ministry of Works and Transport over the last two years we have been doing a lot of work in-house.

Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Minister, have you done an opportunity costing to see what it is really costing the country because of all that equipment that is parked up there?

Hon. Sinanan: Yes, yes, I have done that and that is why we are trying to push forward to have the equipment that can be refurbished, refurbished. And those that would cost an excessive amount be dealt with accordingly.

Dr. Rambachan: Do you know what that opportunity cost is, and can you share it with us?

Hon. Sinanan: I cannot share that with you right now, but I am sure that we could
have a discussion on that and forward you with some—

Dr. Rambachan: So, Mr. Minister, my final question. If a 320 is down for 250 days, as exists now in the Ministry, you realize that 250 by $3,000, giving you an opportunity cost of $750,000 on that piece of equipment, that you now have to hire and pay that amount to which is $1.5 million?

Hon. Sinanan: I can go further than that and say I have seen equipment down for the last 10 years. For the last 10 years, and this is why I am addressing it. As I said before, this is a problem that faced the Ministry even when you were the Minister of Works, and it is something that I am addressing. I am working with the department to have all the equipment as much as possible back up and running, based on the resources that we have available for repairs.

Madam Chairman: Item 007, Maintenance, pages 269 to 270; Item 00—Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you. Page what you said, to 270?

Madam Chairman: Item 007, Maintenance.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Okay. It is okay.

Madam Chairman: Item 008, Construction. Member for Caroni Central.

Dr. Tewarie: I was going to ask something on 007.

Madam Chairman: We move on to Item 008, Construction. Member for Tabaquite.

Dr. Rambachan: Could the Minister, under Item 002, Wages and COLA, how many construction gangs there are in the Ministry?

Hon. Sinanan: I will have to forward that to you.

Dr. Rambachan: And again, is there a programme of works for these construction gangs?

Hon. Sinanan: Yes, there is, and I will have that forwarded as well.

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Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Minister, how many hours a day is a construction gang supposed to be working?

Hon. Sinanan: These are full-time employees right? These are full-time employees, the construction gang?

Advisor: Yes.

Hon. Sinanan: These are daily-rated workers, and they are expected to work a full day.

Dr. Rambachan: Have you ever, like I used to do, do an audit to see whether these people are really on the job for eight hours, and whether they are working? Or, whether they go there and after three hours they are gone missing, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Sinanan: I think, again, as a former Minister of Works and Transport, I recognize that you know.

Dr. Rambachan: I understand your problem, you know.

Hon. Sinanan: No, the answer is no they are not, and again, I am holding the supervisors and the directors responsible for that. Because, we do have a productivity challenge, not only in the Ministry of Works, but throughout the country. And I think each one of us as citizens has to be responsible for the portfolio that we hold.

Dr. Rambachan: But, Mr. Minister, do you recognize that the workers are saying that they go home because they are not supplied with the materials and the tools to do the job, so they go on the jobs and they are inadequately resourced and they go home. Is that not a matter that shows incompetent management?

Hon. Sinanan: Through you, Madam Chairman, last week Monday I paid a surprise visit to one of the regional offices and I was quite surprised to see close to 70 people at 20 to 9. And I share your view, the excuses that I got were poor. I
called the director and I asked him to meet me here now, and I pointed out everything to him. So, I do share your point, and it is something that I am addressing as Minister. I am not staying in the office in Port of Spain, I am actually going out to the different job sites.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 012, Unemployment Relief Programme. Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, line Item 01, can you advise what the complement of staff is for the URP, and how many persons are currently employed?

**Hon. Sinanan:** You want to just repeat that? I did not hear.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** What is your complement of staff for the URP, and how many persons are currently employed?

**Hon. Sinanan:** The complement of the staff? You are talking about what? The—

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** How many persons in total at the URP? How many vacancies? How many positions? And how many persons are currently employed?

**Hon. Sinanan:** These are the public officers we are speaking about here.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Is it only the public officers are here or you have both?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yes, this is the public officers here.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Only?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yes. This is not the contracted employees. This is just public officers here.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Not a problem. I appreciate the information nevertheless. Thank you.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Sorry. Member, you had a question?

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** I require the information still.
Hon. Sinanan: On the public officers?

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Yes.

Hon. Sinanan: Okay, we would have that forward to you.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Item 013, General Administration, Transport; Item 014, Transport, page 272; Item 015, Maritime Services. Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, if you can advise again, 01, how many vacancies, what is the number of positions?

Hon. Sinanan: In Maritime?

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Yeah.

Hon. Sinanan: We have four vacancies in Maritime.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Are these in relation to like, tug boats or anything like that? I am just asking.

Hon. Sinanan: Anybody familiar with tug boats? Well, this is a Maritime Division, so there are four vacancies. I cannot tell you exactly what positions are vacant, but I could have it sent to you.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services, page 273; Item 001, General Administration. Member for Mayaro.

Mr. Paray: Thank you, Madam Chairman. Minister, in Item 01, Travelling and Subsistence, I noticed that there was a $600,000 decrease in the allocation for that travelling. Now, just about a month ago several of the southern districts, especially in Mayaro/Rio Claro, workers downed their tools and so on for non-payment of travelling allowances since 2015. One, are you aware of that? And two, taking note of the $600,000 decrease, how do you plan to address that?
**Hon. Sinanan:** Now, this is monthly paid staff we are speaking about. This is not those who downed their tools.

**Mr. Paray:** Okay, something separate?

**Hon. Sinanan:** This is something separate, yeah.

**Mr. Paray:** Where would I be able to ask about that?

**Hon. Sinanan:** That would be in the 01. I “doh” work in the Ministry, Ma’am.

[Interruption] I would be guided. Thank you.

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

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Line Item 16, together with line Item 22, Contract Employment and Short-term Employment, could you elucidate a little more on it, how many officers you have under Contract Employment and Short-term Employment?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Line Item 16, let me just get that here. Line Item 16, 318—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** No, under 02, Goods and Services, page 273; line Item 16?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yeah, 318. The total of contract employees, 318.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Does it vary from time to time? Yeah?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yes, it will vary, depending on if the contract ends or so.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Right, okay, and Short-term Employment?

**Hon. Sinanan:** The Short-term Employment, 22.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** All right, thanks Minister.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Caroni Central, do you have a question?

**Dr. Tewarie:** No, it is on 02.

**Madam Chairman:** All right. So, we are going on to Item 002, Highways, pages 274 and 275. Member for Caroni Central.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Yes. I noticed on Item 28, Other Contracted Services, there is significant increase there of $91 million. Can you explain a little bit?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Other Contracted Services. It would have been outstanding

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payments. Yes, it is outstanding payments for 2018, and 26 projects.

Dr. Tewarie: Okay. So, this would be payment to contractors for projects?

Hon. Sinanan: And 71 projects are planned this year.

Dr. Tewarie: Yeah, okay.

Mr. Lee: Minister, going back to line Item 28, Other Contracted Services, an increase of 91 million. Your budget or you revised estimate for 2018 was 15 million. You just mentioned that out of that 91 million increase for this year, some of those expenses relate to projects in 2018, correct?

Hon. Sinanan: “Hm mm.”

Mr. Lee: And you have identified certain projects in 2019. If you do not have it now, here, in your budgeted for 2019, could you provide us with a list of those estimates of those projects for 2019, please?

Hon. Sinanan: Sure.

Mr. Lee: A follow up question, Madam Chair. Line Item 12, Minister, Materials and Supplies of 900,000 in 2019. You had mentioned earlier in relationship to staffing, that during the period, especially in highways, there were some issues with tools, and supplies, and materials. Given that in 2018 you had a revised estimate of 800,000, do you feel that this 900,000 estimate for 2019 is sufficient to ensure that productivity by the staff is maintained, because of the concerns of lack of materials on tool? I do not know if this line Item 12 falls within that category for supplying materials and tools for the Highways Division throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

Hon. Sinanan: Again, we have to work within the allocation that we receive. I can tell you the Ministry would always be welcoming for additional funding. We have gotten 100,000 extra here, and we are going to utilize it as far as possible.

Mr. Lee: I agree. But when you look at the type of funding in Other Contracted
Services of 91 million, compared to 900,000 in Materials and Supplies that is not required to furnish, to keep the staff productive, there is a sort of an—

Mr. Indarsingh: Imbalance.

Hon. Sinanan:—imbalance. What we will do, through you, to the Member, is that internally we review the allocations, and we would supplement wherever required. I can tell you that this material and services, most of it is to buy things like bitumen and so for the Agua Santa Plant.

Madam Chairman: Member for Chaguanas West.

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the Minister made reference to the issue of bitumen from the Agua Santa Plant, because when I call 623-MEND and report potholes in Munroe Road, Madras Road, and areas within my constituency, I speak to public servants or those who man the telephones there, and they tell me the problem is a lack of bitumen. Now that Petrotrin is no longer Petrotrin, and that therefore bitumen is a problem, can we see an exacerbation of the problem in the supply of bitumen to the 623-MEND Programme? Because, I speak to—and I would not call the names of the public servants who man that line, and I call all the time in order to report potholes that are growing larger with the rainy season. So my question is, supply of bitumen needs to be increased for your programme of 623-MEND. And secondly, what the impact of the closure of Petrotrin on the supply of bitumen to your programme of works?

Madam Chairman: So, the first thing is a statement, not a question?

Mr. Singh: No, it does not require—yes.

Madam Chairman: Yes. So the question is, how does Petrotrin affect—

Hon. Sinanan: We have been having discussions with the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries, and the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries has given us the assurance that the supply of bitumen not only to the Ministry of Works and
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Transport, but to the entire construction industry will be addressed, and we should have no fear of any shortage, but the short to medium term.

**Mr. Singh:** But, will there be a price increase?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Again, that is the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries. We do not supply bitumen nor do we import bitumen. So, we are just a user of bitumen.

**Mr. Imbert:** Madam Chair, just let me come in here.

**Madam Chairman:** Sorry.

**Mr. Imbert:** It is the Government’s intention with respect to items that were previously produced by Petrotrin such as cooking gas and now bitumen, that the price to consumers will remain the same at this time, and the availability will be the same or better.

**Mr. Singh:** I just want to be clear, Madam Chair. I am making a plug for the increase in the supply of bitumen to the Ministry of Works and Transport to procure the potholes for us.

**Mr. Imbert:** That is what I just said. The availability of bitumen it would have to be imported, obviously. The bitumen that would come in would be in quantities that would be equal to or better than what is currently obtained, and probably of a higher quality too. And the Government will continue to subsidize the price, so that the effects of the Petrotrin closure on the cost of living would be minimized or eliminated altogether.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** We would hold you to that.

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

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, coming back to line Item 28, you indicated that this increase was to settle outstanding payments of 2018. I am asking, has the Ministry settled all the 2018 outstanding debts relating
Hon. Sinanan: Yes, we do have outstanding payments in 2018 of 3.8 million on 26 projects.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Outstanding?

Hon. Sinanan: Outstanding, yes.

Madam Chairman: Member for Tabaquite.

Dr. Rambachan: I am concerned with traffic management.

Madam Chairman: Member for Couva South.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Minister of Finance answered the question on the supply of bitumen, but the jury will be out on that.

Madam Chairman: Item 003, Traffic Management, pages 275 to 276. Member for Tabaquite.

Dr. Rambachan: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, under Traffic Management, the salaries and wages paid, amounts to about $14.5 million, so that is a lot of employees involved. But I see under Materials and Supply, Item No. 12, that you are allocating only $500,000 of materials. How are these workers going to be productively employed to do productive work, when it appears now that the same thing they are complaining about, the lack of materials, is being shown up here with 500,000 allocation?

Hon. Sinanan: We recognized that we will have a shortfall there and we will vire money to ensure that they have the required materials.

Dr. Rambachan: But, Minister, is that not the same thing you faced in 2018 when you had 500,000 and all you were able to give them of 1.5 million more, and they still complained, and they were sitting there doing nothing because they did not have the materials and supplies. So, you did not vire—so, it seems to me, would you agree that you did not vire sufficiently to keep them productively employed?
Hon. Sinanan: I think you are probably mixing up—what you had said before was Highways Division you saw sitting.

Dr. Rambachan: No, traffic management. Traffic management.

Hon. Sinanan: No, before you said in highways.

Dr. Rambachan: No, I said in traffic management.

Hon. Sinanan: I have no proof that they were sitting down doing nothing, because I know the traffic management does a lot of work: signage, road painting and so. We were able to find last 1.7 million and we intend to find that again for them this year, and if they require a little more we will find it for them.

Dr. Rambachan: “You cyar see the quality of paint you buying bad, Mr. Minister.”

Dr. Gopeesingh: In keeping with my colleague’s question just a while ago. Minister, would you then say that line Item 12, Materials and Supplies of 500,000, in relation to our workforce expenditure of 14 million under Traffic Management, which we just passed, so the material is only 5 per cent of the total cost.

Madam Chairman: Member, I am not going to allow that. That is the very conversation we just exhausted.

Dr. Gopeesingh: No, but the Materials and Supplies which I am saying on line Item 12, what percentage of the total traffic management cost is for materials?

Madam Chairman: Member, again, I am not going to allow that. I think the Member for Tabaquite made the point—

Dr. Gopeesingh: No.

Madam Chairman:—about a disproportionate relationship, and that was answered by the Minister.

Dr. Gopeesingh: No, I do not think the Minister gave—you want to give the answer, Minister?
Madam Chairman: Excuse me? Member for Caroni East, I ruled that the Minister answered that.

Dr. Gopeesingh: All right, I will go along with your ruling.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. If you have another issue I would welcome it.

Dr. Gopeesingh: The same thing on Traffic Management, Other Contracted Services. It is the same question, how many people there under line Item 028.

Madam Chairman: Under line Item 28?

Dr. Gopeesingh: No, we passed that.

Madam Chairman: I think we are on Goods and Services, if I remember.

Hon. Sinanan: Yes, but that is not personnel. That is Other Contracted Services, so there is not personnel there.

Dr. Gopeesingh: We passed that. That is all right.

Dr. Rambachan: Other Contracted Services, in 2018 you allocated 3 million, you spent 7, you are allocated 3 million more, are these Other Contracted Services a duplication of what the traffic management division workers are supposed to be doing?

Hon. Sinanan: No, it is not.

Dr. Rambachan: Then Minister, can you say what these Other Contracted Services are?

Hon. Sinanan: This would be separate projects, things like New Jersey barriers and so. It is not a duplication of the in-house staff doing things like that.

Madam Chairman: Item 004, Central Planning Unit; item 005, Drainage. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, line Item 09, Rent, Lease, vehicles and Equipment, 2017 the actual figure was 93,000; 2018 you had estimated 1 billion, in 2018 revised estimate 10 million; 2019 you estimate a million. Could
you indicate, what was the reason for that substantial expenditure in 2018 for $9 million extra, additional?

Hon. Sinanan: Under this Vote here is where we did a lot of the desilting projects, and we did in 2018, 230 projects were completed, under that Vote. So this is where most of the desilting programme.

Mr. Lee: So, a lot of these equipment were one-off kind of—

Hon. Sinanan: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Member for Couva North.

Ms. Ramdial: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, line Item 28, Other Contracted Services, I am seeing a huge increase by 89.2 million for the 2019 estimate, which amounts to 110 million. Can you account for that increase by 89 million?

Hon. Sinanan: Yes. In 2018, there were six projects completed at a cost of—in 2019, approximately 80 projects are planned across 31 constituencies at a total cost.

Ms. Ramdial: And just for my clarification, this would include what, the dredging of river, desilting?

Hon. Sinanan: It includes some dredging, some walling and some paving, and some walling of the rivers.

Ms. Ramdial: Would you undertake to give us a listing of these projects?

Hon. Sinanan: If required, yes.

Ms. Ramdial: Yes. Chair, I have another issue. Line Item 08, Rent, Lease, Office Accommodation and Storage, I am seeing the 2019 at 3.1 million with $431,000 increase. What accounts for this increase in Office Accommodation and Storage, rental, lease?

Hon. Sinanan: It is the same as previous years.
Ms. Ramdial: It is the same as previous years. No, an increase by 431,000.

Hon. Sinanan: It is when they pick it up. Member, this would have been picked in March.

Ms. Ramdial: “Ah haa.”

Hon. Sinanan: So it is when you pick it up and you compare it to the actual, the year end.

Ms. Ramdial: Where exactly is the location of these office accommodations and storage? Where is the new drainage building? Are you still in San Juan or have you moved?

Hon. Sinanan: We are in El Socorro now. We are still at El Socorro.

Ms. Ramdial: Right, you are still there.

Hon. Sinanan: Yeah.

Ms. Ramdial: Okay. All right, thanks.

Madam Chairman: Member for Tabaquite.

Dr. Rambachan: The question was asked already.

Madam Chairman: Member for Caroni Central.

Dr. Tewarie: The question was asked already.

Madam Chairman: Member for Couva South.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you, Madam Chair. The question that was partially asked by my colleague from Couva North, but I would like the Minister to provide a list of the projects and by constituency.

Madam Chairman: I think that was exactly what Couva North asked for.

Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: So in keeping with those same two questions.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. Member for Chaguanas East. No?
Mr. Karim: I pass.

Mr. Singh: Okay. Item 006, Mechanical Services. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Mr. Lee: Thank you. Minister, line Item 12, Materials and Supplies, within the mechanical services area, a decrease of 125,000. I know it is in keeping with the estimate of 2018, but given that earlier on the discussion was about how much equipment is down and in need of repairs, do you feel that this Vote of $400,000 is sufficient to bring these equipment that are in dire need of repairs operational?

Hon. Sinanan: We will have to review the allocation here, and utilize some funding from other—

Mr. Lee: Do you also go out for private repairs in respect to your equipment?

Hon. Sinanan: No. We do have a well-equipped mechanical service department. Again, once the resources are there they can do the repairs. Actually, people at the other Ministries would actually send vehicles there to have it repaired.

Madam Chairman: Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: My question was asked by Pointe-a-Pierre and answered.

11.00 a.m.

Madam Chairman: Item 008, Construction; Item 009, Environmental Health and Safety Unit. Member for Tabaquite.

Dr. Rambachan: The question is, what does this Environmental Health and Safety Unit do? And especially the safety unit aspect of—

Hon. Sinanan: So, these actually look after the Ministry buildings and so on, develop the policies for guidelines by the Ministry.

Dr. Rambachan: So, is it totally internal in terms of what the—

Hon. Sinanan: They also review the documents for contracts and so.

Dr. Rambachan: Do they actually look to see whether there is—what they review and accept when the documents are actually on the ground, on the highways?
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Hon. Sinanan: That is what the engineering consultants and so will do. They will review the documents.

Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Minister, are you aware of the extent of the violations of safety between Oropouche Roundabout and Paria Suites, with respect to that work that is going on there. Poor lighting, poor signage, [Desk thumping] and what have you.

Hon. Sinanan: If you could submit to me through—I will definitely look at it. That is one of the areas that I think was started under your tenure.

Dr. Rambachan: Yes.

Hon. Sinanan: If you are referring to the OAS, the highway to San Fernando?

Dr. Rambachan: I am referring to the work that is currently being done by local contractors.

Hon. Sinanan: But we do have the same foreign consultant on site which is AECOM and if you have any concern and you forward it to me, I will definitely have them look into it.

Dr. Rambachan: Minister, I do not mean to be rude or disrespectful, but I will like to invite you to just come one night and see what we face there, in terms of just saving our own lives driving there.

Hon. Sinanan: I will have this department, the safety department, because they do go out. I have projects where they had recommended projects stop until the safety requirements were adhered to.

Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Minister—

Hon. Sinanan: If there is a concern there, I give you the assurance we will look into it.

Dr. Rambachan: I take it up under safety here again. Do you recall I was telling you about the entrance by the Raja Yoga Centre into Chaguanas, that all the signs
that are supposed to reflect are no longer there and you could miss it and hit. Mr. Minister, take a drive and see the extent to which the public is being placed at risk because those things have not been replaced over the last two years.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Okay, we will look into your concerns.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Couva South.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Thank you, Madam Chair, to the Minister. Minister, under 16, Contract Employment, we see an increase of 1,266,000. Could you elaborate on the reason for this, the number of persons that are currently existing under Contract Employment at this unit and whether there will be additional recruitment and how you are going to recruit?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yes, the EHS Unit is being restructured with an increase in the staff complement.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** No, but “you eh tell meh” in terms of how much that are currently existing? How much you intend to recruit additionally? What are the criteria? Whether it is an internal advertisement? Would it be in newspapers and so on?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Right. Right now we have nine and we are reviewing the—PMCD is reviewing the structure for us right now. And once that is reviewed we will take it to the required amount. But right now there are nine positions in the department.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** And did this unit play any role in reviewing the structural damage, and so on, across the country with the last earthquake?

**Hon. Sinanan:** No. They do not do that. The engineering department does that.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** But from an OSH point of view and so on, Minister?

**Hon. Sinanan:** They will do this for our Ministry, for the Ministry—

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Only for your Ministry?
Hon. Sinanan: Yes. Because each Ministry will have its own health and safety unit.

Mr. Indarsingh: You have a director of this unit currently?

Hon. Sinanan: No, you would not have a director of this unit.

Mr. Indarsingh: What you have in terms of, carrying out the supervisory roles and functions?

Hon. Sinanan: And the structure is being reviewed right now at PMCD to fill that position of head of the unit.

Mr. Indarsingh: Because my colleague, the Member for Tabaquite, is quite concerned about the management of personnel in your Ministry. So who supervises from a daily point of view and so on? We “doh want people making cook and drinking Puncheon rum”.

Hon. Sinanan: We do have a head of the department who is responsible for reviewing, again, the contracts and the different health and safety issues within the Ministry of Works and Transport. We do have a head.

Madam Chairman: Member for Couva North.

Ms. Ramdial: The question was asked, Ma’am.

Madam Chairman: Member for Mayaro.

Mr. Paray: Thank you, Madam Chairman. Minister, back to 009, Environmental Health and Safety Unit. In your conversation a short while ago, you said that that unit is responsible for looking at the Ministry’s buildings and so on, in terms of health and safety and I am assuming some OSH issues as well. Are there currently any of your facilities, anywhere in the country, that are being red-flagged for violations or any of them that are not conforming to HSE or even OSH requirements at this time?

Hon. Sinanan: Yes, there are and there is provision in the allocation this year for
renovations to some of these divisions.

**Mr. Paray:** Could you provide us a listing of those buildings that are earmarked for repairs this fiscal year please?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Sure.

**Mr. Paray:** Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 010, Traffic Warden Unit. Member for Chaguanas East.

**Mr. Karim:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, line Item 1-6, 16. Could you give us some details as to what this Contract Employment is about and the increase of 110,000?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Under 16, Contract Employment, yes.

**Mr. Karim:** How many contract employees—

**Hon. Sinanan:** The Ministry is addressing the shortage of a number of traffic wardens by seeking to employ the following: one, the chief traffic warden, the deputy chief traffic warden, 11 traffic warden supervisors, 64 traffic wardens and 649. Now, this is the entire cadre. We have just gotten the approval from Cabinet to have their contracts renewed. But they are working and their contracts are now being renewed.

**Mr. Karim:** Chairman, can I ask a follow-up question?

**Madam Chairman:** Sure, you may.

**Mr. Karim:** Hon. Minister, there is a visible concern around the Endeavour Roundabout and a couple of other areas in Chaguanas. Do you intend to increase the complement to deal with these very serious situations?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Well, again, once we complete the renewal of all the contracts the programme will be revised. This programme was supposed to roll out in several areas. Unfortunately, it did not materialize the way it was intended. So we are in
the process of reviewing the programme as to where the wardens actually go out to. So I cannot commit to you that any specific area will get additional wardens but we are in the process of reviewing the allocation of the wardens.

**Mr. Karim:** Will you be able to give favourable consideration to requests from us?

**Hon. Sinanan:** We will give favourable consideration to every MP who makes a request. There is the guarantee that you are going to get the request but we will definitely look at it.

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

**Mr. Lee:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, in connection with line Item 16, Contract Employment and the Vacant Position you just read out, you said that chief traffic warden, a deputy traffic warden. So my question is, presently, those two top positions are vacant and you have 11 supervisors that are also vacant—

**Hon. Sinanan:** No, we have people in the positions but they are on short term. So we are about to renew their contracts.

**Mr. Lee:** My other question, Madam Chair, line Item 08, Office Accommodation and Storage, 3.3 million till 2019. Could you identify the office locations of the Traffic Warden Units throughout Trinidad and Tobago, please?

**Hon. Sinanan:** I would submit that to you in writing.

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

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** The question was asked.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Couva North. Member for Caroni East.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Hon. Minister, could you indicate their mission, criteria for becoming a traffic warden and the levels of training or retaining?

**Madam Chairman:** Member, this is—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Yes, line Item 16, Contracted Services for the 649 and
continuous figure. Because I am asking you that because from my personal knowledge looking at these traffic wardens, the expenditure of $20,000,000 on them has been a national failure. Because they do not do what is required of them. Their level of interaction with the public is abysmal. They do not seem to have been trained, and they are hiding in little areas where there is shade; and where the actual transgression of the traffic issue takes place they are not there. That is why I am asking you about the level of training and retraining and entry requirements to be a traffic warden, 649 traffic wardens.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Madam Chair, I do not share the view that the traffic wardens should be described in that way.

**Mr. Hinds:** Correct.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Well, that is my experience with them.

**Hon. Sinanan:** I have no doubt there might be—like in any organization, there might be one or two who may not perform the way we expect them to, but I think the traffic wardens are doing yeoman service. [Desk thumping]

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** I do not agree with you.

**Hon. Sinanan:** I do not agree that we should describe them in that way.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Well, that is my impression.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Our intention is to actually have this service improved and be expanded. The method of hiring, depending on the position that you apply for, there are different criteria and all the wardens go through a training by OLEP, which is a law enforcement agency. So only when they actually graduate from that programme then they come in to be a traffic warden. And again, I think the traffic wardens have been doing yeoman service. There might be a few within the system that the system may have to weed out, but I think the traffic wardens, that service needs to be expanded.
Dr. Gopeesingh: What is the level of—the entry requirement level?
Hon. Sinanan: Again, it will vary in whatever position that you apply for.
Dr. Gopeesingh: No, the 649, generally, what would be their entrance requirement level?
Hon. Sinanan: I will submit the job specs for all the—
Dr. Gopeesingh: Is it no O levels or one or two or three?
Hon. Sinanan: Let me submit it in writing.
Dr. Gopeesingh: Well, you see that is a hidden thing because by the time we get that information it is—

Madam Chairman: Member for Couva South.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you, thank you, Madam Chair. To the Minister. Minister, you indicated it is 649 in the—
Hon. Sinanan: Positions, yeah.

Mr. Indarsingh: How many of this 649 still have to be filled?
Hon. Sinanan: Madam Chair, through you, it was said a little while ago that it was hidden as to the qualifications—

Mr. Indarsingh: I am not concerned about qualifications. I am asking you, out of the 649, how many vacant positions?
Hon. Sinanan: There are 179 traffic wardens currently employed.
Mr. Indarsingh: Okay.

Hon. Sinanan: However, this would have dated back pre-2015, the entire cadre were hired between 2010 and 2015. So the criteria, there is no secret to that.

Mr. Indarsingh: No, no. The issue for me, Mr. Minister, how much is there to be filled?

Hon. Sinanan: One hundred and seventy-nine and the approved bodies are 649. So there is a significant amount of vacancies. Cabinet has recently approved the
new programme—

Mr. Indarsingh: Right. So you would be recruiting—

Hon. Sinanan: And these vacancies, based on the availability of funding for the programme, the vacancies will be filled. It is not that we are going to hire 649, it is based on the availability of funding for the programme.

Mr. Indarsingh: And the 179 that are currently in the system, what is their contract period?

Hon. Sinanan: Three years.

Mr. Indarsingh: Three years. And effective from when?

Hon. Sinanan: It depends and it will vary.

Mr. Indarsingh: It will vary?

Hon. Sinanan: Yes.

Mr. Indarsingh: But between 2015 and now, could you provide a listing of how many have been recruited and by constituency?

Hon. Sinanan: Okay. I do not know if the requirement for employment is by constituency—

Mr. Indarsingh: No, I just want to have an idea. That is my right to ask you. So you do not determine whether which constituency—

Madam Chairman: Member for Couva South.

Mr. Indarsingh: It is my right to ask you.

Madam Chairman: Member for Couva South, nobody is affecting your right here, please.

Mr. Indarsingh: [Inaudible]

Madam Chairman: One minute. [Crosstalk] Member for Couva South, both of us cannot speak at the same time. [Crosstalk] Member for Couva South. Member for Couva South, both of us cannot speak at the same time.
Mr. Indarsingh: I want to ask questions in the context of transparency, good governance and open government that they promised. And if I want to ask how people are being recruited, whether from Cedros, Couva, Port of Spain, wherever. That is my right as a Member of Parliament. And the Minister, I am simply asking him to furnish this meeting with that information. That is all, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: And nobody has denied you that right to ask a question. Minister of Finance.

Hon. Sinanan: Madam—

Mr. Imbert: Yes, Madam Chairman—no, let me say something. Madam Chairman, the traffic warden system was conceptualized, designed and ready to be put in place just before the May 2010 election. This is necessary for the Member to remember and for the public to know. When the Government changed, the incoming Minister of Works and Transport completed the recruitment exercise. And therefore, the first batch of traffic wardens were hired by the UNC. Most of the people there were hired under the UNC administration. The Ministry of Works and Transport has continued with the process of advertisements, interviews and recruitment on merit. Any insinuation to the contrary is mischievous.

Mr. Indarsingh: Madam Chair, it was no insinuation. I am just asking for information.

Madam Chairman: Member for Chaguanas East.

Mr. Karim: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Given the substantial increase in the training allocation of the traffic warden, I suspect it may be—is it as a result of the increased numbers? And if that is the case, what is the duration of this training programme? How many days do they attend training for?

Hon. Sinanan: Three months. The duration is about three months and, yes, the anticipated increase is based on the increase in the traffic warden that we intend to
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bring on into the new system.

**Mr. Karim:** Who has approved the curriculum or is this programme accredited by anybody?

**Hon. Sinanan:** It is done by OLEP.

**Mr. Karim:** It is accredited by OLEP.

**Hon. Sinanan:** OLEP does the training.

**Mr. Karim:** No, is it accredited by OLEP?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Well, they conduct the training. They certify it so their programmes are accredited by who have to accredit their programme. The traffic wardens are trained by OLEP which is, as we know, a part of national security.

**Mr. Karim:** I was asking the question, Minister, in the context of what one of my colleagues hinted was a concern of delivery of the service and that is why I asked about the accreditation. Because accreditation is not simply about a programme design. It is much more than the terms of quality assurance. So may I ask whether you have any intentions to have this programme by OLEP accredited? For example, by the—let me help you—

**Hon. Sinanan:** It is not something that is on the drawing board at this point in time, but if the Member so suggests, it is something that we will look at.

**Mr. Karim:** Well, I want to ask whether you will give consideration to the quality assurance aspect of it through the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago. Will you be so inclined?

**Hon. Sinanan:** You see, this OLEP is a part of national security [*Crosstalk*] and OLEP then has to seek that through national security. What it will simply mean is that the entire training of national security may have to go and get—

**Mr. Karim:** Through the academy.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Through the academy. I do not think they will go just for the
traffic wardens.

**Mr. Karim:** That was the question, Minister, to improve the—through the academy.

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

**Mr. Singh:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I thought I was not going to catch your eye. Madam Chair, the point about value for money, the ticket system is going way by ticket by citation, so that is the new legislation. When the traffic warden was conceptualized you did not have that approach. But you have recently an attempt to environmentally clean up the place by increasing the fines for littering. Is there any thought being given or should there be thought given to expanding the role of the traffic warden, given the fact that ticketing by citation is going to be the norm, that you should engage in enforcement of the Litter Act through this mechanism?

**Hon. Sinanan:** We have litter wardens and we have traffic wardens. I do not know if we want to—in my opinion, there is enough work for the traffic wardens, because we just saw recently where we had overweight trucks, and so, doing a lot of damage and where we are using the traffic wardens now, traffic wardens now, to do is to actually police some of the areas that we have heavy trucks utilizing where they are not supposed to utilize. So I do not think at this point in time I would want to put the traffic wardens to do what the litter wardens do.

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

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** In the training programme that my colleague asked about, the Member for Chaguanas East, would that incorporate areas of how to write up a ticket expeditiously. I think they need to be trained if they have to write a ticket, they take an inordinate length of time, same thing like the police service; many members of the police service take an inordinate long time to write up a ticket.
Hon. Sinanan: I am sure that would be part of the training programme that OLEP will conduct. I am sure that writing up the ticket will definitely be a part of that training programme.

Dr. Gopeesingh: I want to recommend that because they take half an hour to write a ticket.

Madam Chairman: Item 011, Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, page 281; Item 012, Unemployment Relief Programme, Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, line Item 08. Can you identify to us how many offices this Unemployment Relief Programme houses and their location, please? And I am sure you are referring to the public officers, not so?

Hon. Sinanan: Yeah, yeah.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: If you can identify the offices and the location.

Hon. Sinanan: Sure. We will submit that to you in writing.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you.

Hon. Sinanan: The offices and their locations.

Madam Chairman: Item 013, General Administration Transport; Item 014, Transport Division; Item 015 Maritime Services. Member for Chaguanas East.

Mr. Karim: Hon. Minister, might you be able to give us some details as to the nature of work conducted by this Maritime Service Division?

Hon. Sinanan: Well, the Maritime Service Division, they are responsible for ensuring that the—there are several responsibilities that they have: to certify the vessels that are coming in and to ensure that vessels are compliant coming in and out of Trinidad and also working inter-island, in terms of their safety. And they are also the regulatory body that ensures that all vessels are operating within their
class and certification.

**Mr. Karim:** Any reason for this substantial decrease in the training allocation at line 17 then?

**Hon. Sinanan:** What?

**Mr. Karim:** Line 17, 1-7.

**Hon. Sinanan:** A decrease you said?

**Mr. Karim:** Yeah.

**Hon. Sinanan:** It is the same amount as 2018.

**Mr. Karim:** Sixty-eight thousand decrease for the 2019 allocation.

**Hon. Sinanan:** I will have to review it. It could be an extra something that they did during that period, but what was budgeted was for in 2018 and again in 2019. It could be that they had some—

**Mr. Karim:** With respect to training, did they utilize the University of Trinidad and Tobago, Maritime Campus?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Well, they do work with the Maritime Campus of the UTT.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 016, Procurement Unit. Member for Caroni Central.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Just a quick question, Minister. Is it that you are setting up this Procurement Unit now to prepare for the procurement legislation when it is—

**Hon. Sinanan:** The answer to that is, yes.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Is yes?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yes.

**Madam Chairman:** Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchase, page 285; Item 001, General Administration; Item 002, Highways; Item 003, Traffic Management; Item 004, Central Planning Unit; Item 005, Drainage; Item 006, Mechanical Services; Item 007, Maintenance; Item 008, Construction, Item 009, Environmental Health and Safety Unit. Member for Tabaquite? Item 010, Traffic
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Warden Unit. Member for Tabaquite, we are on page 287.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Mr. Minister, I see here under Traffic Warden Unit that there is no provision for vehicles for the Traffic Warden Unit and yet there have been several instances where the traffic wardens located in San Fernando could not get to Gasparillo, and therefore on several occasions there were no traffic wardens and at one period of time it operated like that for a couple of weeks well, eh, I will refer it to you. Is there any—

**Hon. Sinanan:** There was a challenge for the repairs of vehicles which have been addressed. At that point in time there was a challenge with having the vehicles repaired. But that has been addressed.

**Dr. Rambachan:** But do you intend to buy any more vehicles for the unit?

**Hon. Sinanan:** No, we intend to repair vehicles throughout the Ministry of Works and Transport.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 011, Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Unit; Item 012, Unemployment Relief Programme; Item 014, Transport; Item 015, Maritime Services. Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies, we are on page 289. Item 001, Regional Bodies; Item, 003, United Nations Organizations; Item 005, Non-Profit Institutions; Item 007, Households; Item 008, Subsidies. Member for Tabaquite.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Mr. Minister, under Subsidies: Port Authority, page 290, Contribution Towards Deficit on Operation of Coastal Steamers. Just for my elucidation. The figure of 327,476,300, is that the amount of money that the Government will be contributing to the sea bridge from Trinidad and Tobago net of any income earned?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yes.

**Dr. Rambachan:** And that this is simply recurrent costs?
Hon. Sinanan: These are recurrent costs.

Dr. Rambachan: No capital costs are involved there?

Hon. Sinanan: No, this is the recurrent cost.

Dr. Rambachan: Right. So it is costing us a subsidy of 327.4 million on the sea bridge.

Hon. Sinanan: Yeah, similar to what it has been costing for the last couple of years.

Dr. Rambachan: Right, good. And Other Transfers, No. 5, Water Taxi Service. I would like, Mr. Minister, before I go on there, to know how many passengers were transported on the sea bridge.

Madam Chairman: Is this in 009?

Dr. Rambachan: Yeah. 008. But you have not named 09, so I was waiting for you to name 09.

Madam Chairman: Okay. We will wait for 09.

Dr. Rambachan: Yeah.

Madam Chairman: Item 009, Other Transfers. Member for Tabaquite.

Dr. Rambachan: So Water Taxi Service. Now, this one refers to Port of Spain/San Fernando.

Hon. Sinanan: Yes.

Dr. Rambachan: Right. And that is subsidized to the extent of $52.929 million, right? Now, how many passengers are transported on the water taxi annually between San Fernando and Port of Spain and Port of Spain and San Fernando.

Hon. Sinanan: I will have to get that figure for you.

Dr. Rambachan: And also, what income is derived from that Water Taxi Service, as I am trying to establish the cost to operate as against income.

Hon. Sinanan: I am sure you will have to take several other factors when you are
determining the cost, but I will get those figures for you, because you have to consider the amount of man-hours that could be lost if these passengers have to be transported by vehicle on the road and the traffic congestion and things like that. So when you are working the cost, I do not think it would be fair to just say 50 passengers costing X amount. You will have to look way beyond that.

**Dr. Rambachan:** But if you work it out and it is costing you $1,000 a day per passenger then something is wrong.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Again, you will work that cost and I will get the figures for you.

**Dr. Rambachan:** But the cost will have to include, Mr. Minister, when you present it, the cost of maintenance also because this might just be what you calculate as the running cost, but what is the cost of maintenance and so on.

**Hon. Sinanan:** This includes the maintenance as well. But I will get the cost for you and the passenger loading and you will be able to come to a conclusion on it.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Thank you.

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

**Dr. Moonilal:** Thank you. Ma’am, are we on Transfers to State Enterprises?

**Madam Chairman:** No, we have not reached there as yet.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Okay, I will hold.

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

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** If we are under Subsidies, 008, line Item 01.

**Madam Chairman:** We are at 009. Item 011, Transfers to State Enterprises, Member for Oropouche East.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Thank you very much. Minister could you, I am at 07 on page 290. Could you just indicate to us, Minister of Works and Transport, whether this is payment for repayment on a loan for the Rapid Rail transit? What has happened now to the Rapid Rail project? Is it still active at the Ministry?
Hon. Sinanan: No, the Rapid Rail project is not active at this time.

Dr. Moonilal: Could you also indicate, maybe in writing, not necessarily now, the total amount of moneys paid as of 2017 on repayment of loans on the Rapid Rail project of the Ministry of Works and Transport and how much money is outstanding on the Rapid Rail project specifically? If you can provide that to us. Now would be fine, but I know you may need to do—

11.30 a.m.

Hon. Sinanan: Madam Chair, I think I provided that in my first response. I think it was about two years ago. But I will—

Dr. Moonilal: You can probably update as the moneys keep going down.

Hon. Sinanan: I think I answered that about two years ago.

Dr. Moonilal: Well, a good update would be welcome.

Hon. Sinanan: Sure.

Dr. Moonilal: Thanks.

Dr. Gopeesingh: I will start with line Item 1, which is VMCOTT. Is this the total amount of money that the Ministry of Works and Transport provides to VMCOTT under State Enterprise; whether they do X amount of vehicles or Y amount of vehicles?

Hon. Sinanan: No. This figure is a subsidy that goes to VMCOTT. This has nothing to do with vehicle repairs and so, from any Ministry.

Dr. Gopeesingh: So if vehicles are repaired, a separate cost—

Hon. Sinanan: That is an additional charge, yes.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Additional cost. Okay. And could you give us an idea about—last year, what was the additional cost for VMCOTT?

Hon. Sinanan: I will have to get that to you in writing.

Dr. Gopeesingh: All right. The next one is Nipdec, line Item 02. There is a fixed
rate bond for $339 million given to Nipdec for motor vehicles. What does that mean? Does it mean purchase of new vehicles? And how many vehicles have been purchased? How long this loan will be repaid, the $339 million?

**Hon. Sinanan:** This loan would have been for the Motor Vehicles Authority.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Motor Vehicles Authority?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yes.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** But paid through Nipdec?

**Hon Sinanan:** Yes. The loan was taken through Nipdec.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** So how many vehicles were purchased, and when?

**Hon. Sinanan:** There are no vehicles. This is the Motor Vehicles Authority. Remember the Caroni building?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Yes.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Right. So this would have been the loan that was taken, not for vehicles but for the Motor Vehicles Authority.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** All right. I got the answer. Thank you. And the next one under Nidco, 04, Term Loan Facility for four new fast ferries. Could you elucidate on that?

**Hon. Sinanan:** That would have been the purchase of the four water taxis, and the loan. These are all loan payments.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Right. When is it going to be the completion for that loan? And how much was it altogether?

**Hon. Sinanan:** I could furnish you with that in writing.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** All right.

**Mr. Karim:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, line Item 01, VMCOTT. I just want to get the—I did not hear it too well. What you said was the purpose—this was a loan facility as well?
Hon. Sinanan: No, no, this is—

Mr. Karim: What is the reason for this 10 million?

Hon. Sinanan: This is the Government subvention.

Mr. Karim: Okay. Now, the Government subvention, is it possible to get it here or at another place? What percentage of Government vehicles are repaired by VMCOTT?

Hon. Sinanan: I will have to get that to you.

Mr. Karim: And therefore, also—

Hon. Sinanan: But, remember, we would deal with the Ministry of Works and Transport’s vehicles going to them. Other Ministries would normally send. Police would send. Other Ministries will send their vehicles to VMCOTT. You want a report from VMCOTT for all the Government Ministries?

Mr. Karim: All right. If you could tell us what percentage of your vehicles, then, that you send there, and what percentage go outside to private garages.

Hon. Sinanan: Our vehicles would be minimal because every department has their own garage. We have a mechanical service division. So our vehicles going to VMCOTT will be minimal.

Mr. Karim: Well, in that case, since you are the Minister responsible for VMCOTT, if you could give us the answer to the question I asked.

Hon. Sinanan: Sure.

Mr. Karim: What is the total amount of vehicles—

Hon. Sinanan: Government.

Mr. Karim: —government, and what is being sent to private, and the quantity of moneys that are relative to the work being done.

Mr. Charles: 07, Repayment of Trinidad Rapid Rail Transit System. Minister are we still paying for that problem that has—or could you explain the deliverables
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from that expenditure?

**Madam Chairman:** I believe the Member for Oropouche East asked about the Rapid Rail. I believe so, and the Minister undertook to give an update.

**Mr. Charles:** All right. Could the Minister tell us when we will stop paying for this loan?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Soon as we finish pay for it. [Laughter]

**Mr. Charles:** What is the time frame for finishing spending on this Item? Because we have received nothing from it and we are spending annually, $10 million. [Crosstalk] Madam Chair, I am not happy with that answer.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Madam Chair, I will give an update, a status report on the loan.

**Mr. Charles:** Okay.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Okay? I will submit a status report on the loan.

**Mr. Charles:** Thank you.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Thank you very much, Minister. Minister, I am on number 15 and 12. I am looking at it, but number 15. I just wanted to enquire from you, this is the moneys concerning the extension of the highway to Point Fortin. Just two quick questions. The final piece of the highway to Point Fortin, has the Government issued a contract yet for the completion of that part to Point Fortin, the final piece of the highway? Did the Government issue any contract yet for that final piece?

**Hon. Sinanan:** I do not know if there is a final piece. The highway would have been broken up, I think into 12 packages. Three packages have been completed. I understand five packages are in the stage of award; two are being tendered out and should close within about a week or so, and an additional two will be advertised within the next week, which will complete the 12 packages.

**Dr. Moonilal:** And just as a related question to that, sometime ago in the House in
response to a question, you had indicated that the Debe to Mon Desir section, we had suspended work there because you were undertaking some type of study and that will inform whether or not that part of the highway continues. Could you just update us? Because it has to be here with the loan for the extension of the highway, because that is a critical part of the extension. Could you indicate whether that study has been completed, its finding and when—because this is also my constituency, Minister, as you appreciate—when the Debe to Mon Desir section would be constructed?

**Hon. Sinanan:** At this point in time, the concentration is San Fernando to Point Fortin.

**Dr. Moonilal:** No, but that is on the way.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yes, that is on the way. In terms of the other section of the highway, there are a lot of land issues to be resolved, and at this point in time that is not a priority. We have to deal with the land issues because we have several matters now going to the court for land issues that have not been resolved.

**Dr. Moonilal:** I appreciate that, but did you undertake the study that you promised in the response?

**Hon. Sinanan:** I cannot remember saying a study. What I said was that there were certain issues that have to be dealt with.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Okay, fine, fine—

**Hon. Sinanan:** Because, I mean, a study should have been done long before we decide to build the highway.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Yes, they were, but you had promised a new study. But we will sort it out.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yeah.

**Dr. Moonilal:** And finally, related to this Item as well, the loan arrangements you
have here for payments of a loan, if we can just get an update, not necessarily now, but in writing, you can give an undertaking to just update on how much moneys have been paid so far; how much is outstanding and when we expect this loan facility.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Sure.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Thank you.

**Mr. Lee:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am just seeking your guidance first before I ask the question. Line Item 18. Was any question asked on line Item 18, with the Helicopter Services Limited?

**Madam Chairman:** No, none were.

**Mr. Lee:** Okay. Minister, line Item 18, National Helicopter Services Limited, 2019. Nothing in ’17, nothing in ’18; 2019, you have an estimate of $40 million. Could you draw some clarity into—

**Hon. Sinanan:** Eighteen?

**Madam Chairman:** Page 291.

**Mr. Lee:** Page 291, still under Current Transfers and Subsidies.

**Hon. Sinanan:** That is a new line Item. It is for payment of loans.

**Mr. Lee:** Payment of loans on behalf of the National Helicopter Services Limited.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Madam Chair, through you, that would have been what I would have referred to in the House recently about a helicopter that have not been delivered to Trinidad because of the non-certification of the aircraft, and this line Item is to deal with that aircraft.

**Mr. Lee:** Just for clarity also, is the Government of Trinidad and Tobago guaranteeing this particular loan, of $40 million, on behalf of the Helicopter Services Limited?

**Hon Sinanan:** This is a matter that, again, is before the court at this time, but
there were some payments that had to be made to the—

**Mr. Imbert:** Madam Chairman, just let me come in here.

**Hon Sinanan:**—through the charter party agreement.

**Mr. Imbert:** Madam Chair, let me assist the Minister of Works and Transport. This helicopter was procured before the general election by the last government. It is a very convoluted situation as to why it was procured; who procured it; on whose authority and why they procured a helicopter that cannot be used. With respect to the financing, that too is being investigated.

**Mr. Bodee:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, if I could just take you back to line Item 15, and just to seek further clarification on the Solomon Hochoy Highway extension. Did you give the assurance that the segment from Debe to Mon Desir will be completed? I know you mentioned the issues involved.

**Hon. Sinanan:** No, I cannot give you a commitment that that will be done at this point in time. It is being reviewed.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Could the hon. Minister give us an undertaking that he can provide for us the information on line Items 11, 13, 14 and 17, particularly with those fixed rate bonds. When did it originate; how long you estimate the payment to be made; over what period of time? So 11, 13, 14 and 17. Those are fixed rate bonds: Nipdec; $1.5 billion fixed rate bond under PURE, that is 13; 14 is repayment of 1 billion fixed rate bond, PURE again; and number 17, repayment of TT 400 million bond under PURE again—under 17.

**Hon. Sinanan:** We will submit that in writing.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Right. When it originated; how much on an annual basis and when would it be completed?

**Dr. Tewarie:** Yes, on 06—

**Madam Chairman:** 06 on page?
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Dr. Tewarie: 291, sorry.

Madam Chairman: We have not reached there as yet.

Dr. Tewarie: Okay, sorry.

Madam Chairman: We are still at Item 011. Member for Naparima?

Mr. Charles: No, I was at 06.

Madam Chairman: Okay. Sub-Head 06: Current Transfers to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies; Item 004: Statutory Boards. We now go on to a new book. [Interruption]

Well, if we recall, the details of all of these that would be under 06 will be in a new book. So that that is why it is put here, but then we go to the details. That is what we have been doing for the past how many days. Okay? I know we are all tired. So, Member, if you wish, when we go to the new book, the details for whatever you want to ask would be in that book. We have a book called Draft Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies and of the Tobago House of Assembly.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: For the guidance of Members, we go to page 377. Okay? So what we have in the book we were looking at was a summary and now we are going to each of the individual entities. Okay? So hon. Members, we will now move on to the Draft Estimates of the Revenue and Expenditure of the Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies and of the Tobago House of Assembly. 39: Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago. Sub-Head 01: Personnel Expenditure, page 377. Item 001: General Administration. Caroni Central, is your question under this?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes, under Personnel Expenditure.

Madam Chairman: Yes, Caroni Central?
Dr. Tewarie: No, I think it might be better under 002, Passenger and Cargo Terminal.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So, Member for Caroni East, we are under Item 001: General Administration. Is that where you are, Caroni East?

Dr. Gopeesingh: No. I am seeing 375, Madam Chair, under Personnel Expenditure, which was under 375. Okay, I see it now, so I can ask the question on it.

Mr. Charles: General Reduction, that is 01, but I see that we would pick it up in the Sub-Items. Okay.

Madam Chairman: Yes? Okay.

Dr. Gopeesingh: So Personnel Expenditure, 377. For the Airports Authority, line Item 01. Can we get an idea of how many people are employed at the Airports Authority for the value of 26,500,000?

Hon. Sinanan: There are 864 employees on staff.

Dr. Gopeesingh: These are full-time employees?

Hon. Sinanan: Yes.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Any vacancies?

Hon. Sinanan: Yes, 38 vacancies.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Okay.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, you have any outstanding sums of moneys being owed to employees of the Airports Authority which were realized under the collective bargaining process?

Hon. Sinanan: Yes, about $35 million is owing for the period 2009 to 2014 under the EPA, and the payment will be made depending on the availability of the cash flow.

Mr. Indarsingh: On the availability of?
Hon. Sinanan: The cash flow.

Mr. Indarsingh: Cash flow.

Hon. Sinanan: Yeah, money.

Mr. Indarsingh: And the current collective bargaining period, the negotiations are currently in progress?

Hon. Sinanan: Yes, the PSA, for the period of 2014 to 2016 and 2017 to 2019, proposals have not been received to date. The Estate Police Association, for the period 2015, 2017 and 2018, 2020, proposals received for the period of 2015, 2017 only.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you.

Dr. Rambachan: Madam Chair, it is just that I am confused about one thing. This is about revenue and expenditure, right?

Madam Chairman: Yes.

Dr. Rambachan: And when you started here, you did not deal with page 376, which is—and I am looking back. We have not had an opportunity to look at the revenues of the Airports Authority. Because there are some questions here that I would have liked to ask on this page. So I do not know if there is a reason why we are not looking at it.

Madam Chairman: I think this is the summary page, 376.

Dr. Rambachan: It is income. You have expenditure. You have Summary of Income and Expenditure on page 375, but then you have Detail. For example, if I may give an example, Ma’am? Can I?

Madam Chairman: Yes, please.

Dr. Rambachan: Under Number 11, under Fees, you have Passengers Facilitation Fee that you did not have in ’18 and ’17, but you have $13,400,000, and you are wondering whether that is a new fee—
Hon. Sinanan: It is.

Dr. Rambachan:—and how is that going to affect the passengers, whether that is going to be absorbed as a new tax. For example, you have Security that is going to go up by $18 million, and then you have also Landing Fees going up by $12 million. Are those going to be passed on now to the taxpayers and it is going to affect the cost of transport, the ticketing cost and what have you? Because these are substantial amounts that are being increased here.

Madam Chairman: Minister, you could answer it? My understanding is because we look at appropriations, we tend to look only at expenditures, moneys that have been appropriated. That has been my understanding.

Mr. Imbert: Could I just make a point? There is a book called Estimates of Revenue, and all receivers of revenue are accounted for. So that although that is not one of the Items that is examined in this Standing Finance Committee—because the appropriation, as the Chairman correctly said, is for expenditure, not for revenue. But I will look into the Estimates of Revenue and see whether the answer to your question can be found there. If not, we can deal with it in due course in the parliamentary session.

Dr. Rambachan: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Item 002: Passenger and Cargo Terminals.

Dr. Tewarie: Chair, I wanted to ask a question: If the Minister would clarify what would be the role of the Airports Authority in the construction of the Tobago Airport.

Mr. Imbert: I can answer that. The Cabinet made a decision to appoint a committee comprising a number of stakeholders, including the Airports Authority and the Tobago House of Assembly and the Ministry of Works and Transport, but that project is being driven by the Ministry of Finance.
Dr. Tewarie: Which agency will be responsible for procurement issues?

Mr. Imbert: Cabinet recently made a decision to use Nidco to—the tender, evaluation and award of contract for the new terminal building.

Dr. Tewarie: Okay.


Mrs. Newall0-Hosein: Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, can you just indicate—there is a decrease in line Item 01, and will this impact upon the security at all?

Hon. Sinanan: No. That is 01?

Mrs. Newall0-Hosein: 01, Salaries and Cost of Living.

Hon. Sinanan: And if it will have an effect on the security? That is the question? No, it would not.

Mrs. Newall0-Hosein: How many persons are currently—what is the complement of the staff, and how many vacancies are there?

Hon. Sinanan: Four hundred security officers are directly employed. And I will have to get the vacancies for you. But there are 400 security officers that are directly employed with the Airports Authority.

Dr. Moonilal: Thank you very much, Madam. Minister, just a quick clarification before a question. This security, at 005 here, would include both the estate constables and the private security companies that have been recruited by the Airports Authority?

Hon. Sinanan: This will include the public and the private.

Dr. Moonilal: Then may I ask—if it is you can answer now or again, give an undertaking to provide—the process that was used to recruit the private security company that is now functioning at the Airport, whether it was an open tendering
process; whether it was sole selective, and any other business concerning that? Because, as you are aware, there have been several issues in the press relating to breach of security and discovery of items, and so on, at the airport.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Okay, I will provide that information.

**Mr. Karim:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Is it possible, following that question, whether we could get the breakdown of the amount for the security services provided by the Airports Authority and by the private security?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Could you give a little explanation on the large overtime payment of 20 million last year? And well, of course, you reduced it this year. What accounts for that large overtime payment?

**Hon. Sinanan:** That is 03?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Yeah.

**Hon. Sinanan:** There would have been a reduction in the overtime due to the redeployment of security at other posts that require specialized aviation training and the use of CCTV surveillance and external security for land-side posting.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** So you are reducing.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yes.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Okay.

**Mr. Imbert:** Madam Chair, I just want to make the point, if you look at page 380, 005, 28: Other Contracted Services would be private security. So the information is there.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Ma’am, just for clarity, the question I asked was—

**Mr. Imbert:** No, this was in answer to the question from Chaguanas East as to how much is being spent on private security and how much on public. The line Item 28, 005: Security, Other Contracted Services, would be for private security.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** So just for clarification, we are saying that on page 378,
01, and under 005, this figure of 59 million is only for—

**Hon. Sinanan:** Which Item is that?

**Mr. Imbert:** Where are you?

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** You took us just—

**Mr. Imbert:** I said 380.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** I understand that, Minister—

**Madam Chairman:** Yes, just one minute.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:**—so I am asking—the Member for Oropouche East had asked about the Salaries and Cost of Living at 01 on page 378, and you indicated that it was public and private. So I am just differentiating now and saying that this here, this figure of $59 million on page 378, 01, is only for public and on 380 it is specifically to private? I am just asking.

**Mr. Imbert:** No, no, no.

**Madam Chairman:** I do not think the additional information given related to the question asked of Oropouche East. It really related to a question asked by Chaguanas East. And if I recall, what the Minister said in terms of 001, this related to 400 officers, and the word he used was “directly”—

**Mr. Imbert:** Yes.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Agreed. And then—

**Mr. Imbert:** Obviously, we answered the question.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** And then the Member for Oropouche East had asked another and it was relating to whether it is public and private—

**Mr. Imbert:** No, but not with respect to that line Item. That line Item, it is pellucidly clear, would be direct employees of the Airports Authority, because it refers to Salaries and Cost of Living allowance, overtime, monthly-paid officers—allowances, monthly-paid officers.
Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Right, because you just corrected it.

Mr. Imbert: It is not corrected. That must only, possibly, refer to employees of the Airports Authority. It cannot refer to anything else. And then on the flip side, on page 380: Other Contracted Services, must refer to external agencies. It cannot refer to anything else.

Dr. Rambachan: Mr. Minister, thank you for that. So under 28, under Contracted Services, what is the necessity—

Madam Chairman: No, no, no. Just now. We have not opened up the discussion that widely. I think in response to the question from the Member for Chaguanas East, he was directed to somewhere else. All right.

Dr. Rambachan: Okay. I will come back to it.


Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, line Item 61, Insurance. In 2019 your estimated budget is 13 million, an increase of $4 million. Your Actual for 2017 was 7.8 million. Your revised for 2018 was 9 million. So if you take that into account, what is the reason for the increase of approximately 3 million for 2019? What new policies or insurance—

Hon. Sinanan: Okay. It is an increase expected in the insurance premium in line with the evaluation exercise done in March 2018.

Mr. Lee: Valuation of?

Hon. Sinanan: Of the assets.

Mr. Lee: Is it with the same insurance providers?

Hon. Sinanan: That is the reinsurance.

Mr. Lee: Okay.

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Madam Chair, line Item 15, Repairs and Maintenance of
Equipment. Madam Chair, through you to the hon. Minister. Minister, there is a problem, generally, with the escalator upon arrival, and that therefore—I see that there has been no increase in the allocation in this line Item. The question is, is there sufficient moneys allocated to prevent this escalator from going down so frequently?

Mr. Imbert: May I ask the Member to be specific? There is more than one down escalator on arrival. Which one are you referring to?

Mr. Singh: Well, I “doh” know the geography of the airport—

Mr. Imbert: There are a number of loading bridges—

Mr. Singh: The one that you enter in any international flight, you go down.

Mr. Imbert: There are a number of loading bridges. As you come off the loading bridge, you would access an escalator. There is more than one. Which one are you referring to?

Mr. Singh: The one that—I cannot really indicate which one, but what I do know—

Mr. Imbert: Well, you should not say they—

Mr. Singh: No. Let me ask it differently. Are all the escalators in the equipment operational?

Mr. Imbert: Right.

Mr. Singh: Right? And then, therefore, what is the downtime of the various escalators you have and what efforts are being made to ensure that they are operational all the time? Because I can tell you, I see old people struggling to walk down the escalator when it is not operational, because there is an eyesight problem in dealing with it.

Hon. Sinanan: At this point in time, all the escalators are working—at this point in time.
Mr. Singh: Okay, fine, hon. Minister, but perhaps in looking at this line Item, we could put some preventative programme in place to ensure it is operational all the time.

Hon. Sinanan: Noted.

12.00 noon

Dr. Gopeesingh: Line Item 61, the Insurance. The increase from $9 million to $13 million, could you indicate who is the provider for this insurance for the airports authority, if there is one or more than one; and if there is one, who is the provider?

Hon. Sinanan: Will provide.

Madam Chairman: Member for Chaguanas East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: You have your colleague at your side from the airports authority, I am sure he will know right away who the provider is. Is it something that we should not be privy to now?

Hon. Sinanan: I do not have that information at this point in time.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Is it Angel Gabriel?

Madam Chairman: Member for Chaguanas East.

Mr. Karim: Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, is it possible to get some details on line Item 27, please? Sorry, 23. Line Item 23, Fees, can we get some details as to what these fees are about?

Hon. Sinanan: This is a reduction in the fees, and this reduction in the legal—it is anticipated with the use of in-house experts from the legal team. It is a decrease.

Mr. Karim: Oh, it is legal?

Hon. Sinanan: Yes. So some of the jobs would be done in-house with the legal team in-house.
Mr. Karim: Do you have litigation matters that these fees will be used for; and if so, how many matters do you have?

Hon. Sinanan: I could always forward that to you.

Mr. Karim: Good.

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: Thank you. Hon. Minister, Line 62, Promotions, Publicity and Printing. 2018 Revised Estimates received 2.7 million; 2019, 3.5. There is an increase of 800,000. In light of the fact that the hon. Attorney General said that too much paper is being used in the Judiciary, do you think that there could be alternative ways in which the public could be educated?

Hon. Sinanan: This line Item was increased because we anticipate an increase with the need to advertise in the print media for contract services such as going forward. So this is an increase for advertising, for RFPs and so, for contractual services going forward.

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: Do you not use the social media too?

Hon. Sinanan: Well, I do not think social media is accepted for advertising for contractual services.

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: I was just thinking about the reducing cost.

Madam Chairman: Member. Item 002, Passenger and Cargo Terminals. Member for Chaguanas East.

Mr. Karim: Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, line Item 09, 12.9 million for vehicles and equipment, could you tell us what vehicles and equipment, and who are the persons from whom you lease or rent, companies and the amounts? If you do not have it here, you could always—

Hon. Sinanan: I will support you with that—

Mr. Karim: But could you give us an idea as of the equipment that is leased now or rented?
Hon. Sinanan: Again, I would have to supply you with that.

Mr. Karim: Okay. Very good.

Madam Chairman: Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: The question was asked by my colleague.

Madam Chairman: Item 003, Airports Operations; Item 004, Runways, Taxiways, Grounds and Car Parks; Item 005, Security. Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases. We are at page 380. Item 001, General Administration. Member for Tabaquite.

Dr. Rambachan: Ma’am, you are on page 380?

Madam Chairman: We are at page 380, Item 001. Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases.

Dr. Rambachan: You skipped Security because I remember I had a question that I wanted to ask.

Madam Chairman: No, I did not skip Security. I said Item 00—

Dr. Rambachan: I put my hands up, but probably you did not see.

Madam Chairman: Excuse me?

Dr. Rambachan: I had my hand up under Security because that is why I was looking back when you said three now, I am looking at two because security which was in relation to the answer the Minister of Finance gave.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So seeing my eyes can be fallible, I will allow you that question, but we are not going back and we are not making a practice of going back.

Dr. Rambachan: Thank you, Ma’am. I simply wanted to ask why is it that you are increasing private security by $5 million in 2019 over 2018. What is the necessity to increase private security when you have 400 officers engaged by the airports authority?
Hon. Sinanan: Because there were additional specialized security like the K-9 Unit and other security measures which I really would not want to talk about pertaining to national security.

Dr. Rambachan: So is it then that the dogs that you are going to use at the airport are dogs that are going to be procured from private security firms?

Hon. Sinanan: Whatever company used at the airport authority would have to be internationally registered and recognized. Again, in terms of the national security I would not really want to go into too much details, but I am sure we can have that conversation.

Mr. Imbert: And you will have to understand, Member, in today’s world there is a lot of focus on acts of terrorism and airports are required—

Dr. Rambachan: No, I do have no problem with that.

Mr. Imbert:—to have far more stringent security.

Dr. Rambachan: I just wanted to know what it was for. That is all.

Mr. Imbert: No, I am just telling you. So it is something that we really cannot discuss.

Dr. Rambachan: I am fully aware of that. I just wanted to know what it was for.

Madam Chairman: So, we are back to Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases; Item 001, General Administration. Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies; Item 007, Households; Item 009, Other Transfers. Member for Tabaquite.

Dr. Rambachan: I just want to get an understanding—I have seen it throughout the—on the matter of 01, Depreciation. Can you explain because as I understand it depreciation is not a cash outflow? Why are you including this as a depreciation?

Hon. Sinanan: It really is an accounting procedure. It is an accounting procedure that you have to account for the depreciation. So it is an accounting procedure.
Dr. Gopeesingh: So Minister, in the accounting process why do you have to put it as an expenditure, if it is being depreciated? First of all, what is the asset that is being depreciated to the value of 160 million; and what percentage depreciation you used as a yard for that?

Hon. Sinanan: Through you, Madam Chair, this has been the process used from inception and it is the total asset of the authority. I do not know if the Minister of Finance could help me with that.

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman, it is standard practice in accounting when you are declaring your financial results that you do so, and state earnings before depreciation, amortization, taxation and other expenses. You must account for depreciation as an expense, reason being that you need to replace the equipment and the assets that are depreciating. So you must account for it as an expense in your accounts.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Sure. But if this is considered as a line Item under expenditure, when in the end of it all if depreciation is just accounting, the state is not paying that money of $160 million, so where does that 160 million go?

Hon. Sinanan: They are paying it at the top.

Dr. Gopeesingh: It is not being paid—

Hon. Sinanan: It is an expense.

Dr. Gopeesingh:—so where does it go?

Mr. Imbert: It is an expense. It must be accounted for.

Dr. Gopeesingh: All right. So is it paid to anyone?

Madam Chairman: Minister of Finance.

Mr. Imbert: Madam Speaker—

Dr. Gopeesingh: But it has been on the total amount for the Ministry of Works and Transport as an expenditure. So if it is not being paid to anyone that should be
Dr. Rambachan: Madam Chairman, on page 375, if you look you will see it is treated as income under Government subvention three—it is 160 there and then it is cancelled out on this side. So it nets out.

Madam Chairman: So let me ask: Is the Member for Caroni East only asking this to test the Minister’s familiarity?

Dr. Rambachan: No, no.

Dr. Gopeesingh: I wanted to find out what is their accounting principle?

Madam Chairman: Okay. So Member for Caroni East has your question has been answered? [Crosstalk] Member for Caroni East, has your question been answered?

Dr. Gopeesingh: He failed the test long time.

Madam Chairman: Okay. 50, Port Authority of Trinidad and Tobago.

Dr. Gopeesingh: No, no, I have other questions here under 009. Could the Minister—Minister, I am trying to draw to your attention—provide if not now, as early as possible, the information related to all these bond issues in terms of the principal and the interest payments? I saw some you have started in 1998 ended in 2018, and some 1999 ending in 2019, but there are many others you do not have that information and that is very substantial coming close to about over $200 million. Could you provide the information for us; when the principal started; what was the value; when does it end in terms of the interest payment and the principal payment, as any loan? Could you provide that for us?

Hon. Sinanan: Sure.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Right. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: 50 - Port Authority of Trinidad and Tobago. We are at page 392. Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure; Item 001, General Administration;
Standing Finance Committee  

Item 002 Engineering Division. Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, how many engineers do you have on staff?

**Hon. Sinanan:** How many engineers on staff. I can give you the total employment at the port. In terms of the engineers I will have to submit that to you.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Thank you.

**Mr. Lee:** Thank you, Chair. We are on page 392, right?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Correct.

**Mr. Lee:** Marine Division?

**Madam Chairman:** Well, we at Item 002, Engineering Division, which is on page 392.

**Mr. Lee:** Okay. When we get down lower then, Marine Division.

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

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Minister, bearing in mind the statement made by the trade union that they need to send home 400 workers from the Port Authority, how many workers are there now in all the divisions; how many vacancies are there; and how do you relate to what the Port Authority leader has indicated?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Let me start by the last first. Government has not taken a position on sending home anybody on the Port Authority at this time, so I will not comment on what the union leader would have said. That might be his views in sending home employees. In terms of the number of employees at the Port, it is 1,543, comprising monthly paid employees 701 and daily paid 842. In terms of vacancies we have 50 vacancies, senior managers 17, and regular staff 33.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Thank you very much. That was very clear and explicit. I appreciate it.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 004, Marine Division. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

UNREVISED
Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister 004, Marine Division, is this the division the area that is in charge of the Tobago ferries?

Hon. Sinanan: They do some services for the TTIT.

Mr. Lee: And in your budget debate you had announced that the Port Authority would not be handling the Tobago ferries sometime in 2019 and beyond, I remember.

Hon. Sinanan: I never said sometime in 2019, I never said they will not be. I said one of the plans that I have is to take a Note to Cabinet to ask that the services rendered by TTIT be placed in a separate company. I did not give a timeline and I did not say that the Port is going to—

Mr. Lee: Okay. I stand to be corrected. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Item 005, Wharves Division. Member for Tabaquite.

Dr. Rambachan: Thank you. Mr. Minister, Item 03, Overtime - Monthly Paid Officers, particularly the monthly officers, does the Port work on shift system?

Hon. Sinanan: The Port has a unique work schedule, their time. It is one that in my opinion is outdated, and it cannot be continued if the Port has to be a modern port operating to compete with the ports of the region. Their work schedule is something that the new board is looking at and, as I did say in the budget contribution, we expect a presentation to the Cabinet within the next two weeks.

Dr. Rambachan: Then are you suggesting that this amount of monthly paid officers’ overtime, and in this case it is $5.158 million, is as a result of that antiquated system of the operation?

Hon. Sinanan: Yes, it is and I can indicated that this has been reduced by close to 50 per cent. So the Port is working to reduce the overtime, but because of the agreements that they have with the unions that has to be reviewed if we have to bring it down lower.
Dr. Rambachan: In your view, has this therefore been an abuse by the—

Hon. Sinanan: No, the thing about it this is the agreement. So I cannot say it is an abuse if both parties signed to agree on that. I mean this is the agreement, so what they are doing they are just utilizing the agreement as it stands.

Dr. Rambachan: To fish the system.

Hon. Sinanan: That is your words.

Madam Chairman: Item 006, Cruise Ship Complex. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, I am trying to understand the Cruise Ship Complex as a unit. In line Item 04, line Item 21 and line Item 61 are very heavy expenses in those three line Items—

Madam Chairman: Where are you?

Mr. Lee: On page 395?

Madam Chairman: 006?

Mr. Lee: Yes, Cruise Ship Complex.

Madam Chairman: I am not seeing any 21 under 03.

Mr. Lee: 04, Electricity on page—

Madam Chairman: 04, Allowances.

Mr. Lee: No, page 395, Cruise Ship Complex.

Madam Chairman: I am at page 393.

Mr. Lee: Oh, 393. Sorry.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you, Madam Chair. If the hon. Minister can indicate the reason for the increase in line Item 01, Salaries and Cost of Living?

Hon. Sinanan: And this includes the salaries for employees and preretirement leave to the end of the calendar year 2018.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you.
Madam Chairman: Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services; 001, General Administration. Member for Oropouche West.

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: Thank you. Hon. Minister, Line 23, Fees. We are seeing an increase from 800,000 in 2018; 2019 I am seeing it is 1.3—

Hon. Sinanan: Page 3.

Madam Chairman: Fees. 23, Fees.

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:—500,000 increase, can you tell me the reason and what warranted this increase?

Hon. Sinanan: This is an estimate including legal fees and settlements including pending claims as at 2013 of 4 million plus 5 per cent.

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: Do you know the legal firm?

Hon. Sinanan: No. There will be a number firms involved.

Madam Chairman: Item 002, Engineering Division; Item 004, Marine Division; Item 005, Wharves Division; Item 006, Cruise Ship Complex. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, the Cruise Ship Complex, just enlighten me what that complex is about. I have an idea, but I just want to make sure that it is the same idea.

Hon. Sinanan: That is where the cruise ships—

Mr. Lee: Whenever the cruise ships come in?

Hon. Sinanan:—dock and the passengers will disembark.

Mr. Lee: Right. So the only time they really become operational or any activities is when cruise ships come in? Correct?

Hon. Sinanan: No. They have shops rented out and they it use for different functions and so. So it is operational every day.

Mr. Lee: So when I look at your expenses with respect to the Cruise Ship
Complex on the Port, 04, Electricity, is $4 million budgeted, 21 Repairs and Maintenance of that complex is 5.7 and it has been averaging around $5 million in Repairs and Maintenance, and insurances have been averaging around $3 million. Those are three heavy expenditure line Items, have you all looked at the profitability of running this Cruise Ship Complex because it has been losing over $18 million a year approximately when you look at the salaries and the general expenditure versus the income of rental?

**Mr. Imbert:** Madam Chair, Members need to understand that Governments spend money on items or activities in order to encourage economic activity. We facilitate cruise ship arrivals by providing facilities at a subsidized rate. This is to encourage spin off economic activity in the provision of goods and services to the cruise ship lines as well as revenue to the Port Authority in other areas.

**Mr. Lee:** Okay, I understand that Minister. All I am saying is that maybe the port needs to look at to see how they can save some expenditure in that—

**Mr. Imbert:** One of the problems with cruise lines is that they are very sensitive to charges and fees, and cruise lines over the years have left destinations and stopped coming if they feel it is too expensive and they go to other islands who are quite prepared to allow them to land for free.

**Mr. Lee:** Okay.

**Mr. Imbert:** So, it is just one of those things. That is the environment you are working in.

**Mr. Lee:** Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases; Item 001, General Administration; Item 002, Engineering; Item 005, Wharves Division; Item 006, Cruise Ship Complex. Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies. We are at page 396. Item 007, Households.

**UNREVISED**
Dr. Rambachan: I am just trying to establish that the total Government subsidy to the Port would be 101,736,000 in 2019?

Hon. Sinanan: Yes.

Mr. Imbert: Just for clarity, that does not include the Government shipping service. That will be a subsidy on operations, container and other dockside operations.

Dr. Rambachan: So that is an additional amount?

Mr. Imbert: Yes. The Government shipping services accounted for separately in addition to the subsidy on port operations.

Dr. Rambachan: Do you know how much is that, Minister?

Mr. Imbert: That will come up in due course. It is in the book.

Dr. Rambachan: All right.

Madam Chairman: Item 009, Other Transfers. 52 - Public Transport Service Corporation. We are at page 412. Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure; Item 001, General Administration. Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, line Item 01, Salaries. Can you explain the decrease in line Item 01?

Hon. Sinanan: Decrease in line Item 01? 01, you want to find out personnel expenditure? You want to just run that again?

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Salaries. 001, General Administration; 01, Salaries, there is a decrease of 2.7—

Hon. Sinanan: Yes, there is a decrease in the staff.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: There was a decrease in the staff?

Hon. Sinanan: In 01.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Is it as a result of the staff—is it being overstaffed? Was it overstaffed? What is your complement of the staff, Minister?
Hon. Sinanan: The complement of the staff—okay, I will have to forward that information to you.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Okay, and if there are any vacancies that are to be filled as well.

Hon. Sinanan: Yes. Sure.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, line Item 06, Remuneration to Board Members, an increase of 85,000. Why should there be even an increase? I am assuming that a board would have X amount of members by X amount of board fees, and that would be your maximum. Is it—

Mr. Imbert: There is a minimum and a maximum, and the board has been operating for some time at the minimum. They have now increased the number of board members. So that it automatically translates into an increase in fees.

Madam Chairman: Item 002, Vehicles and Equipment Maintenance. Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Line Item 02, the expenditure of approximately 40 million plus 4 million for salaries and wages, and COLA, approximately 45 million, how many members that will account for; how many employees that would account for, for 45 million for the PTSC?

Madam Chairman: We are at 02, Wages and COLA

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yeah.

Madam Chairman: The 2019 estimates are how many?

Dr. Gopeesingh: 40.270.

Madam Chairman: Not 45 million?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes, total for salaries and wages. 01 and 02.

Madam Chairman: Okay. All right.

Hon. Sinanan: Okay. The increase is 3.7 million.
Dr. Gopeesingh:  No, not the increase. I mean, how many PTSC are you paying—

Hon. Sinanan:  The reason for the increase is because there is 30 additional staff.

Dr. Gopeesingh:  How many staff do you have in vehicles and equipment maintenance to account for 45 million expenditure and wages?

Hon. Sinanan:  Over 400.

Dr. Gopeesingh:  Wow! They take care of their own fleet of vehicles?

Hon. Sinanan:  Yes.

Madam Chairman:  Member for Tabaquite.

Dr. Rambachan:  Mr. Minister, what is the complement of the equipment and vehicles, but particularly vehicles? How many buses are there in the fleet; now many are serviceable; how many are non-serviceable; and how many are on the road that we necessitate we have $40 million being spent a year to maintain it?

Hon. Sinanan:  Total buses on the fleet is 389, the operational buses are 195. PTSC expects based on their repair plan to bring into operations 230 buses by November 30, 2018 and 250 by December 2019.

Dr. Rambachan:  So, Mr. Minister, of your 389 buses on the fleet, 50 per cent are inoperable?

Hon. Sinanan:  Yes.

Dr. Rambachan:  How did they reach that stage, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Sinanan:  We have been at that stage, based on the report that I am getting, for quite a while, however, the PTSC has gone on a drive to have the buses that are down and by December 2019 they expect the fleet to go back up to 250. However, a lot of the buses on the PTSC fleet are over 10 years old where the industry standard should be seven.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:  Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, does this fleet
include the ELDAMO buses?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yes.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** And how many ELDAMO buses are there and how many are in fact operational? You could always give it to me after.

**Hon. Sinanan:** There are 25 of these buses. The ones that are down is just minimal, I will forward that to you.

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

**Mr. Karim:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, with respect to the fleet and those in operation, if you could give us the figure for Tobago by itself?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yes. Sure. Tobago has a complement of—oh, you want it in writing? No, problem. I will give it you in writing.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Minister, you said your fleet is supposed to be 389 and 159 in operations, so left with 244, but you want to bring your total fleet operational to 250 by December, so that leaves approximately 139. Are those to be just discarded or you will still try with those? How many of those that are totally non-salvageable?

**Hon. Sinanan:** The programme to continue the repairs will continue. In addition, we have an additional 25 buses coming in on the first quarter of 2019, and the repair programme will continue.

12.30 p.m.

Cabinet has also approved the purchase of additional 300 new buses. So we intend to get the fleet beyond the 389 to ensure that when we have challenges with buses we do have capacity, because you would recognize that the staff at PTSC, again, we have more than what is required in the industry standard. I think we operate 3.8 drivers per bus, the industry standard is 2.5. So we do have the capacity in terms of drivers, the intention is to get the fleet up to ensure that the
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public transportation system could be as efficient as the users expect it to be.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Minister, thank you for that information. I was trying to get the answer to the 130 out of the 389 that you have in your fleet. How many of those will not be able to be salvaged? In other words, they are there and you cannot do anything about them.

Hon. Sinanan: I am sure there will be a percentage referred to that cannot come back but at this point, we are concentrating on getting those that are repairable back in service.

Madam Chairman: Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you. Hon. Minister, regarding the same line Item, I understand the ELDAMO service is oversubscribed, so will you be increasing the fleet in light of the fact that you are purchasing 100 new buses?

Hon. Sinanan: The answer is yes. 300. The answer is yes. In the purchase of 300 buses, consideration will be given to all the buses that are required in the field.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Would there be an open and transparent process in the purchase of these vehicles and what process would you—tell us.

Hon. Sinanan: Madam Chair, through you, all processes through this Government is open and transparent and this one will be no different.

Dr. Gopeesingh: And what process will be utilized? Is it by the PTSC or by the Ministry or who?

Hon. Sinanan: Once the process has been identified, it will be announced.

Madam Chairman: Item 004: Property Development Services. Member for Chaguanas East.

Mr. Karim: Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, with respect to line Item 21, does this involve the Kings Wharf facility in San Fernando?
Madam Chairman: 21? What page are we?

Mr. Karim: Sorry, property development services?

Madam Chairman: No, we are on page 412.

Mr. Karim: Okay, I am sorry. I will get to that then.

Madam Chairman: That is all right. Item 008: Transit/Express Commuter Services. Sub-Head 02: Goods and Services, Item 001: General Administration. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Mr. Lee: Under Goods and Services, line Item 23: Fees of estimated 5.7 million this year. Could the Minister give us, if you do not have it, a breakdown of what those fees would entail for 2019?

Hon. Sinanan: Sure.

Madam Chairman: Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla. Item 002: Vehicles and Equipment Maintenance. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Mr. Lee: Minister, line Item 13: Maintenance of Vehicles, $28 million increase, what was the reason in 2018 for the—you had estimated 49 million in 2018, your revised estimate is 23 million in 2018.

Hon. Sinanan: What number are you on?

Mr. Lee: This line Item 13: Maintenance of Vehicles.

Hon. Sinanan: All right.

Mr. Lee: And then your Estimate for 2019 is 51 million. So you have an increase of 28 overall. What accounted for that revised downward figure in 2018 at 23 million compared to your estimate of 49 million?

Hon. Sinanan: That would just be on releases. That would have been the releases that we got and that is why it is back up to 51 in 2019.

Mr. Lee: So you would be in arrears owing in 2018 technically?

Hon. Sinanan: Well, we cannot buy the parts if we did not get the releases.
Mr. Lee: Oh, so in parts, okay. Are these parts—I presume it is all international.

Hon. Sinanan: Yes.

Mr. Lee: Okay, no problem.

Madam Chairman: Item 005: Port of Spain Transit Centre; Item 006: Para Transit Unit. Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, is this line Item 006, the ELDAMO buses by chance?

Hon. Sinanan: Yes.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Just want to ask line Item 21. What repair and maintenance of buildings are being referred to in this line Item?

Hon. Sinanan: Those will be the internal offices for that service.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: And they are housed at the—

Hon. Sinanan: PTSC compound.

Madam Chairman: Item 007: Property Development Services. Member for Chaguanas East.

Mr. Karim: Madam Chair, I think that this is the time to raise line Item 21 and the question is, does this line Item have anything to do with the Kings Wharf property in San Fernando?

Hon. Sinanan: No, this would be our repairs to existing buildings.

Mr. Karim: Yeah, but you have the bus terminus in San Fernando at Kings Wharf, the former TGI building.

Hon. Sinanan: This line Item would include on several of our sites so yes, it could include some work on the PTSC building.

Mr. Karim: All right. So now that you have said that, the question is: Is there any plan to relocate this building given the waterfront project which you have approved?
Hon. Sinanan: The answer is there will be some relocation in San Fernando. Right now, the plans are being reviewed to have the garages and so removed to NIDCO compound.

Mr. Karim: Which compound? Sorry.

Hon. Sinanan: Where OAS operates.

Mr. Karim: At the end of the highway?

Hon. Sinanan: Yes.

Mr. Karim: Okay. “When yuh think that might happen?”

Hon. Sinanan: The plans are being reviewed and we expect to some transition shortly to facilitate the San Fernando waterfront project.

Madam Chairman: Item—sorry, Member for Fyzabad. Item 008: Transit/Express Commuter Services. Member for Fyzabad.

Dr. Bodoe: Minister, with regard to line Item 28: Other Contracted Service, first, if you could just give an idea of what this relates to and what the other contracted services would be expected to do in 2019?

Hon. Sinanan: Okay. Through you, Madam Chair, this is the maxi-taxi service. The cost of the maxi-taxi programme.

Hon. Member: For schoolchildren?

Hon. Sinanan: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Sub-Head 03: Minor Equipment Purchases, Item 001: General Administration. Sub-Head 04: Current Transfers and Subsidies, Item 007: Households; Item 009: Other Transfers. Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Similar to what I asked previously on the issue of the bonds and so on, could you give us an appreciation of line Item 12, that 130 bond and line Item 25, the 93 million bond? When did it originate? For what purpose? When it is going to be completed? And also—well, if we go the next page, Madam Chair,
line Item, the principal with loan 41 million and 57 million. So in summary, we are paying principals and interest to 93 plus 130, so 130 and 93 is 223; 223 and 41—

Madam Chairman: Member, the question.

Dr. Gopeesingh: So the question is: Could you give us a summary of when the principals were taken out, for what use and when is the interest and principal payment going to be completed?

Hon. Sinanan: We will forward it in writing.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yeah, we will appreciate that.

Madam Chairman: 57, Trinidad and Tobago Civil Aviation Authority. We are at page 425. Sub-Head 01: Personnel Expenditure, Item 001: General Administration. Sub-Head 02: Goods and Services, Item 001: General Administration. Member for Chaguanas East.

Mr. Karim: Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, line Item 28, could you give us some details of that expenditure, please? Other Contracted Services.

Hon. Sinanan: Okay, line 28. Madam Chairman, I will submit that in writing to him.

Madam Chairman: Member for Chaguanas West.

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Madam Chair. To the hon. Minister, Official Overseas Travel, line Item 27, there is an increase of $1.9 million. What is envisaged by this?

Hon. Sinanan: From time to time, Madam Chair, through you, the authority will have to do overseas travel to ensure that they keep up with all statutory requirements through the international bodies. I can further any information to you if required.

Mr. Singh: It is not necessary.
Madam Chairman: Sub-Head 03: Minor Equipment Purchase, Item 001: General Administration, page 426. Sub-Head 04: Current Transfers and Subsidies, Item 001: Regional Bodies; Item 004: International Bodies; Item 007: Households.

Hon. Members, we shall now move on to the Draft Estimates of the Development Programme, another book. Sub-Head 09: Development Programme. We are at page 108. Consolidated Fund, Item 001: Pre-investment. Member for Tabaquite.

Dr. Rambachan: Under Development Programme, I just want to ask the Minister why is it for 2018, only 36 million of the 192 million allocated was spent?

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman, I think the practice is that we look at 2019 Estimates, not 2018.

Dr. Rambachan: Okay. [Laughter]

Madam Chairman: Member for Tabaquite, I am sure you will find a way to find out what you wish.

Dr. Rambachan: I am not worried about the insults, you know. The population is seeing exactly what the Member is doing every day. The population has a good eye.

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman, Madam Chairman, I take objection when I make a clear, definite statement in polite language that the Members opposite misconstrue and distort my polite statements and characterize them as insults. It is just offensive when they do that. Please do not do that.

Madam Chairman: Member for Oropouche East.

Dr. Moonilal: Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. I think this was the— [Crosstalk] Madam Chairman, the Minister of Finance needs to contain himself. To the Minister of Works and Transport, may I ask the question in this manner? What may account for this mammoth increase for 2019 of $333 million estimate
after that small sum of 36 million in 2018 Estimates? I think it is the same issue asked for 2019.

**Hon. Sinanan:** So, Madam Chairman, this year, we have an increased programme and so we anticipated a heavy increase this year.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Having announced that heavy increase, maybe the Minister would like to tell us some of the elements of this 2019 heavy increase to account for the 333 million, having spent in 2017, 68 million, which we are not asking what you did in 2017 because we cannot.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay, so hon. Members, I think that—to quote Oropouche East’s “mammoth” sum which is there as an aggregate, I expect it to unfold in Items 001, 003 and 005.

**Mr. Imbert:** Yes, Madam Chairman, they have to go to the line Items.

**Madam Chairman:** And therefore, I would allow any question when we come to it. Okay? So let us go. Item 001, Pre-investment. Member for Oropouche East, would you like to ask a question there?

**Dr. Moonilal:** 01, Pre-investment. Yes, could the Member give us some of the elements that would account for the increase in the Estimates for 2019?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Will that not be what we are going through line by line?

**Mr. Imbert:** They are line Items, Madam Chairman.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Ma’am, I think what we will do is as we progress through all the Heads, these matters would arise.

**Mr. Imbert:** No, line Item by line Item, please.

**Hon. Sinanan:** That would be the line by line.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Well, I was invited by the Speaker so—

**Hon. Sinanan:** Okay.

**Mr. Imbert:** No, that is not true.
Madam Chairman: First, before I called you, I made the statement with respect to it unfold in each one of these.

Dr. Moonilal: I will wait for the unfolding.

Madam Chairman: All right. Member for Tabaquite, you have a question?

Dr. Rambachan: No, no.

Madam Chairman: Member for Naparima.

Mr. Charles: Thank you. 001, could the Minister give us some of the elements of this national transportation plan that is costing $5 million?

Hon. Sinanan: The elements—Madam Chair, through you, this is for the hiring of a consultant to do the national development plan.

Mr. Charles: Which would mean what? Stopping the bottlenecks? Increasing the flow of traffic?

Hon. Sinanan: Everything to do with traffic management, including how we could reduce traffic in Trinidad and Tobago and how we could more efficiently manage the road ways.

Mr. Charles: Yes, and with respect to 004: Highway Improvement Studies. Is this going to deal with roads for which you are responsible, not secondary roads, primary roads? Would Garth Road be included in this item of expenditure?

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chair, for clarity to inform the Member for Naparima, there is a legal definition of a highway. Highways are classified and are listed in the Schedule for the Ministry of Works. A highway is a highway; a main road is a main road; a secondary road is a secondary road. So if there is an Item that says highway programme, it refers to those highways that are listed in the Schedule of the Ministry of Works.

Mr. Charles: Thank you for what is known to everybody in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Imbert: “Why yuh ask then? Why yuh ask?” [Crosstalk]
Mr. Charles: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Okay, Members, Members.

Mr. Charles: So the question is: Does 004 include Garth Road which falls under a highway?

Mr. Imbert: It is not a highway. The Churchill Roosevelt Highway is a highway.

Mr. Charles: So the answer is no?

Mr. Imbert: The Solomon Hochoy is a highway.

Mr. Charles: We move on.

Mr. Imbert: Uriah Butler is a highway.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Members, are we under 004?

Mr. Imbert: Come on man, we have three highways in Trinidad.

Madam Chairman: Minister of Works, is it 004?

Hon. Sinanan: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Is there any allocation under 004 for 2019?

Hon. Sinanan: No.

Madam Chairman: Right, let us move on please.

Mr. Imbert: It is not a highway.

Madam Chairman: And Members, I know it is near lunchtime so certain things may be happening to us, but let us try and keep focused and not be mischievous. There is nothing under 004 for 2019 and I am sure my eyes are working well. Fyzabad.

Dr. Bodee: Is it that your studies have been completed? Why is there no allocation under 2019? The same 004.

Hon. Sinanan: Why is there no—

Dr. Bodee: Allocation. Is it that the studies have been completed or moved to a different section or level?
Madam Chairman: We are under the same 004. The question is: Why is there no allocation for 2019?
Hon. Sinanan: We will reallocate within our budget as required to continue the study on a needs basis.
Dr. Bodoe: So it has not been abandoned?
Hon. Sinanan: No, of course not.
Madam Chairman: Member for Oropouche East.
Dr. Moonilal: Yes, thank you. We are on the Highway Improvement Studies and my question pertains to that. Minister, on the Highway Improvement Studies, on the 28th of June, 2017, in this very House, we checked the record of course, and you had promised to undertake a new study to deal with hydraulic issues for the Debe to Mon Desir segment, would that not be included under Highway Improvement Studies?
Hon. Sinanan: No.
Mr. Imbert: No.
Dr. Moonilal: Where has that study reached? Have you completed the study? Have we started the study?
Hon. Sinanan: No, this project does not cover that. That is a separate project.
Dr. Moonilal: Oh, that is covered somewhere else?
Hon. Sinanan: Yes.
Dr. Moonilal: Has the study started?
Hon. Sinanan: NIDCO will be reviewing that document, as I said previously.
Dr. Moonilal: Okay. Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you.
Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman, the Minister does not have to answer a question that does not deal with this line Item.
Dr. Moonilal: Thank you very much, Minister, much appreciated.
Madam Chairman: If the Minister chooses to, I cannot stop him.

Dr. Moonilal: Thank you very much, Minister, appreciated.

Madam Chairman: Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: I was ahead so when you reach there, I will ask the question.

Madam Chairman: Item 003: Economic Infrastructure, pages 111 to 116.

Member for Caroni Central.

Dr. Tewarie: Yes, the Major River Clearing Programme, $10 million Estimate.

Madam Chairman: 001, Minister.

Dr. Tewarie: Yes. Could we please have an indication of the rivers that are involved? The Programme of Upgrade to Existing Drainage Pumps and Gate Inventory, does that refer to Port of Spain only?

Hon. Sinanan: No, it does not. Through you, Madam Chair, 001 is the completion of the Felicity pump house and the ancillary work and also the rehabilitation of [Inaudible] section of the Caroni River from the St. Helena Bridge to El Socorro. Under 009, that is the procurement of eight pumps and replacement of the gates in six zones.

Madam Chairman: Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, for line Items 001, 003, 006 and 009, if you can provide, not now—

Madam Chairman: Member, could we take it one at a time?

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: It is one question. “Is one.”

Madam Chairman: Member, can we take it one at a time, identify them?

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Okay. 001, if you can identify if any rivers in my constituency will be addressed with this programme.

Madam Chairman: I think somebody just asked for the rivers.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: 003, again, if my constituency can be identified as to
benefiting from this. 005, if my constituency of Cumuto/Manzanilla would be benefiting and 009, if you can advise if my constituency of Cumuto/Manzanilla will be benefiting. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Member for Naparima.

Mr. Charles: 003, could the Minister indicate whether the Barrackpore area would be included in the Flood Mitigation Programme?

Hon. Sinanan: Through you, Madam Chair, under this line Item, we will accommodate all rivers as far as the funding is available.

Mr. Charles: Could the Minister then indicate whether the Guaracara River, which you know is significant in the flooding of Williamsville, is that included as a priority? [Crosstalk] I asked him, not you.

Hon. Sinanan: At this time, Madam Chair, yes, the Guaracara River is included.

Mr. Charles: The Guaracara River is included?

Hon. Sinanan: Yes.

Mr. Charles: Thank you, Sir. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Member for Chaguanas East.

Mr. Karim: Madam Chair, just in furtherance of my colleagues, 001, 003, 005, 009, if we could get them rather than to ask “which river”, by constituency, the list, right?

Madam Chairman: Yes, all right.

Hon. Sinanan: Madam Chair, the river programme does not go by constituency, it goes by district.

Mr. Karim: Listen, no, “leh we get serious with this”. [Crosstalk]

Hon. Sinanan: Madam Chair, I will—

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman—

Mr. Karim: Madam Chair, let us get serious with this.
Madam Chairman: Order, order, order. I will hear Chaguanas East.

Mr. Karim: Madam Chair, rivers will pass through districts and communities but also constituencies. For example, the Caparo River will pass through, maybe, Caroni East and also Chaguanas East. So wherever it passes, can you not give us so we get an idea as to what it is about?

Hon. Sinanan: Madam Chair, I will submit to the Members the entire work programme and the Members could take from it which one goes through their constituency, but the Ministry of Works does not operate by constituency, we operate by districts.

Mr. Karim: Madam Chair, let me just make a clarification here. Minister, I mean, you know what I am talking about. Sometimes people clear these rivers up to certain points, you will never know unless you advise us as to the boundaries and I could give you an example now but I would not do that.

Madam Chairman: Okay. Member for Fyzabad.

Dr. Bodoe: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, with regard to line Item 009, I know you agreed to provide a comprehensive list but can you indicate whether the St. John’s Trace bridge, drainage pumps and gates will be included in that allocation for this fiscal year?

Hon. Sinanan: Through you, Madam Chair, under this programme, this takes into consideration all the gates and pumps in Trinidad and Tobago and they are done on a priority basis. It takes into consideration all. We have a unit now dealing with pumps and gates and their mandate is to inspect all the pumps and gates in Trinidad.

Dr. Bodoe: Can you undertake to provide the programme of works then?

Hon. Sinanan: Sure.

Dr. Bodoe: Thank you.
Madam Chairman: Member for Oropouche East.

Dr. Moonilal: The question was asked.

Madam Chairman: Member for Mayaro.

Mr. Paray: Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. Minister, page 112 under Transport and Communication, Bus Transport, Item 039, Development of a Passenger Facility at Rio Claro, $2 million. Can you give me an idea of what is the plan for this fiscal year in terms of taking that project forward? I know it has been on the drawing board for quite some time. What is the plan for this 2019 fiscal?

Madam Chairman: Yeah, we are doing pages 111 to 116.

Mr. Paray: Page 112, Minister.

Hon. Sinanan: Yeah, 039. And what is your question on that?

Mr. Paray: Concerning what is the plan for this fiscal? I see $2 million appropriated for the project? You know, what is the plan this year in terms of pushing that project forward?

Hon. Sinanan: The designs are 80 per cent completed and Cabinet approval is to be sought as to the way forward with the project.

Mr. Paray: Okay.

Madam Chairman: Member for Couva North.

Ms. Ramdial: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, page 113, under Roads and Bridges, line Item 221, Roads and Bridges Rehabilitation, I am seeing a measly 8 million for 2019. Would you give an undertaking to give us a listing of these Roads and Bridges Rehabilitation projects?

Hon. Sinanan: All right. That is a completed project and those are outstanding bills on that project.

Ms. Ramdial: Okay.

Madam Chairman: Member for Couva North, are you finished?
Ms. Ramdial: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Member for Caroni Central. No? Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, page 111, I want to come back to line Item 003: Infrastructure Rehab and Flood Mitigation Programme. In 2018, you had budgeted $9 million for that programme; no revised estimate in 2018 and 8 million in 2019. Could you tell me if anything was done utilizing 003 for 2018, please?

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chair, this is the 2019 expenditure, not 2018.

Mr. Lee: No, but I am asking a valid question.

Mr. Imbert: Stop asking about 2018.

Mr. Lee: If anything happened in that line Item 003.

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman, I am asking for a ruling from you that questions be related to the 2019 Estimates.

Madam Chairman: There is another way and we have been shown repeatedly by other Members here. There is another way for you to elicit that information. Okay? So I will stand you down, Pointe-a-Pierre, I am sure that you will be able to rephrase your question. Member for Couva South.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you, Madam Chair. With respect to page 113, Roads and Bridges Rehabilitation, Minister, in this allocation of $8 million, will you be finishing and opening the Captain Watson Bridge for the resumption of vehicle traffic? And in that regard, based on the fact that your predecessor had stopped the construction of this bridge based on a probe into corruption and so on, could you bring us up to speed on the findings of that also?

Hon. Sinanan: Madam Chair, through you, that project is not covered under this line Item; however, I would like to invite now the Member for Caroni to join me
sometime later on this week while we formally open the bridge.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Caroni?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Sorry, Couva, for Couva South. So for Couva South, if you can join me, probably by Wednesday or Thursday, when we formally open the bridge.

**Madam Chairman:** Chaguanas West.

**Mr. Singh:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to thank the hon. Minister for the completion of the Felicity pump house which he has undertaken to complete. I also want to find out—this is under the line Item dealing with Flood Alleviation and Drainage Programme. Hon. Minister, what is the status of the project at the Lighthouse? I see that there are some works taking place. Is it covered under this line Item 005: Flood Alleviation and Drainage Programme? If not, well what is the status of the works taking place?

1.00 p.m.

**Hon. Sinanan:** That is not covered under that Item. But the work is ongoing. The contractor is on site every day and we expect to have completion sometime later on this year. But the work is ongoing. I visited the site this morning before I came here and the contractor is on site working.

**Mr. Singh:** What is the nature of the works?

**Hon. Sinanan:** It is installing new underground drains going into a sump by the Port and then a massive pump to take the water out of the sump into the ocean once there is high tide.

**Mr. Singh:** This design was done by an international consultation or locally?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Through you, Madam Chair, we would have spent millions of dollars on international consultations between 2013 and 2016. All the drawings would have failed and the unit at the Ministry of the Works and Transport, the PURE Unit and the Drainage and the Coastal Unit would have put this project
together. Okay.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you, Madam Chair. First question, in line Item 076, on page 113.

Hon. Sinanan: 113?

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: On page 113, yes. Line Item 076. When is the commencement date for the facility at Sangre Grande?

Hon. Sinanan: This is for repairs.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: And when—well it has development, eh?

Hon. Sinanan: Sorry?

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: And line Item 824, on page 114, Removal and Disposal. Can the hon. Minister advice what is the status of this project and how many wrecks and derelict vehicles are there to be removed?

Hon. Sinanan: This is vessels, not vehicles.


Hon. Sinanan: This is an ongoing project and so far my information is about eight vessels have been removed—

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Eight?

Hon. Sinanan: Eight vessels have been removed. And there are about 24 ongoing.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Page 112, Hon. Minister. Line Items 003 to 009, you indicated under explanation that this is a new project or new projects. Are these projects—have these been tendered for already? If not—?

Hon. Sinanan: 009?

Dr. Gopeesingh: 003 to 009.

Madam Chairman: So, you want a status of these projects?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yeah. Whether they have been tendered for already?
Hon. Sinanan: We would have that supplied in writing.

Dr. Gopeesingh: That is the pavement? And what is ANRRIA under 003, for 30 million?

Hon. Sinanan: ANR Robinson International Airport.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Okay. So these have not been tendered yet, Minister?

Hon. Sinanan: I would supply to you a status report on the project.

Dr. Gopeesingh: No, but have they been tendered?

Hon. Sinanan: Again, I would supply that to you in writing.

Mr. Charles: Thank you, Madam Chair. Page 113, Item 074, I see no allocation. I use it from time to time, not being the owner of a Mustang and therefore I wanted to know—it has been closed down—the lounge. So what is the status of the lounge for PTSC? Design and Construction of a Deluxe Coach Lounge, PTSC. It has been closed down the last two weeks or so, three weeks?

Hon. Sinanan: No, the lounge has not been closed in the last two weeks. Contracts have been issued for the refurbishment of the lounge and that is an ongoing exercise.

Mr. Imbert: I am sure you drive a Porsche or a Mercedes—

Hon. Sinanan: Unfortunately that coach service, and if you just permit me to go a little further into it, was a paid service. Unfortunately, in 2015 some decision was taken to allow school children and elderly citizens to use the service free of charge. That created a burden on the service because what we found was that the school children were leaving the regular buses and now using the coach service.

So, we are trying to streamline that and to have this executive lounge restructured because, what you have in there now is just a lot of free passengers using the service?

Mr. Charles: Thank you very much.
Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, line Item 050, under Bus Transport. Purchase of 100 new buses, 2018 Revised Estimates 12 million. 2019 Estimates is $56 million. How many buses—is this 100 buses going back a while or is 100 new buses for 2019?

Hon. Sinanan: This would have been 100 going back. We have taken possession of some of them already and by March we have 25 which would bring us to 95 and then we have an additional five, in this programme.

Mr. Lee: Right. So, at the end of 2019 hopefully we will get all the balance of the 100 buses?

Hon. Sinanan: Again, Cabinet would have approved the purchase of an additional 300. So we expect to have buses from that 300 coming in 2019.

Mr. Lee: And this $56 million caters for that?

Hon. Sinanan: This, no. This would have been buses already ordered and coming in the first quarter of 2019.

Mr. Karim: Thank you, Madam Chair. On page 112, Transport and Communications. Given that 003 to 009 are new projects, but they include the airfields at both ANR and also at Piarco, will the Minister be able to supply us with a list of those users of both airfields, who are owing the Airport Authority and by extension the Ministry of Works and Transport?

Hon. Sinanan: Sure.

Mr. Paray: Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. Minister, line Item 50 concerning the purchase of the new buses. I just wanted to follow-up in terms of having all these new buses coming on stream. It is my understanding that there is one wrecker at PTSC that is not at the best functioning service. Was there any request from PTSC to purchase additional wreckers to augment the service, to support the maintenance of all these new buses that are coming in?
Hon. Sinanan: Through you, Madam Chair. The wrecker has nothing to do with the new buses. I would expect that the new buses will not require a wrecker, but—

Mr. Imbert: And it is not this line Item.

Hon. Sinanan:—PTSC is working on getting an additional wrecker.

Mr. Paray: So they are working on getting an additional wrecker. Mercedes Benz shut-down as well, Minister. Thank you.

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman—

Madam Chairman: Member for Oropouche—now, I realize it is a little past 1.00 and people might be getting a little hungry. But let us try and focus.

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman, they are asking questions. There no wrecker line Item.

Madam Chairman: Let us try to focus and get through this, please.

Mrs. Gayadeen-Goopeesingh: Hon. Minister, line Item 050, I am just following through again. Just who has been awarded the tender for the purchase of these 100 buses?

Hon. Sinanan: What is that?

Mrs. Gayadeen-Goopeesingh: Who has been awarded the tender for the purchase of these 100 new buses?

Hon. Sinanan: Madam Chair, through you. Again, the 100 buses, PTSC would have issued that tender and if I am just to recollect, the same person who got the last 25 got the first 25 under your administration, through a public tender.

Dr. Bodoe: Thank you, Madam Chair. If I may indulge the Minister. I am trying to find a line Item under road systems, operations and services. But I am referring to those overhead signs on the highways.

Mr. Imbert: What line Item is this, please? You cannot make up your own line Items.
Dr. Bodoe: I know I cannot.

Mr. Imbert: You cannot. [Crosstalk] No, he cannot do that. This has been going on whole morning, making up line Items.

Madam Chairman: Is the sparring completed?

Mr. Imbert: This is clarification, Madam Chairman.

Dr. Rambachan: To the Minister, I am on page 114, 824, Removal and Disposal of Wrecks and Derelict Vessels. It is costing you $19 million in 2019 to remove possibly eight or 24—whatever—derelict vessels. What income do you earn from these vessels that you wreck?

Hon. Sinanan: Madam Chair, these are vessels that would have been—are derelict vessels that are parked there with no owners and it is the responsibility of the Maritime Services Division to have the channels clear in the event of collision by vessels coming into contact.

Dr. Rambachan: Have you considered offering these to scrap dealers at their cost to remove them and dispose of them rather than we spent $20 million and get nothing for it?

Hon. Sinanan: Madam Chair, this is a very serious exercise. It is not an income earning exercise. The past experience with utilizing the method put forward is that these scrap iron dealers, they cut the top of the vessel that is out of the water and they leave the bulk of the vessel beneath the surface because it is very costly to float the vessel and to remove it.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, line Item 221 on page 113. Just asking, and I know that you indicated that a number of roads have been rehabilitated and this balance of 8 million is for the balance. I am just asking if Bon Air Road, Balata Hill Road, Tamana Hill Road, Guatapahara Road, Mundeyalsingh Road, Tamana Hill Road, all these areas with the—

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Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman, just let me come in here. The Minister already made the point to that particular Member who asked a similar question that this Item is to pay for outstanding bills on contracts already completed. And therefore it cannot be for new projects along the lines the Member has—[Crosstalk] This was crystal clear in his response.

Madam Chairman: Item 005, Multi-Sectoral and Other Services, pages 116 to 117.

Mr. Charles: Madam Chair, I had given my name.

Madam Chairman: I just thought Members would have vacated those questions.

Hon. Members: No, no, no.

Mr. Singh: Madam Chair. Item 828, on page 114 Dredging of Government Shipping Service Basin, an allocation of 28 million in 2018, no money extended in 2018 and an estimated allocation of—in 2019 of 30 million. Could the Minister give us an indication of the status of this project and whether it is necessary to now dredge this channel to have the Cabo Star and the Galleons Passage operate efficiently from that location?

Hon. Sinanan: Madam Chair, through you, the line Item as recorded is for the dredging of the channel at the Port of Port of Spain. It has nothing to do with our local vessels. It has to do with the dredging to accommodate the international vessels. So, the status on that is that a tender went out and the Port Authority is in the process of evaluating the tender. I expect a recommendation will come to the Ministry shortly which will be taken to Cabinet and then the exercise will begin.

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Madam Chair, line Item 831, Acquisition of Two Multi-purpose Vessels. There was an allocation in 2018 of a million, and an allocation which is clearly nearly a line Item of 100,000 in 2019. Could the hon. Minister indicate what is the nature of these multi-purpose vessels and whether or not the...
Incat and the Austal vessels are those multi-purpose vessels?

**Mr. Imbert:** Madam Chairman, the Minister of National Security and others have made the point that the Incat and Austal vessels will be procured using financing pureed from the Exim Bank of Australia. It would not be represented here.

**Mr. Singh:** So what is this line Item for?

**Hon. Sinanan:** This line Item, through you, Madam Chair, is for the Maritime Services Division. These are vessels for them to use in the event they have to board vessels and so outside to regulate their duties.

**Mr. Imbert:** A launch.

**Hon. Sinanan:** These are vessels for the Maritime Services Division—

**Mr. Imbert:** It is a launch.

**Hon. Sinanan:** —to launch into—

**Mr. Imbert:** Not to launch. It is a launch. It carries people.

**Mr. Charles:** Thank you. Page 113, Item 151, Installation of Zebra Crossing Street Furniture. Minister, I have used the furniture and have attempted to use the zebra crossing, and I always get the sense that motorists are not fully aware of the rights of pedestrians with these zebra crossing roads. Are you satisfied that there is need for an education as to what they are and what are the responsibilities—

**Mr. Imbert:** That is not this line Item.

**Mr. Charles:** Yes. The furniture can lead to deaths.

**Mr. Imbert:** It is not this line Item. [Crosstalk]

**Mr. Charles:** Well, explain the line Item 151 for me please.

**Mr. Imbert:** For paint.

**Mr. Charles:** Page 113, explain it please.

**Mr. Imbert:** It is for paint and traffic signals and signs.

**Hon. Sinanan:** At 20 locations.
Mr. Charles: So the question is, are these signs understood by motorists and pedestrians so, all are clear about their responsibilities. [Crosstalk] We move on, clearly they do not want to answer. But somebody could die.

Hon. Members: No, no, no!

Mr. Charles: Somebody could die.

Hon. Sinanan: Madam Chairman, the education on the method that you use to use the streets of Trinidad and Tobago is all done by the Licensing Department when you go for your driver’s permit and education on road use falls directly with the Transport Commissioner under the Ministry of Works and Transport.

Mr. Charles: Ministry of Works and Transport, which you are responsible for. So, I am asking you the question. [Crosstalk]

Madam Chairman: Item 005, Multi-Sectoral and Other Services. Infrastructure Development Fund, page 208, same book. Item 001, Pre-Investment; Item 003, Economic Infrastructure.

Dr. Bodee: Line Item 003, Shore of Peace Coastal Stabilisation Works. Minister, I note no allocation in 2019. Can you indicate whether this project has been completed?

Hon. Sinanan: Okay. The project was completed and there are some outstanding payments. But the project has been completed.

Ms. Ramdial: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, A, Drainage and Irrigation, line Item 005, National Programme for the Upgrade of Drainage Channels. I am seeing an estimate of 30 million for 2019. Can you give an undertaking to give us a list of these drainage channels that you intend to upgrade?

Hon. Sinanan: Yes. I will.

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Madam Chair. Line Item 009, Construction of a Reservoir and Associated Water Treatment Facility at Ravine Sable, Caparo.
There is an allocation in 2018 of 503,000 but there is nothing in 2019 Estimates. What is the status of this project because it deals with flooding in Caparo and the utilization of significant water resources in that catchment area?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Can you give me the page? What page are you on there?

**Mr. Singh:** Page 209.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Madam Chair, through you, that project is a project we inherited from Water Resources, when the Minister was split between the Ministry of Works and the Ministry of Water Resources. At this point in time the Ministry has no intentions of continuing in that project which would have entailed the Ministry of Works actually getting into a water distribution project. We are in the process of speaking to WASA to have that project transferred.

**Mr. Singh:** Just for clarification, hon. Minister. It was a collaboration between WASA and the Ministry of Works and Transport. The Ministry of Works and Transport will do the construction and WASA will take the responsibility. It is something you should look at, because you will recall in all the manifestoes of the PNM this was the replacement for the Mamoral Dam.

**Mr. Imbert:** Madam Chair, that is not a correct statement.

**Ms. Ramdial:** Thank you, Madam Chair, line Item 007, Minister, Flood Mitigation - Erosion Control Programme for an estimate of 20 million for 2019. Again, can you undertake to give us the areas where this erosion control programme is to be implemented?

**Hon. Sinanan:** I will.

**Dr. Bodel:** Page 211, under Road Systems Operations and Services, line Item 001, Traffic Management Programme.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yes, what would you like to find out about this?

**Dr. Bodel:** There is no allocation.
Hon. Sinanan: Yes, what you want to find out about it?

Dr. Bodoe: No, no. I was hoping to ask the previous question but I see there is no allocation. But perhaps you can still permit me. I was going to ask whether—

Mr. Imbert: If there is no allocation there is no line Item and no question is possible.

Madam Chairman: Just one minute. Member for Fyzabad, do you want to know if it is located somewhere else?

Dr. Bodoe: I will pass, Madam. Thank you.

Ms. Ramdial: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, page 210, line Item 247 under Roads and Bridges, Road construction/Major Road Rehabilitation, under PURE. The 2019 Estimates is 140 million. Minister, would you give us an undertaking to give us a list of those roads you intend to rehabilitate—

Hon. Sinanan: Sure.

Ms. Ramdial: —at 140 million. And also, Madam Chair. Minister, line Item 275, Bridges Reconstruction Programme, 2019 estimate 25 million. Again, Minister, please, an undertaking to give us a list of those bridges?

Hon. Sinanan: Sure.

Ms. Ramdial: Thank you.

Mr. Charles: Thank you, Madam Chair. Page 210, Item 276, Landslip Repairs Programme, 20 million has been estimated. Could the Minister indicate the roads that are programmed for this and does that list include Garth Road, Buen Intento and Sainte Croix Roads.

Madam Chairman: Minister, will you give the work programme?

Hon. Sinanan: Yes, I will. Yes.

Madam Chairman: Yes. Okay. Item 004, Social Infrastructure.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Chair. I know, sorry. I will speed it up. Minister,
on page 210, 015, Comprehensive National Coastal Monitoring Programme. This is critical given climate control and climate issues. 2018 you had estimated $4 million and 2019 you have estimated again $4 million. What has happened in 2018, the status of that programme?

**Hon. Sinanan:** At the procurement for the consultant services for the design of the coastal monitoring system the project was awarded in September in 2018. There is a consultant on board.

**Mr. Lee:** And final question for me on line Item 278, I thank you. Repairs and Landslips at Upper Christian Drive, Pleasant Park, Pointe-a-Pierre. I thank you, $3 million dollars estimated; when do you expect to start that project.

**Hon. Sinanan:** That project is finished and that is an outstanding payment.

**Mr. Lee:** Okay, great. Thank you.

**Dr. Bodoe:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, line Item on page 211, 291. That expenditure of 164 million in 2019, what is expected to be achieved with that expenditure?

**Hon. Sinanan:** This is for the continuation of the segment from Dumfries Road to Dunlop Roundabout, identified as a priority for construction.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, line Item 284, I have two questions. Line Item 284—

**Hon. Sinanan:** What page?

**Madam Chairman:** Page 210.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Page 210. Does this include the Manzanilla Stretch just before Second Caigual?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Madam Chair, through you this is the Churchill Roosevelt Extension to Manzanilla.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** I know it is through to Manzanilla. But I am talking about
in terms of will that road also be included in terms of the rehabilitation of the road repairs and so forth. Because as you would be aware it is very—

**Hon. Sinanan:** Madam Chairman, this is for the new—in other words, this is the highway extension to Manzanilla. It has nothing to do with the road repair or anything to the Manzanilla Road.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Line Item 276, Land Slip Repairs. Does this line Item include Bon Air Road, Balata Hill Road, Tamana Hill Road, Guatapahara Road—

**Madam Chairman:** Member, I think the Minister undertook to give a schedule.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Item 834 on page 211. Is that 129,795,000 the final price of the *Galleons Passage*?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Where is that?

**Madam Chairman:** 234.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Purchase of new Inter-Island Ferry.

**Mr. Imbert:** Madam Chairman, that is not a 2019—

**Dr. Rambachan:** I am just trying to get clarification—

**Mr. Imbert:**—appropriation. No, ask about 2019.

**Dr. Rambachan:** But you spent it.

**Mr. Imbert:** Ask about 2019.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Is it the final price of the *Galleons Passage*?

**Mr. Imbert:** Madam Chairman, I am asking again for a ruling that they confine themselves to 2019 expenditure.

**Madam Chairman:** 834, Member you want to find out what is this project? Please ask the question in the proper way.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Mr. Minister, would you kindly indicate what this $129,795,394 was spent on?

**Mr. Imbert:** Madam Chairman.
Madam Chairman: Oh, I thought you were asking about the 930—

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman, he keeps asking about what happen in the past. That is why I am asking for a ruling. We are talking 2019 and there is no allocation in 2019 under that line Item.

Dr. Rambachan: So, you do not want to account for that to the public.

Mr. Imbert: This is not the forum for that. You can put a question, you can bring a matter on the adjournment, and you can file a substantive motion.

Dr. Rambachan: I will.

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Madam Chair. Line Item 288, the Construction of Moruga Highway, and allocation in 2018 of 45 million, revised estimate 21 million, allocation in 2019, 76.5 million. What is the status of this project?

Hon. Sinanan: Through you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the project commenced in October 2017 and is expected to be completed by 2019. It extends from Petit Cafe on the outskirts of Princes Town to the north to the Marac Village in the south and about 35 kilometres of roadway. This project is ongoing, again broken up into several packages and for anyone who visits that area they will see several contractors mobilized and ongoing work in the area.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Chair. Line Item 291 to the Minister, construction of the Solomon Hochoy to Point Fortin. This is a new project; 164 million. Could you tell us what would be the status and what is the—what is projected by this line Item 291 2019, please?

Madam Chairman: Member, what you are asking is this from Dumfries Road to Dunlop Roundabout?

Mr. Lee: No. Line Item 291, Sir Solomon Hochoy Extension to Point Fortin?

Madam Chairman: Member, I feel I could give the answer—

Mr. Lee: I do not know about the Dumfries.
Madam Chairman: I feel if I could give the answer that was answered here. From Dumfries Road to Dunlop Roundabout.

Mr. Lee: Okay. Well, okay, fine. You are listening.

Mr. Imbert: More than once.

Madam Chairman: You see, maybe if Members would [Crosstalk] exercise and have some lunch, we will be a little bit more productive.

Mr. Imbert: Stop playing games. [Crosstalk] Play acting all of you all. Playing to the gallery.

Madam Chairman: Item 004, Social Infrastructure, page 212.

Hon. Members, the question is that the sum of $2,624,200,000 for Head 43, Ministry of Works and Transport stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 43 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Madam Chairman: We will be back here at 2.00 p.m. This meeting is now suspended for lunch.

1.28 p.m.: Standing Finance Committee suspended.

2.00 p.m.: Standing Finance Committee resumed.

[M. FORDE in the Chair]

Mr. Chairman: Yes, Good afternoon, as we resume the Standing Finance Committee of October the 15th 2018.

Head 31: Ministry of Public Administration, $762,500,020.

Mr. Chairman: I will now invite the Minister of Public Administration to make a brief opening statement not exceeding five minutes.

Hon. Mc Donald: Thank you, Deputy Chair. Good day to all Members. I am pleased to be here before the Standing Finance Committee to answer questions relating to Head 31, the Ministry of Public Administration. Before getting into the
details of this portfolio, may I remind Members that in fiscal 2018, Head 31 reflected allocations to the former Ministry of Public Administration and Communications and, as such, throughout the fiscal 2019, the figures you will note, for the most part, there are deductions to many of the Items and Sub-Items when compared with those of 2018. You may also see zero allocations where Items were transferred from the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications to the Ministry of Communications, Head 70.

Chair, the Ministry of Public Administration has two primary responsibilities: one, the National Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Public Service Modernization. The work of this Ministry is aligned with the National Strategic Plan Vision 2030 and the sustainable development of the country, particularly the public service, which remains a key facilitator and enabler of national economic and social development.

With respect to the ICT, it is recognized that ICT is crosscutting, and thus it resonates with the strategic themes of *Vision 2030*. In this regard, a national ICT plan for the period 2018 to 2022 has been developed which will guide the Ministry’s work in the area of ICT over the next five-year period. The plan, which will serve as the ICT enabler of *Vision 2030*, is comprised of the following five strategic thrusts:

1. Improving connectivity;
2. Enhancing ICT human capital;
3. Digital Government;
4. Fostering economic development; and
5. Advancing societal and environmental benefits.

Also falling under the National ICT Portfolio is the Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago, TATT, which regulates the telecommunications
and broadcasting sectors. I note here that this entity collects revenue for the State and, therefore, there is no subvention for it under Head 31.

The National ICT Company called iGovTT, is the Government’s execution agency which, among other things, manages the Government’s ICT infrastructure, namely GovNet, comprising data centre and IT networks which connect Government Ministries, departments and agencies. iGovTT is also responsible for the TTConnect suite of services through which thousands of citizens access services by the TTConnect suite of services through which thousands of citizens access services via the TTConnect portal through their kiosks, centres, hotline and buses.

Over $100 million has been allocated in fiscal 2019 to the National ICT Portfolio and covers among various items, payment for the software with international suppliers, infrastructure upgrades related to the Government’s ICT network and implementation of e-government services.

With respect to the Public Service Modernization, as I said earlier, the modernization of our public service is a critical prerequisite for the wider modernization and sustainable development of our economy. They must not only keep up with the demands of our citizens and business sector, but should also be at the frontline in standard setting and thought leadership. There are at present four technical divisions that comprise the Public Service Modernization arm of the Ministry. They are one:

1. The Public Management Consulting Division (PMCD);
2. The Public Service Academy, the PSA;
3. The Modernization and Service Improvement Division; and
4. The Property and Real Estate Division.

And, as I close, I wish to emphasize that the two arms of the Ministry’s
portfolio, that is, the Public Service Transformation and the National ICT agenda, work in tandem with each other. Whilst we look forward to advancing the digital development of our nation as a whole, we can also leverage technology in our suite of tools to provide a more responsive, efficient and progressive public service.

Mr. Chair, my team and I stand ready to answer questions, or to make any available written submission that may be required. Thank you, Deputy Chair.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you. Thank you, Madam Minister. I would like to welcome the Permanent Secretary at this time, and also the senior executives of the Ministry of Public Administration. Welcome to the Parliament.

Question proposed: That Head 31 stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the sum of $762,500,020 for Head 31, Ministry of Public Administration, is comprised of monies proposed for expenditure under the following Sub-Heads and Items to be found in the Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure, the Draft Estimates of the Revenue and Expenditure of the Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies and of the Tobago House of Assembly and the Draft Estimates of the Development Programme. We shall now proceed to consider the Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure. Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure, and we are at page 212, and I recognize the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Chair. To the Minister. Based on your opening remarks, just for my own clarification, where is the head office location of the Ministry of Public Administration, please?

Hon. Mc Donald: The Ministry of Public Administration is located at Level 7, NALIS Building. Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla and then Fyzabad.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you, Chair. Hon. Minister, line Item 14. Can you tell me how many Cabinet-appointed committees are there?
Hon. Mc Donald: There is one Cabinet-appointed committee. That is the e-business roundtable.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: How many members?

Hon. Mc Donald: Twenty-one committee members.

Dr. Bodoe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister, under 01, Salaries and Cost of Living Allowances. In view of the separation of the Ministry of Communications, can you indicate now the establishment at the Ministry of Public Administration and if you could also indicate the number of vacant posts as well?

Hon. Mc Donald: Sure. The staff establishment—the permanent staff at the Ministry is now 189; total filled positions, 92; total vacant positions, 97. The contractual ones now.

Dr. Bodoe: Sure.

Hon. Mc Donald: Total contract positions, 207; total filled contract positions, 89; total vacant contract positions, 118.

Dr. Bodoe: Thank you, Minister. If I could just point you to line Item 08, the Vacant Posts.

Hon. Mc Donald: 0?

Dr. Bodoe: The same page, 08, Vacant Posts, and I see an allocation of 200,000 for filling of vacant posts I am presuming. Can you indicate how many vacant posts you expect or you are hoping to fill in 2019?

Hon. Mc Donald: You know, we have placed that 200,000 there because of course we recognize that there are vacant positions, but that will be dependent on the DPA.

Dr. Bodoe: All right. I am just trying to get a picture of what happens. Is it that you—is there an ongoing dialogue between your Ministry and the DPA—

Hon. Mc Donald: Yes there is.
Dr. Bodoe:—in terms of requesting and so on?

Hon. Mc Donald: And also, you will recall that the PMCD is located in the Ministry of Public Administration and, therefore, they too will advise us on our structure and the way forward.

Dr. Bodoe: Thank you. I have some questions on the PMCD, but when we come to that line Item.

Hon. Mc Donald: Sure.

Mr. Chairman: Cumuto/Manzanilla, you have your hand up?

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Yeah.

Mr. Chairman: Proceed.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you, Chair. Hon. Minister, but a lot of vacancies have been identified in line Item 01, does this impact negatively on the efficiency of your Ministry?

Hon. Mc Donald: Not at all. I think that the staff there, they are doing a wonderful job and as time goes by, you know, we will do our assessment, with a view—you know, we have started with at $200,000 small allocation for 2019, but as we go along we will look and assess and hire as we deem fit. And also too, I have just been advised, we are also filling the contract positions also.

Mr. Chairman: Same Item, Caroni Central?

Dr. Tewarie: I want to ask a general question here about decreases. I saw the entire line has decreases.

Hon. Mc Donald: Which line is this? Because of realignment you will find that—

Dr. Tewarie: That is the main reason? Because I see it throughout the—

Hon. Mc Donald: Well, that is why I said at the beginning of my submission that you will note that some of the figures would have dropped, the allocations, and that
is because of the delinking of the both Ministries, Public Administration and Communications.

**Dr. Tewarie:** All right. Okay.

**Mr. Chairman:** Item 004, Government Printery, page 312.

**Hon. Mc Donald:** Sir, 004 has been transferred to the Ministry of Communications.

**Mr. Chairman:** Okay. Item 005, Property and Real Estate Management Services, page, 213. Pointe-a-Pierre and then Fyzabad.

**Mr. Lee:** Hon. Minister, line Item 01, under Property and Real Estate Management Services, there is a decrease of 180. So I would like to ask: How many filled positions there are in the Property and Real Estate Management Services Division and what is that division—what is their responsibility?

**Hon. Mc Donald:** You are asking why there was a decrease?

**Mr. Lee:** A decrease of 180,000 in line Item 01, in Salaries and Cost of Living Allowances and how many positions—that $970,000—are filled and what is the role of the Property and Real Estate Management Services Division?

**Hon. Mc Donald:** I will have to provide—with respect to the first part of the question, I will have to provide that information for you. But with respect to the PRESD, as you are aware, PRESD through the Ministry of Public Administration, we are the Government’s landlord and custodian of its own and leased properties. So, therefore, you will find that we play a critical role in terms of accommodating and outfitting government buildings. So, by and large, PRESD is like the landlord, and we overseer these different leases as well as owned properties of the Government.

**Mr. Lee:** So some of the roles and functions of the employees in 01, would be to actually visit these properties on behalf of the Ministry?
Hon. Mc Donald: Oh, certainly. Yes, we do have officers who would definitely go out and—

Mr. Lee: And it will fall under this?

Hon. Mc Donald: That is right, yes.

Dr. Bodoe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister just to remain on 05, Property and Real Estate Management Services. I am sorry. Did you say you were not able to provide the number of employees at this time?

Hon. Mc Donald: I said I will provide it at another time in writing.

Dr. Bodoe: Could you indicate whether you are satisfied that the number of employees in that department currently would be sufficient to manage because there is almost a 450 million portfolio in terms of rentals and so on?

Hon. Mc Donald: Okay, very good question, Fyzabad. I am personally not satisfied and that is why we will have to recruit down the road, especially where we have been given responsibilities for additional properties. We definitely will have to be looking at bringing on more persons.

Dr. Bodoe: So could look to more efficient operation of that department?

Hon. Mc Donald: Exactly.

Dr. Bodoe: Minister, can you indicate whether there is an office outfitting policy in place? Does the Government have an office outfitting policy in terms of outfitting these building?

Hon. Mc Donald: In terms of outfitting, we are now revising it, Sir. Yes.

Dr. Bodoe: Can you say when the revised plan will be available?

Hon. Mc Donald: I would think that by the end of the year, this December, we shall have a policy in place.

Dr. Bodoe: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Item 006, Public Management Consulting Division. Fyzabad.
Dr. Bodee: Thank you, Chairman. Minister, this department here, this division, PMCD, under—let me take it under 01, Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance. Can you indicate how many employees?

Hon. Mc Donald: At the PMCD?

Dr. Bodee: Yes.

Hon. Mc Donald: Again, I will have to provide you with that information.

Dr. Bodee: Right. Can you just us give us a brief idea, Minister, of what this department—this division does? What is it supposed to do?

Hon. Mc Donald: What are the functions of the PMCD?

Mr. Chairman: A brief description.

Hon. Mc Donald: Yes sure. This particular division looks at your organizational design and process management of the Ministries and Departments, and they are the ones who will advise you with respect to the structure and the staffing of your department.

Dr. Bodee: Right. Minister, do you have an idea how many projects you are expected to execute in the financial 2019? Do we have a plan in place?

Hon. Mc Donald: That is difficult because we are in receipt of—the PMCD department is in receipt of so many requests from various Ministries and Departments, et cetera. As a matter of fact, sometimes on a weekly basis I take a lot of notes from various Ministries to the Cabinet, having had an input from the PMCD. But that is a figure that we could look at. I am sure the officers will be willing to do an assessment.

Dr. Bodee: Sure. Will you then be willing to provide it in writing a status of the requests on this status?

Hon. Mc Donald: Certainly, Yes.

Dr. Bodee: I will appreciate that. Thank you.

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Mr. Chairman: Chaguanas East, you still have a question?

Mr. Karim: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Hon. Minister, I recall—well let me ask the question before I am rebuked for not asking the question. How long does it take normally for PMCD to get back—to respond to a Cabinet note for a position to be filled?

Hon. Mc Donald: Well, since I have been there—I have been there from March—and I must tell you, I always take pleasure in reading the analysis that PMCD—and I always tell my PS that—that PMCD will do requests from various Ministries. I can tell you once all the information is in place, within a period of two weeks, we will be able to provide the report from the PMCD.

Mr. Karim: And the report from the PMCD, how long do you think after that that report goes in there with the recommendations the positions take to be filled?

Hon. Mc Donald: Well, I would not be able to tell you that because it is different Ministries. So the different Ministries will have to report to us and let us know how long.

Mr. Karim: So, are you saying that it takes two weeks for PMCD to complete its report back to the Cabinet?

Hon. Mc Donald: On average, once all the information is had from the particular Ministry.

Mr. Karim: Well, I am very glad to hear that. Mines took over two years.

Hon. Mc Donald: Well that is a different era, is it not?

Mr. Karim: Well, let me just ask the question because I am going somewhere with this question. In your view, do you think the PMCD has the requisite expertise to respond as efficiently and effectively as possible?

Hon. Mc Donald: Yes I do think so. And, well course, you know you will not get 100 per cent, but I can tell you that I think there are some very good people, good
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expertise and skills in the PMCD department. And I always tell you, I take
pleasure and pride in reading and analyzing although it does not pertain to the
Ministry of Public Administration, but other Ministries, the way they craft it, the
way they analyze it and whatnot, I have to say that I am very proud of the PMCD.

Mr. Karim: Now, in terms of the PMCD, you know there was a shift in the world
now towards the new workforce. How do they cope with these new analytical
issues with new workforce positions?

Hon. Mc Donald: All right. I am being advised that we are engaging in
developmental work with the PMCD department. It is going to take some time,
but I think one day at a time, and we will be good.

Mr. Karim: Thanks.

Mr. Chairman: Item 006—Fyzabad you have a question on this line Item? Item
007, Public Service Academy. Still on page 214. Proceed.

Dr. Bodoe: Minister could you indicate what is the establishment of the Public
Service Academy? How many employees?

Hon. Mc Donald: We will provide the details in writing.

Dr. Bodoe: All right. Can you provide a proposed work programme for 2019?

Hon. Mc Donald: Yes, we can.

Dr. Bodoe: In writing?

Hon. Mc Donald: Yes, we can.

Dr. Bodoe: And can you also indicate, Minister, how many public servants are
expected to benefit from the training by the PSA in this 2019?

Hon. Mc Donald: Yes, we will provide it.

Dr. Bodoe: Are those figures available?

Hon. Mc Donald: Certainly, we will provide it.

Dr. Bodoe: In writing?
Hon. Mc Donald: The Public Service Academy plays a very important role in terms of training and development of public officers, and you will see throughout this, you may make mention of it—

Dr. Bodoe: I have a further question which I will ask under Goods and Services, so you may have a chance to explain.

Hon. Mc Donald: Okay. All right.

Mr. Karim: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Public Service Academy, I imagine this is in-house training?

Hon. Mc Donald: Yes, in-house training using our facilitators from within the Ministry itself.

Mr. Karim: The recipients of the training, do they receive certification?

Hon. Mc Donald: Some of them. Yes.

Mr. Karim: And those who received it, is the Academy accredited?

Hon. Mc Donald: Not as yet. We are looking at it.

Mr. Karim: And from whom are you seeking accreditation?

Hon. Mc Donald: NTA and other bodies we are looking at.

Mr. Karim: Well, are you going to be looking at the NTA or the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago?

Hon. Mc Donald: That too. That is another body. That too, we will be looking at.

Mr. Karim: Okay. The ACTT oversees the NTA.

Hon. Mc Donald: Okay.

Mr. Karim: Thanks.

Mr. Chairman: Item 008, National Archives.

Hon. Mc Donald: Sir, National Archives has been transferred to the Ministry of Communications.
Mr. Chairman: Item 009, Public Service Transformation Division, page 215.

Hon. Mc Donald: Sir, we will look at that as we do—this has been transferred to a new Head 020. As a matter of fact, I might as well say from now that what I have found at the Ministry is that there existed very small divisions, all with the same objective towards modernization of the public service, and I believe that the leadership at the Ministry felt that we needed to put all under one umbrella. So you will find Strategic Human Resource and Management Division, the Diamond Division and the Public Service Transformation Division have all now been subsumed under new Item 020, and the name of that Item is Modernization and Service Improvement Division.

Mr. Chairman: However, colleagues, for the information of the Hansard I will still need to itemize each one and then we will proceed accordingly.

Hon. Mc Donald: Okay.

Mr. Chairman: So I could move on? You have a question, Fyzabad?

Dr. Bodoe: I want to thank the Minister for that information because it answers three of the other questions I had. But also to ask, Minister, because I noted that although you have this new division, the Modernization and Service Improvement Division, there is no line Item under Personnel Expenditure, and if to ask you, at this stage, whether that division is going to be treated strictly under Goods and Services by contracted employment. Hon. Mc Donald: It will be, yes, under contract.

Dr. Bodoe: So there will be no permanent appointments, not permanent employees?

Hon. Mc Donald: One or two but, by and large, contractual positions.

Dr. Bodoe: You understand, because I see no line Item under Personnel Expenditure. I just wanted clarification on that.

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Hon. Mc Donald: Okay.

Dr. Bodee: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Okay Members, so we will move on. Item 013, Information Division.

Hon. Mc Donald: The Information Division, Sir, has been transferred to the Ministry of Communications.

Mr. Chairman: Item 015, Strategic Services Division. Same thing there?

Hon. Mc Donald: Strategic 015. This remains in the Ministry.

Mr. Chairman: Any question here colleagues? Item 019, Diamond Division. That remains.

Dr. Bodee: Could you just indicate briefly the number of employees and the function of that division?

Hon. Mc Donald: The amount of—you are talking about number of employees?

Dr. Bodee: Yes.

Hon. Mc Donald: Again, we will provide that information for you.

Dr. Bodee: And the functions.

Mr. Chairman: And the functions also, Madam Minister, will be provided?

Hon. Mc Donald: Yes, Sir. This particular division deals with research and policy development and monitoring and evaluation—research, monitoring and evaluation and policy development.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you. Hon. Minister, as you spoke about monitoring and evaluation, exactly what is that division, in fact, monitoring and evaluating?

Hon. Mc Donald: Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla, they will be monitoring and evaluating the work of the Ministry and also any new projects that the Ministry will engage in. They are the ones who will be doing the assessment of the projects.

Mr. Chairman: Right. Item 019, Diamond Division.
Hon. Mc Donald: That has been transferred, Sir, to the new 020.

Mr. Chairman: Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services; Item 001, General Administration, pages 216 and 217. Fyzabad and then Pointe-a-Pierre.

Dr. Bodeo: Thank you, Chairman. Minister, line Item 08, Rent/Lease - Office Accommodation and Storage on page 216.

Hon. Mc Donald: 08?

Dr. Bodeo: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Page 216.

Dr. Bodeo: That expenditure of 23,120,300.

Hon. Mc Donald: You mean the increase of 702?

Dr. Bodeo: Well actually no. I am just asking—that as well. Can you indicate are those in-house facilities for the Ministry of Public Administration?

Hon. Mc Donald: Actually, this relates to leases. And, more specifically, to 08, this is due to the fact that the PMCD—that is the Public Management Consulting Division we just spoke about—they have been removed from the Chaguanas area and they are now in Park Plaza and this will account for the rental.

Dr. Bodeo: Can I then ask you Minister to provide a list of the locations, the value of the contracts and the landlords to account for that expenditure?

Hon. Mc Donald: Certainly, Sir.

Dr. Bodeo: And, Minister, in terms of the impact on the movement—is it that part of the public service administration staff has moved to the Government Campus?

Hon. Mc Donald: Well, not with us.

Dr. Bodeo: No.

Hon. Mc Donald: No, no. We would like to go there, but not at this point in time.

Mr. Chairman: Line Item, line Item, very important. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, do you have a question still? Proceed.
Mr. Lee: Hon Minister, line Item 16, Contract Employment. That is on page 217. In 2019 the estimate is $12.3 million. You might not have it, but could you provide a listing of what is envisioned in 2019 for Contract Employment?

Hon. Mc Donald: All right, yes. We do have this one. This is 16, yes. What we will try to do here is the vacant positions on contract, we would like to fill them in 2019 and those positions are in the HR Department, IT, facilities and legal division and they are like the Manager Information Systems, the Manager Solutions Development and Implementation, the IT Analysis/Programmer, Information Systems Specialist, Information Technology Infrastructure Specialist, the Facilities Manager, Facilities Maintenance Technician, Senior Legal Officer, Legal Officer I, Service Improvement Specialist, Human Resource Specialist, Document Management Specialist, Real Estate Officer, Property Management Technician. These are the particular positions, contract positions, to be filled during 2019.

Mr. Lee: Thank you.

Mr. Karim: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Hon. Minister, I am not sure if line Item 17 is transferred to somewhere else, but line Item 17—

Mr. Chairman: That is training?

Mr. Karim: Yes. No allocation.

2.30 p.m.

Hon. Mc Donald: Okay. Because I was about to answer when you said you will wait for me to answer down the road.

Mr. Karim: Okay.

Hon. Mc Donald: Yes, this would be in-house training conducted by the Public Service Academy. We will be using—depending on our internal facilitators to assist us here, and that is why you would find in the training you did not get—we did not have a provision.
Mr. Karim: Okay.

Mr. Chairman: Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you, Chair. I have three line Items, the first one is—

Hon. Mc Donald: One at a time, please.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Yeah, I am just letting you know. Line Item 43, Security Services, there is no allocation, could you explain as to why there is no allocation?

Hon. Mc Donald: With respect to 43, we have given up a storage facility at Arouca, and, hence—that is it, it made no sense to make any provisions for it.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: So this one facility costed at one point, 938,000?

Mr. Chairman: No, Member, hold on, hold on, you are going back to 2017. Let us concentrate on—

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: So that one figure here was responsible for security for this one facility?

Hon. Mc Donald: Yes, Ma’am.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Line Item 13—

Mr. Chairman: Maintenance of Vehicles.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Can you account for why is there an increase for the maintenance of vehicles, is it that they have acquired new vehicles?

Hon. Mc Donald: Well, we have 10 vehicles in the Ministry and it is an ageing fleet, so you have to put in—as you get older, as you buy a vehicle and it gets older, you have to put out some money on maintenance, it is that what is happening here. It is an old fleet of vehicles we have.

Mr. Chairman: Another question?

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Final one.

Mr. Chairman: Sure.

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Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Line Item 58.

Mr. Chairman: Medical Expenses.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: What accounted for these expenses?

Mr. Chairman: 75,000, you are on Estimates for 2000—?

Hon. Mc Donald: That is the Estimates for 75—what is the question you want to ask, Miss?

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Well, I saw there was a decrease from 2.3 million to 75, so I just wanted to know.

Mr. Chairman: Member, the trend that has been set already with the Committee is that we are dealing with 2019 Estimates. So could we move on, that is the last question? I will now recognize Fyzabad.

Dr. Bodoe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister, I just want to stay on Item 58, Medical Expenses, and just to get an idea of whether these expenses are for employees of the department, and if so is there a policy for accessing—I am just trying to understand what—

Hon. Mc Donald: Okay, yes. The allocation would be for those persons who fall under the Salaries Review Commission (SRC).

Dr. Bodoe: Okay.

Mr. Chairman: Item 002, Science and Technology, page 218. I recognize Caroni Central. That has been transferred too, Madam Minister?

Hon. Mc Donald: So Science and Technology is no longer with Public Administration.

Dr. Tewarie: Can I ask where it is?

Hon. Mc Donald: Hold on.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. But where would it come under, Communications now?

Hon. Mc Donald: NICT Secretariat, so we will go to 003.
Mr. Chairman: Okay. Minister of Finance, with regard to the transfer of these documents, would it be for our next 2020 Estimates? Would this situation then be regularized in terms of ensuring that we have the proper paperwork in going forward in terms of those that have been transferred, those Items that have been transferred?

Hon. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, I do not quite understand the question.

Mr. Chairman: Like, for instance, a number of these Items that I am calling have been transferred and there are no notes at the sides in the remarks column as to where they have been transferred to, so for easy reference in terms of the future, whether it is that again, they can be identified like others, or again, the necessary correspondence updated accordingly.

Hon. Imbert: I will ask the Budgets Division to make sure that is done.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. All right. Thanks. So we now move on to Item 003, National Information and Communication Technology Centre (ICT) Secretariat, pages 218 and 219. I recognize Fyzabad.

Dr. Bodoe: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: And then I will come to Caroni Central.

Dr. Bodoe: Minister, with regard to line Item 23, Fees, that expenditure of 62 million, can you provide a breakdown of those fees, perhaps in writing if you want or, if you can tell us now?

Mr. Chairman: Okay. Minister, are you able to provide?

Hon. Mc Donald: Yes. These represent payment of fees on behalf of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for software, for all software fees, licences across the Ministries, Microsoft, Oracle, Endpoint Security, and all devices. But we can give you a breakdown of it, you know.

Dr. Bodoe: Sure.
Mr. Chairman: Caroni Central.

Dr. Tewarie: For this particular Item, National Information and Communication Technology—

Mr. Chairman: Number, please?

Dr. Tewarie: I am asking a question in relation to what the Minister said generally but with regard to this department, is that okay?

Hon. Mc Donald: Yeah, sure.

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, proceed.

Dr. Tewarie: Because you said this was critical in the integrating of ICT services in the Public Administration, and then redounding to the benefit of citizens, and that was an important strategy of yours. I raise this, Minister, knowing that you have only recently gone to this Ministry, first of all, and secondly, that this particular project is a big project and can take time. I understand all of that, but in the last Auditor General’s Report there was a particular chapter in the Auditor General’s Report that was focused on ICT, and it observed many things, but two things that it observed was that in terms of integrating the ICT system and providing better service to the community, the customer, the citizen, we were kind of way behind. And the second thing that it observed was that there was a necessity for the Ministry of Planning and Development and the Ministry of Public Administration to work together to try to make this possible so that the policy aspect, I suspect, as well as the administration aspect can be integrated. Can you tell me if anything approaching creation of such an opportunity is happening now?

Mr. Chairman: Madam Minister.

Hon. Mc Donald: Mr. Chair, yes, I have to say, and good question. When I got to the Ministry—let us start with the ICT plan, it was in draft stage and over the two/three months we were able to get it to the Cabinet, so now there is an approved
Cabinet-approved ICT plan, 2018—2022, and of course, some allocations have
been made—not as much as we wanted—in this, 2019’s Estimates, for us to begin
the implementations thereof. What I can say is that the ICT Department has in fact
been collaborating with other departments, et cetera, to implement this plan. It is
going to take some time, but I think that we have the requisite skills and the people
with the know-how for us to achieve what the ICT in this Ministry has set out to
do. We also work with the Government’s backbone which is the iGovTT, in trying
to achieve—and little by little, there are little goals that we have set that we are
going to achieve in 2019.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Okay. If I could follow-up, I think one of the key issues was
integrating all of these ICT capacities behind an overarching set of goals so that
they can in fact be moved forward simultaneously, and I just raised that—

**Hon. Mc Donald:** Yes. Caroni Central, we can provide that information in
writing, to you.

**Dr. Tewarie:** I would be happy to have it.

**Mr. Chairman:** Pointe-a-Pierre.

**Mr. Lee:** Hon. Minister, line Item 29, Other Contracted Services—28, sorry.

**Mr. Chairman:** Item 28, page 219, Other Contracted Services, question?

**Mr. Lee:** The 2019 Estimates is $86.6 million, could the Minister provide in
writing a list of what is estimated or budgeted for these contract services in 2019,
please?

**Mr. Chairman:** Can you provide it now, Madam Minister?

**Hon. Mc Donald:** Yes, I can provide it. This relates to allocations that will be
utilized for the payments for service-level agreements with the contractors, like
TSTT, Fujitsu, and also support for the Government backbone infrastructure. And
to be more specific, we pay a monthly payment of $7.9 million to the contractor
alliance, that is TSTT, for the Ministry, supported the Ministries, and to Fujitsu as our data centre.

Mr. Chairman: Fyzabad.

Dr. Bodoe: Thank you, Chairman. That question was asked by my colleague already.

Mr. Chairman: Sure. I will now move on to Item 004, Government Printery.

Hon. Mc Donald: That has been transferred to the Ministry of Communications.

Mr. Chairman: That has been transferred, and we have the undertaking of the Minister of Finance to have the Items fully coded.

Hon. Mc Donald: Yes, certainly.

Mr. Chairman: Item 005, Property and Real Estate Management Services, pages 220 and 221. Fyzabad and then Pointe-a-Pierre.

Dr. Bodoe: Thank you, Chairman. Minister, line Item 08, Rent/Lease - Office Accommodation and Storage in the sum of 458,659,400—

Hon. Mc Donald: Item—which one is that?

Dr. Bodoe: Line Item 08.

Hon. Mc Donald: Okay, hold on.

Mr. Chairman: That is under Property and Real Estate Management Services.

Dr. Bodoe: Yeah. It is under Property and Real Estate.

Hon. Mc Donald: Yes, this has to do too with our loans, the payment of our loans under this, and I have a—

Dr. Bodoe: Loans? Rent/lease?

Hon. Mc Donald: Yes, 08, hold on, let me just get it.

Mr. Chairman: Madam Minister, it is 08, Rent/Lease - Office Accommodation and Storage.

Hon. Mc Donald: Besides our lease payments, Member for Fyzabad, we also
have loan payments under this heading, 08.

Dr. Bodee: Right. Can you then undertake to provide us with a list of the properties that are rented, the value of the contracts?

Hon. Mc Donald: And the loans too, because I have it here?

Dr. Bodee: Yeah.

Hon. Mc Donald: Do you want to hear it?

Mr. Chairman: Proceed, proceed, if you have the information. Go ahead with it, Madam Minister.

Hon. Mc Donald: With respect to the sublease or rental of the NALIS building, the contract price was 210,678,300. There is balance outstanding of $37,692,096. This loan period was for September 2003 to January 2023. Then there is the International Waterfront Centre long-term financing agreement, the total contract price there was US $100 million. Amount paid-to-date is US $75 million. Balance outstanding: $25 million. Then for the International Waterfront long-term financing, this is for the construction of the facility at the International Waterfront, the Breakfast Shed, Towers C and D, and also the car park, US $375,000. We have already paid US $199,581 with a balance of 175,000. Then there is construction of the Education Tower and Annex Building, both currently occupied by the Ministry of Education. There was a loan of US $88 million; outstanding US 30,800 outstanding. And the fifth one, the construction of the building which is occupied by the Office of the Prime Minister, it is $86,918,000; balance outstanding, TT $30,368,000.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Madam Minister. Pointe-a-Pierre.

Mr. Lee: Madam Minister, just a follow-up to that same line Item 08, out of the $458.6 million, what total number or amount is for the rental of properties that you rent on behalf of different Ministries? No?

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Hon. Mc Donald: No. You see, the thing is, if it is a Ministry is renting, it comes out from the particular Ministry’s Vote, so I will not be able to carry that here.

Mr. Lee: All right. So this Property and Real Estate Management Services division is strictly related your Ministry’s offices that are rented?

Hon. Mc Donald: That is right. Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Fyzabad, you have another question?

Dr. Bodee: Thank you, Chairman, yes.

Madam Chairman: Sure, proceed.

Dr. Bodee: Minister, if I could direct your attention to line Item 21, Repairs and Maintenance – Buildings, and if you could indicate to us the expenditure of 18 million for 2019, what buildings are expected to be repaired, if you have the information at hand?

Hon. Mc Donald: Well, of course, as I said to you, we own and we lease properties so therefore there must be an Item there for maintenance. And for 2019, there is a provision for how much, 18?

Dr. Bodee: Eighteen million, an increase of 5 million.

Hon. Mc Donald: Eighteen million, and that is for the maintenance of—I can tell you, maintenance of the International Waterfront, for Flagstaff residents, Federation Villas; we now have Victoria Keyes, 10 apartments at Victoria Keyes; we have the Tunapuna Administrative Complex, the Siparia Administrative Complex, President’s House and other Government quarters.

Mr. Chairman: Fyzabad, a follow-up?

Dr. Bodee: Yeah, thank you. Minister, this line Item 61, Insurance, just for my own information and for the information of the public, that expenditure Item—

Hon. Mc Donald: And that is Insurance, 61, that is insurance for Tower C and Tower D.
Dr. Bodoie: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Item 006, Public Management Consulting Division, page 221. Item 007, Public Service Academy, page 222. Fyzabad.

Dr. Bodoie: Thank you. Minister, with regard to line Item 17, in terms of Training, can you—

Hon. Mc Donald: That is under page—

Mr. Chairman: Page 222.

Hon. Mc Donald: Public Service Academy. Hold on. What line Item?

Mr. Chairman: Item 17, Training.

Dr. Bodoie: I know you did allude to some in-house training before, can you provide the number of employees that will benefit from this training in 2019?

Hon. Mc Donald: If I could provide—?

Dr. Bodoie: The categories of staff that will be trained and the number of persons who will be trained, who you are projecting for in 2019?

Hon. Mc Donald: Okay, we will do it in writing and send to you, Sir.

Dr. Bodoie: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Item 008, National Archives.

Hon. Mc Donald: Transferred to the Ministry of Communications.

Mr. Chairman: Item 009, Public Service Transformation Division, page 224.

Hon. Mc Donald: That is incorporated in 020, the new Item.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, noted. Item 012, Freedom of Information Unit, same thing there?

Hon. Mc Donald: Yes, the Ministry of Communications.

Mr. Chairman: Item 013, Information Division.

Hon. Mc Donald: The Ministry of Communications.

Mr. Chairman: Item 015, Strategic Services Division.
Hon. Mc Donald: Yes, we have that.

Mr. Chairman: We have that here?

Hon. Mc Donald: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Any questions there, Members? No? Item 018, Strategic Human Resource and Management Division. We are on page 226 for the record. Caroni Central.

Dr. Tewarie: This Strategic Human Resource Management Division, is this something that connects with the whole business of the management of the HR information that would lead to the timely disbursement of pensions?

Mr. Chairman: Madam Minister.

Hon. Mc Donald: I am sure you are referring to the IHRIS programme?

Dr. Tewarie: Yes.

Hon. Mc Donald: We will be working closely with the Ministry of Finance, and strange enough, that has occupied my attention for some time now, because I understand, you know, how difficult it is for public servants when they have retired and the length of time it takes, and that is why you will see in this budget, where the Minister of Finance has this new pension—I would not say pension, but this allowance in his budget where upon retirement—

Dr. Tewarie: You get 25.

Hon. Mc Donald: Right. You get this $3,500, and that is to assist the public officers, and as public officers ourselves, we have to ensure that they do their work and get their files up-to-date. And so, Ministers have been mandated to ensure that at their respective Ministries, that this exercise of updating the records, pension records and files, are true and in keeping with what is happening—

Dr. Tewarie: So this IHRIS system will be fully operational?

Hon. Mc Donald: Yeah, certainly, because, you see, IHRIS has a component that
speaks to the updating of pension files, and whatnot, but we can only do it in conjunction with the Ministry of Finance. They are the lead really, in this.

Dr. Tewarie: Okay.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Tabaquite.

Dr. Rambachan: I just wanted to find out from the Minister on that same Item—

Hon. Mc Donald: Which one is that?

Dr. Rambachan: Item 018, Strategic Human Resource and Management Division.

Mr. Chairman: Strategic Human Resource Management. Go ahead, Tabaquite.

Dr. Rambachan: Why is it that we have no allocation for 2019?

Hon. Mc Donald: Because we have put it under the new—if you read on the other side, Explanation, Incorporated into Item 020.

Dr. Rambachan: So that is where it is now?

Hon. Mc Donald: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Fyzabad.

Dr. Bodee: Minister, if we reach 020, Modernization, I will ask there.

Mr. Chairman: No, we are coming to that, Fyzabad.

Dr. Bodee: Okay, sure.

Mr. Chairman: Item 019, Diamond Division.

Hon. Mc Donald: Again—

Mr. Chairman: That has been transferred also?

Hon. Mc Donald: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Right. Item 020, Modernization and Service Improvement Division, page 226. I recognize Fyzabad.

Dr. Bodee: Thank you, Chairman. Minister, with regard to this new Division, can you outline your targets for this new Item of expenditure of 2.75 million for 2019?
Hon. Mc Donald: Targets?

Dr. Bodee: Yes.

Hon. Mc Donald: Targets with respect to what?

Dr. Bodee: In terms of what you are proposing to do in this fiscal year for this new Division.

Hon. Mc Donald: I do not know if I understand the question so I cannot answer.

Mr. Chairman: Could you be a little more specific in terms of line Item, probably you can use one or two line Items?

Dr. Bodee: I think you answered in your opening, Minister. If I can just ask another question with regard to Diamond Division that is now incorporated in this Division. Can you indicate how many services with regard to Ministries, agencies and Departments, are currently registered for the Diamond certification programme, if it still exists?

Hon. Mc Donald: No, no, no, we do not pursue the Diamond thing anymore. “No, no, we do not go down there no more.” We have started a new Modernization and Service Improvement Division. So we will send you something in writing with respect to our whole objective and whatnot, and our new—the way we are going to achieve this, this new modernization, not the Diamond one.

Dr. Bodee: Thank you, Minister.

Hon. Mc Donald: Good.

Mr. Chairman: Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases; Item 001, General Administration, page 227; Item 002, Science and Technology; Item 003, National Information and Communication Technology; Item 004, Government Printery; Item 005, Property and Real Estate Management Services. We are now on page 228. Item 007, Public Service Academy; Item 008, National Archives; Item 013,
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Information Division; Item 015, Strategic Services Division. We are on page 229. Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies; Item 001, Regional Bodies; Item 002, Commonwealth Bodies, page 230; Item 003, United Nations Organizations.

[Interruption] Fyzabad, you have a comment there? You are with me here?

**Dr. Bodoe:** Yes.

**Mr. Chairman:** We are on page 230, Item 003, United Nations Organizations; Item 004, International Bodies; Item 009, Other Transfers, page 231; Item 011, Transfers to State Enterprises. We now move on to Sub-Head 06, Current Transfers to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies; Item 004, Statutory Boards.

Hon. Members, we will now move on to the *Draft Estimates of the Revenue and Expenditure of the Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies and of the Tobago House of Assembly*. So we are going to a new book and we are moving on to 03, Trinidad and Tobago Telecommunications Authority: Sub-Head 01, page 193; Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure; Item 001, General Administration, and everyone has the new book, *Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies and of the Tobago House of Assembly*, page 193, and I am moving on. Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services; Item 001, General Administration; Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases on page 194; Item 001, General Administration; Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies; Item 007, Households; Item 009, Other Transfers, page 194. Hon. Members, we will now move on to the *Draft Estimates of the Development Programme*, and we are going on to the *Development Programme* book now. You all are with me here, page 79? Sub-Head 09, Development Programme, Consolidated Fund, page 79; Item 004, Social Infrastructure, pages 79 to 80. I recognize Pointe-a-Pierre.

**Mr. Lee:** Thank you, Chair. Madam Minister, on page 80, line Item 013, Establishment of Activity Centres, which is a new project for 2019, of $500,000.

**UNREvised**
Could you enlighten us what this is about, these centres?

Mr. Chairman: Madam Minister.

Hon. Mc Donald: These activity centres, I believe there are four already, this is an allocation for new centres. There are four already in existence at Marac, at Penal, Cumana and Guayaguayare. There are four of them, and actually that is taking—that is the use of ICTs in these centres. They are totally Wi-Fi. People go there, they become computer literate. They are able to access the Internet, etcetera. So it is really Internet services in these four centres. We propose to do some more in 2019, and broaden the scope of the services in these centres. Certainly, $500,000 is not sufficient, but we will come back at the mid-term review for a little more.

Mr. Lee: But you would have identified in your Estimates what locations would these centres—you would have identified them?

Hon. Mc Donald: No quite as yet, but as soon as we do I will let you know, and you will appreciate where the four went. Yeah?

Mr. Lee: No, I appreciate what is going to happen.

Mr. Chairman: Chaguanas East, you have a question here?

Mr. Karim: Following that, how do we get on board with one of these?

Hon. Mc Donald: Pardon me?

Mr. Karim: How do we get on board with one of these centres? How do we get one of these centres?

Hon. Mc Donald: Write me, Sir, I am your colleague. You write me.

Mr. Karim: You would get it tomorrow morning.

Mr. Chairman: The easiest form of communication. Fyzabad, same question?

Dr. Bodee: Another line Item, Chairman. Line Item 021, Minister, the Enhanced Career and Succession Management Processes in the Public Service, can you give
us an update?

Mr. Chairman: Item 021, and we are on page 80.

Dr. Bodo: Page 80, 021. Where are we with that?

3.00 p.m.

Hon. Mc Donald: That is the, where we got—how much did we get for it, $400,000?

Mr. Chairman: $500,000.

Dr. Bodo: Actually you have no allocation for it. That is why I am asking whether it has been completed or transferred or contracted out?

Mr. Chairman: But there is no allocation for 2019.

Hon. Mc Donald: What is the question you asked?

Dr. Bodo: No, I am just asking—there is no allocation, so I am asking what is the status of it? Has that process been completed?

Hon. Mc Donald: Which one you are looking at?

Dr. Bodo: 021.

Mr. Chairman: Members hold on, one second. Madam Minister, we are on page 80, 021, Enhanced Career, Succession Management Processes in the Public Service, and there is no budgetary figure. He was asking why there is no budgetary allocation.

Hon. Mc Donald: Sir, but I am seeing that is Enhanced Career and Succession Management Processes in the Public Service. We will be using our internal resources to do our training, and some of this here, some of the expenses for this particular Item went under recurrent expenditure.

Dr. Bodo: That is what I was asking. Thank you.

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: Thank you. Hon. Minister, line Item 097, Property Management Information System. I am seeing an allocation of 795,000. Could
Hon. Mc Donald: Now, let me get this thing cleared, PMIS right? Let us get it clear: Property Management Information System. All right? Let us get it clear: PMIS system, PMIS—“M”, “M”.

This particular system is developed in-house, using in-house talents, software developers, and this system—we did not have this before. What is going on here is you can go into PRESD. You can go on to your computer. It will allow you the opportunity to see all the listed leases, rental or all properties owned by the Government—this was not in existence before—and you will be able to tell the owners of the properties, in terms of the leases, the duration of time for the lease, etcetera. So all information will be now at your fingertips, and it is called the PMIS System, the Property Management Information System. Yes, that is for you all with your minds. It is for you all. [Laughter]

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Madam Minister.

Dr. Tewarie: 001, Chair, to the Minister. This is the same issue I raised earlier, the implementation of the ICT plan. There is a small allocation for 2019, it is just $1 million. I mean, given the importance of what you are doing there, do you think this is adequate?

Hon. Mc Donald: And I agree with you wholeheartedly, Member for Caroni Central. So you know we will back at the midterm review.

Mr. Chairman: Chaguanas East, you have another question?

Mr. Karim: I just wanted to ask the Minister, page 79, line Item 005. I notice no—training of librarians. What has happened there?

Hon. Mc Donald: That has gone to—the library, that has gone to the Ministry of Communications. That is not for us.

Dr. Tewarie: 022, Public Sector Reform Preparation Programme. There were
allocations in 2018, but nothing in 2019. What has happened to that? Is that proceeding?

**Hon. Mc Donald:** That was a book value to clear out a previous payment. That is why there is no allocation in 2019.

**Dr. Tewarie:** So there is no continuity there?

**Hon. Mc Donald:** Yes.

**Mr. Chairman:** Sub-Head 005, Multi-sectoral and Other Services, page 80 of the same booklet, Infrastructure Development Fund, page 195, Item 005, Multi-sectoral and Other Services, page 195.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 31 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, Madam Minister. Thank you, Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry, and also thank you to Madam PS and your senior executives for attending our meeting today.

**Head 06:** Service Commissions, $77,948,000.

**Mr. Chairman:** I will now invite——*[Interruption]*

**Mr. Imbert:** Mr. Chairman, normally the Departments that do not have a line Ministry and appear under their own individual Head in the books would be dealt with by the Minister of Finance, but I have deputed the Minister of Public Administration——

**Mr. Chairman:** What word is that?

**Mr. Imbert:** “Deputed” the Minister of Public Administration to handle the Service Commissions.

**Mr. Chairman:** Sure, thanks for that information. So I will now invite the Minister of Public Administration to make a brief opening statement not exceeding five minutes.
Hon. Mc Donald: Thank you, Sir. The Service Commissions Department grew out of the personnel branch of the former Colonial Secretariat, which went out of existence in 1961 following the attainment of internal self-government by Trinidad and Tobago. The primary function of the Department is to provide support services to enable the four service commissions, that is, the Public Service Commission, the Teaching Service Commission, the Judicial and Legal Service Commission and the Police Service Commission, to discharge their constitutional responsibilities of staffing, and the exercise of disciplinary control over the respective services.

The role and functions of the PSC, the Teaching Service Commission and the Judicial and Legal Service Commission are all enshrined in the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago, and are, one, to appoint persons to hold or to act in public offices, to make appointments on promotion, to transfer, to confirm appointments, to remove, exercise disciplinary control and to enforce standards of conduct.

The role and functions of the police service are: to recruit the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of police, monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of the functions of the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of Police, to prepare an annual performance appraisal report in such form as may be prescribed for the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of Police, to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of the functions of the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of Police.

The Service Commissions Department also ensures that the human resource needs at the higher levels of the service, falling under the constitutional responsibilities of the various service commissions are attended to—and I would say by March of 2017, the institutional strengthening exercise of the Service Commissions Department which began in 2015, concluded. The final report has
not yet been approved. However, several of the internal processes have been implemented.

The Service Commissions Department would evolve to a desired future state that will make it capable of providing improved oversight and the monitoring of Ministries and Departments’ hiring process, while lending senior professional support to the commissions and Ministries, all supported by technologically advanced processes, database records, the enhanced use of merit and modernized HR practices.

The Electronic Document Management System project will provide the Service Commissions Department with the ability to archive and retrieve records in an efficient manner, and will improve the output of the Service Commissions Department. This system is expected to address current inefficiencies of manual document and record storage or retrieval that is the present experience at the Service Commissions Department. The project will cost $25.7 million.

Deputy Chair, a review of the breakdown of the budgetary allocation for fiscal 2019 shows an overall decrease. However, it is expected that funds will be allocated to the department’s budget by the mid-year review. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Madam Minister. I would like to welcome the Director of Personnel Administration and also to your senior executives at the Commission. Thank you, thanks you for coming.

Question proposed: That Head 06 stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the sum of $77,948,000 for Head 06, Service Commissions, is comprised of moneys proposed for expenditure under the following Sub-Heads and the Items to be found in the Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure, and the Draft Estimates of the Development Programme.

We now proceed to consider the Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure,
and we will go to Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure, Item 001, General Administration, page 32.

**Dr. Bodoe:** Thank you, Chairman. Minister, with regard to line Item 01, Salaries and Cost of Living, can you indicate the current establishment of the Service Commissions Department and the number of vacancies?

**Hon. Mc Donald:** The staffing of the Service Commissions Department, number and establishment, 350; number of permanent officers, 180; number of vacant offices, 170; number of vacant offices with bodies, 142; number of vacant offices without bodies, 28; number of temporary offices, 51.

**Dr. Bodoe:** Minister, would you be in a position to tell us how many vacancies actually exist in the public service? Is that a figure that is available to us?

**Hon. Mc Donald:** No, we cannot say at this point, but we can make it available to you.

**Dr. Bodoe:** In writing?

**Hon. Mc Donald:** Okay.

**Mr. Chairman:** Caroni Central and then Tabaquite.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Could I ask, Minister, does the Service Commission itself have difficulty filling vacant posts?

**Hon. Mc Donald:** We would say no, but what we would say, currently there are interviews that are being conducted right now to fill some of the positions available.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Are these are vacant posts in the Service Commission?

**Hon. Mc Donald:** Yes, these are vacant posts in the Service Commission.

**Dr. Tewarie:** During the engagement of the various Ministries, Minister, you were present at some of them, so you know how Ministers responded, there are many, many Ministries that have problems filling vacancies, and several Ministers
referred to the Service Commission as being the appropriate agency to address these issues. How might we, through the Service Commission, find a solution to that problem, that is to say, the large numbers of existing vacancies within the public service and the speed with which they can be filled to bring them up to mark, so to speak?

**Hon. Mc Donald:** Although I do not know which line Item this is, but what I can tell you at this point is that, having filled the professional vacancies in the public service, we will then be able now to look at—you will see improvement—and then we will be able to look at the other positions at the Commission.

**Dr. Rambachan:** I am a bit confused when the Minister was responding with the number of persons employed in the Service Commission.

**Mr. Chairman:** That is the breakdown that she gave you are talking about?

**Dr. Rambachan:** Yes, yes. I was trying to get clearly in my mind whether in fact the Service Commission, given the task that it has to perform—and I want to share my colleague’s concern. Almost every Minister here virtually complained that they could not fill their positions in the Ministry because of some impediment at the level of the Service Commissions. I want to know, is it that the Service Commissions are under-resourced in terms of the human resource capability here? If that is so, what can be done in order to bring them up to par? Because you cannot have Ministries saying that they are not functioning properly, they cannot deliver a quality of service because they do not have people, and the Service Commissions are to blame.

**Hon. Mc Donald:** Tabaquite and Caroni you are quite correct, through you, Mr. Chair—you are quite correct. You would be able to see an improvement there once the Service Commission is adequately staffed. Once you are adequately staffed, and you will see recently they have been advertising and bringing on HR
advisers on board at the Service Commission, and it will redound to the benefit of the various Ministries.

**Dr. Rambachan:** But you would agree that that has been a perpetual answer every year we come here? Because we have asked the question, it is the same answer we get every year, and yet there seems to be no improvement because the Ministers cannot complain about this same thing over and over, and the Ministers are here now.

**Mr. Chairman:** You care to comment, Madam Minister?

**Hon. Mc Donald:** Well, I have been advised that interviews are being currently undertaken and going on as we speak, and so we should see some sort of improvement early 2019.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Minister, may I ask, is it your view that such personnel are not available locally, and that perhaps we need to look at how we are training people to fill those positions?

**Hon. Mc Donald:** I cannot answer that, Sir, and that is not my view, but I am saying, I do not want to debate it. I do not want to debate this issue. I am saying that I am provided with information from the Service Commissions Department and this is what I have to go on, and I will look closely at what they have said to me in terms of hiring of staff at the Commission, and when they do so, they will be able to assist the Ministries.

**Dr. Rambachan:** There is no timeline for that?

**Hon. Mc Donald:** Well, we just said by the end of December into early 2019 we should see some improvement.

**Dr. Bodoe:** Minister, not to belabour the point but just to be clear, you are saying that the Service Commission is satisfied that their current establishment is sufficient to do the job that they are tasked with doing, once they fill the
vacancies?

**Mr. Chairman:** Member, that was answered already on more than one occasion.

**Mr. Imbert:** Twice.

**Mr. Lee:** Item 06, Remuneration to Board Members, $1.7 million. Could the Minister enlighten us how many different boards there are that 1.7 million is allocated to?

**Hon. Mc Donald:** That is for the Disciplinary Tribunal and the Examination Board. That is for the members of those boards.

**Mr. Lee:** And how many members sit on either board, the Disciplinary and the Tribunal?

**Hon. Mc Donald:** Four tribunals at three members each, and five members on the Examination Board.

**Mr. Lee:** And 1.7 million is allocated for those individuals?

**Hon. Mc Donald:** Yes, and just in case they want to incorporate other persons to advise them. Yes, it is a tidy sum, enough.

**Mr. Lee:** Thank you.

**Mr. Karim:** Mr. Chairman, just before I go to the other question, you mentioned Minister, disciplinary?

**Hon. Mc Donald:** Disciplinary Tribunal.

**Mr. Karim:** How many disciplinary matters do you have before the Disciplinary Tribunal?

**Hon. Mc Donald:** We would have to get that in writing, Sir.

**Mr. Karim:** Line Item 25, Remuneration to Members, Direct Charges. What members are these?

**Hon. Mc Donald:** These are the members of the Commission.

**Mr. Karim:** How many?
Hon. Mc Donald: There would be about 12 members.

Mr. Karim: Has there been, Minister, any attempt to decentralize the work of the Service Commission?

Hon. Mc Donald: To decentralize it?

Dr. Rambachan: Because most of it is—I think you have the interviews in Port of Spain. For example, if I give an example like the Teaching Service Commission.

Hon. Mc Donald: I understand what you are saying, yes. I have been advised that the interviews are in Port of Spain. I can look at your recommendation, Sir.

Mr. Karim: Because it might be more effective if you were to have delegated responsibilities to persons, I am asking for your consideration, in different parts of the country, strategic parts, so that you would be able to at least reduce the backlog.

Hon. Mc Donald: Has this been done before, Sir? Just to ask: Has this been done before?

Mr. Karim: Yes, I recall.

Hon. Mc Donald: Yes, it has been?

Mr. Karim: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Thanks Members. Tabaquite, you have your hand up?

Dr. Rambachan: No.

Mr. Chairman: So I will now move on to Item Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services; Item 001, General Administration, pages 32 to 33; Item 002, Tobago Services, page 34; Item 003, Public Service Commission, page 34; Item 004, Teaching Service Commission; Item 005, Judicial and Legal Service Commission, page 35; Item 006, Police Service Commission, page 35. Sub-Head 03: Minor Equipment Purchases, page 36; Item 001, General Administration.
Hon. Members, we will now move on to the Draft Estimates of the Development Programme, and we are moving on to the development programme booklet. Sub-Head 09, Development Programme, Consolidated Fund, page 11; Item 005, Multi-sectoral and Other Services, page 11.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you, Chair. Hon. Minister, I just want to confirm. The line Item 006, is this what you were saying would be costing 25.7 million to upgrade the system?

Hon. Mc Donald: Costing? Which Item are you at?

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: 006, the Implementation and Electronic—

Hon. Mc Donald: That is the EDMS System, Electronic Document Management System. We have asked for $7 million for 2019.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Is this the same one that you indicated in the earlier statement that would be costing overall 25.7 million?

Hon. Mc Donald: Yes, but that is over a period of time.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Yes, I understand. How soon you expect to see some sort of a change in the system to have a greater efficiency?

Hon. Mc Donald: We are going live April of 2019.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you.

Mr. Karim: Quickly, thank you. Minister, who is responsible for this implementation?

Hon. Mc Donald: The Backbone, the Government’s Backbone—

Mr. Karim: IGovTT?

Hon. Mc Donald: Yes.

Mr. Karim: Do they have a consultant or are they doing this themselves?

Hon. Mc Donald: They are using their in-house. This is what we have been trying to say whole afternoon. We are using our in-house resources to do as much
of the work as possible. You see it with PMIS; we see it now with EDMS; we see it in the Public Service Academy. So across Public Admin and now you are seeing it here in the Service Commission, we are using in-house intellect to pursue the work of the Government.

Mr. Karim: Is there any role with IDAI International and iGovTT in any of these technology upgrades?

Hon. Mc Donald: No, not at this point.

Dr. Gopeesingh: IHRIS is linked with the Backbone. IHRIS is for the financial payments of all the public servants on a monthly basis. How effective that is going to help like the Teaching Service Commission and the other commissions in managing their information systems?

Hon. Mc Donald: Thank you for that question Caroni East, but that is a question really for the Ministry of Finance.

Dr. Gopeesingh: So it will come under the—

Hon. Mc Donald: Ministry of Finance.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Well, I will give you my experience, because while I was Minister of Education—

Mr. Chairman: Member.

Hon. Mc Donald: Which line Item are we on?

Mr. Chairman: One second, one second.

Dr. Gopeesingh: The same one, the implementation of the Electronic Document, 006.

Hon. Mc Donald: Well that is not IHRIS. That is EDMS.

Dr. Gopeesingh: No, I was asking you how is IHRIS related to that.

Mr. Chairman: Member, again, earlier on the IHRIS documentation and system came up and it was identified that that falls under the Ministry of Finance in order
to go forward. What we are on is a totally different aspect here with regard to this system.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 06 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, Madam Minister, for your time. Thank you, Director of Personnel Administration and all your senior executives for coming to our Parliament today.

**Mr. Chairman:** *Head 07: Statutory Authorities Service Commission*—[*Interruption*] You are not quite ready?

**Mrs. Robinson-Regis:** Mr. Chairman, could we just get a minute so the officer could be allowed to sit closer to the Minister of Finance?

**Mr. Chairman:** The Minister of Finance is handling this Item, this unit?

**Mrs. Robinson-Regis:** Yes.

**Mr. Chairman:** We shall proceed.

*Head 07: Statutory Authorities Service Commission, $6,784,660.*

**Mr. Chairman:** I will now invite the Minister of Finance to make a brief opening statement not exceeding five minutes.

**Hon. Imbert:** The Statutory Authorities Service Commission is an independent body established by Act No. 16 of 1966, now Chap. 24:01 of the laws of Trinidad and Tobago. The mandate of the Commission as outlined in section 5 of the Act is to appoint persons to hold or act in offices or to transfer, promote, remove or exercise disciplinary control over persons as appointed.

As I indicated earlier, in the legislation, the Minister of Finance is identified as the responsible Minister for this particular Commission, a bit of an anomaly.

The following statutory authorities fall under the Commission’s purview during the upcoming fiscal year: the Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago,
the Arima Borough Corporation, the National Lotteries Control Board, the Point Fortin Borough Corporation, the Port of Spain City Corporation, the San Fernando City Corporation, St. Dominic’s Children’s Home, St. Jude’s School for Girls, the St. Mary’s Children’s Home, the St. Michael’s School for Boys, the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee and the Zoological Society of Trinidad and Tobago. In total the Commission is responsible for 1,562 positions across all of these authorities just mentioned.

**Mr. Chairman:** I would like to welcome the Executive Officer of the Commission and also the other executives from the Commission.

*Question proposed:* That Head 07 stand part of the Schedule.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, the sum of $6,784,660 for Head 07, Statutory Authorities Service Commission, is comprised of moneys proposed for expenditure under the following Sub-Heads and Items to be found in the *Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure* and the *Draft Estimates of the Development Programme*.

Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure, page 38, and we are under Development Programme booklet. Item 001—my apology, we are under Recurrent Expenditure. Item 001, General Administration, page 38; Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services; Item 001, General Administration; Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases, page 39.

**3.30 p.m.**

Fyzabad.

**Dr. Bodee:** I was supposed to ask a question on 01.

**Mr. Chairman:** All right. I will give way. Go ahead. 01.

**Dr. Bodee:** You are moving apace, Chairman. Thank you. Minister, if I can indulge you on this Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance, with regard to the 1,562 positions that you had indicated, can you indicate how many are vacant?
Hon. Imbert: No. No. No. I did not say what you think I said. I said, the Commission is responsible for appointments, promotions—

Dr. Bodee: I understand, Minister.

Hon. Imbert:—removal—just now, I have to finish—and disciplinary control over those 1,562 persons. You will not find the allocations for those 1,562 persons in here. All you will find is the allocations for the employees and staff of the Service Commission.

Dr. Bodee: Can I ask you in the public interest—can I ask you the same question?

Hon. Imbert: No.

Dr. Bodee: Are you in a position—

Hon. Imbert: No. You may not ask me.

Mr. Chairman: He can ask the Minister.

Hon. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, that is not a line Item. That is not a line Item in this book.

Mr. Chairman: Fyzabad, do you have a line Item for a question?

Hon. Imbert: It is not a line Item in this book.

Mr. Chairman: Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you. Hon. Minister, line Item 01, can you tell me how persons are being paid out of this Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance, please?

Mr. Chairman: Minister.

Hon. Imbert: The—[Minister confers with technocrats] I am told the total number of permanent positions is 33, of which 26 have not been filled on a permanent basis, but all 33 positions are filled with persons who are either acting or otherwise performing the functions.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Okay. Thank you. And line Item 25, can the hon.
Minister indicate to whom these direct charges are paid to?

**Hon. Imbert:** The direct charges are for four members of the Commission.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Four members.

**Hon. Imbert:** Yes. Their stipend or remuneration for the year.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Thank you.

**Hon. Imbert:** Welcome.

**Mr. Chairman:** Sub-Head—

**Hon. Imbert:** I answered her; proper questions.

**Mr. Chairman:** I am moving on. Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases, page 39. Item 001, General Administration. Caroni East.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Not yet.

**Mr. Chairman:** Okay. Hon. Members, we will now move on to the *Draft Estimates of the Development Programme*. Sub-Head 09, Development Programme, Consolidated Fund, page 13. Item 005, Multi-Sectoral and Other Services, page 30. Caroni East.

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

**Mr. Chairman:** Okay.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 07 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Thank you for coming, senior officer and also to your executives at the Commission.

*Head 78:* Ministry of Social Development and Family Services $4,965,420,000.

**Mr. Chairman:** I will now invite the Minister of Social Development and Family Services to make a brief opening statement not exceeding five minutes. Welcome, Madam Minister.

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** Thank you, Deputy Chair. The main aim of
Government’s social sector policy and more so the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services is to reduce poverty through an efficient and effective social safety net system and to ensure a resilient society particularly among the vulnerable population.

The Ministry’s focus in 2019 will continue to be enhancing the social infrastructure and on developing, implementing and administering programmes and services to improve the quality of life for vulnerable and marginalized groups.

The Ministry has received an allocation of approximately $4.9 billion with an increase of $245.5 million when compared with 2018. This is a clear demonstration of Government’s commitment to safeguard the nation’s vulnerable with a robust safety net. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Madam Minister. Welcome, Madam PS, and also the other senior executives of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services.

Question proposed: That Head 78 stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the sum of $4,965,420,000 for Head 78, Ministry of Social Development and Family Services is comprised of moneys proposed for expenditure under the following Sub-Heads and Items to be found in the Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure, the Draft Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies and of the Tobago House of Assembly and the Draft Estimates of the Development Programme. We shall now proceed to consider the Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure.

And we are at Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure, page 390. Item 001, General Administration. I recognize Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you, Chair. Hon. Minister, line Item 01, Salaries, can you indicate how many positions these salaries would, in fact, be responsible
Mr. Chairman: Madam Minister.

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: There are currently 153 persons, 132 permanent and 21 temporary. We have 74 vacancies, 47 with bodies and 27 without.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Will the hon. Minister be in the very near future looking to fill these vacancies?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: We have been in discussions with Service Commissions, I am very happy to say that last year we had 37 appointments, so we are hopeful this year we will also have some positions filled.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Line Item 14, hon. Minister, can you advise how many Cabinet-appointed committees are under this Ministry?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: There are currently five Cabinet-appointed committees, two have not been operationalized as yet, but they have been approved by Cabinet.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Is this as a result of the decrease of the 128 as they have not been—

Mr. Chairman: You are with us, Madam Minister?—the decrease in that line Item.

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: No. The Ministry did request some additional funds, it was not approved, but we have been informed that if it is necessary, it will be provided.


Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you. Hon. Minister, line Item 01, can you advise, why is there a decrease of $73,000 in particular line Item 01, and how it will impact upon the functioning of the Social Welfare Division?

Mr. Chairman: Madam Minister?
Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: We do not expect it to negatively impact the operations of the Ministry because what has happened in instances where there may be a shortfall, we have utilized services of short-term employees. The Ministry did request some additional funds, and if positions are approved, we will get that necessary funding.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Therefore, you are saying that the persons who are line Item 01, have the same qualifications as the persons who are on short-term employment?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: When we employ persons on short term, we ensure that the persons we bring on can fit the positions for which we have advertised. So if we are looking for a Clerical Officer I, we seek persons who have the necessary qualifications for such a position.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Is these the administrative position in the social welfare, or does this apply to qualified social workers?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: If there is a mix. In the Social Welfare Division there is a mix in the establishment positions and contract positions.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: How many positions are there that is the complement of the Ministry for this social welfare? And how many vacancies are there?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: Currently, we have 216 permanent positions?

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Six zero?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: 216, 35 temporary positions, 65 of these positions are vacant, 51 with bodies and 14 without.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: And how many are, in fact, social workers?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: I will have to give you that information subsequently.

Mr. Chairman: Can I move on, Cumuto/Manzanilla?

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: “Umm hmm.”
Mr. Chairman: Right. Item 005, Child Development Centre, page 391. Cumuto/Manzanilla, I recognize you.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you, Chair. Hon. Minister, line Item 01. How many staff do you have per centre?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: We have just one child development centre, 14 persons are employed permanently. We have 14 permanent positions however, we have 10 vacancies, five with bodies and five without.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: And these centres, can you advise—well this centre, sorry, I should say, they are there to service all of Trinidad?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: No. This child development centre was as a result of when we had International Year of the Child, a Cabinet decision was taken to bring this centre on board in the Couva area, and it is really to treat with high-risk persons living in that area. It is a like a preschool. It is a preschool facility funded by the Government.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: So how many persons, how many children actually access the centre then?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: There are currently 14 children at the centre.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: So you have one staff member per child, if you have 14 positions.

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: Well, that is the approved establishment for the centre.

Mr. Chairman: Member for Mayaro.

Mr. Paray: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, just to follow up on my colleague from Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Mr. Chairman: The same line Item?

Mr. Paray: The same line Item.
Mr. Chairman: Proceed.

Mr. Paray: Based on how this important and critical this particular service is, is there any intention of the Ministry to push this service out further into other communities?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: No. There is not. What we did, we have made a request for this to be transferred under the Ministry of Education because it is, in fact, an educational facility. So, we are expecting that that approval will be granted during this period.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Okay. Well that makes sense.

Mr. Chairman: Cumuto/Manzanilla. Okay.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: No. No.

Mr. Chairman: Item 006, National Family Services. Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you. Hon. Minister, do you have plans to transfer this as well to any other Ministry, National Family Services?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: No. We do not.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: How many persons—how many members of staff are currently on this division?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: There are 22 permanent positions, five positions are filled, seven are vacant, but we have six with bodies and 11 without bodies.

Mr. Chairman: Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services. Item 001, General Administration. Pointe-a-Pierre.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Chair. Line Item 08, Rent/Lease - Office Accommodation and Storage $25.2 million is estimated this year. Could you state the locations of these rentals for 25.2 million for 2019? If you could provide a listing if you so desire.

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: We have 14 buildings that are used for offices. One
is an outside storage and four car parks, but we will give you specific subsequently in writing.

**Mr. Lee:** One four?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** One four.

**Mr. Lee:** Follow up question, Chair.

**Mr. Chairman:** Go ahead, Pointe-a-Pierre.

**Mr. Lee:** Madam Minister, line Item 27, Overseas Travel. 2019, you budgeted in your Estimate 1.3 million for foreign travel. Could you indicate what conferences or whatever that you would have estimated for 2019?—and countries.

**Mr. Chairman:** Madam Minister, you can provide that additional?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** Yes. We can provide that subsequently.

**Mr. Lee:** Okay.

**Mr. Chairman:** Subsequently not now.

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** Subsequently. Not now.

**Mr. Lee:** A final question.

**Mr. Chairman:** Go ahead.

**Mr. Lee:** Line Item 05, Telephones. Madam Minister, 2019 is $6.1 million. What is the reason? Is this an arrears or how many locations this Telephone expenditure relates to?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** This relates to all of our locations. We do, in fact, have some outstanding payments to TSTT, Flow and Digicel that is roughly approximately $1.5 million. So this was also intended to take care of that.

**Mr. Chairman:** Caroni East, and then I will go to Cumuto/Manzanilla.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Line Item 16.

**Mr. Chairman:** One six.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Hon. Minister, the Contract Employment an increase of 8
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million. And could you just give us some information on the Contract Employment. What is it about?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: Okay. Based on the six-year plan, we had 814 positions being approved. However, because of changes in the programmes under the Ministry we do not require 361 of those positions at this present time. We do however have approximately 385 vacancies which we are seeking to fill. We have been advertising positions, and last year we were able to fill 24 of those positions, and we expect to fill as many or more this year.

Dr. Gopeesingh: So there seems to be a minor attrition of the administrative staff?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: No. These are contract employees.

Dr. Gopeesingh: So, you will not require as much?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: So it will be as a result of natural attrition. Their contract ends, if their services are not further required, then they would leave the organization.

Dr. Gopeesingh: All right. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Cumuto/Manzanilla, are you okay?

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Yeah. My questions were asked already.

Mr. Chairman: Oropouche West, on this line Item?

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Proceed.

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: Thank you. Hon. Minister, under Training 17, there is an increase on 2018 Revised Estimates from 100,000 to 756,000. Can you justify that increase?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: The Ministry has adopted an integrated approach to service delivery. And, as you will be aware, we have incorporated the food
support within Social Welfare Division. There are also a number of other training. So, we are seeking to ensure that all staff who operate in the Ministry are knowledgeable about all of our products, all of our programmes, all of our services, and we are also very much heavily engaged in customer training.

**Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:** Who will be doing the training?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** We have an internal team, and we are also provided with resources from the public admin.

**Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:** And line 15, Repairs and Maintenance Equipment, an increase from 150,000 to 1.3 million. Again, can you justify that big increase?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** The largest expenditure here would be in terms of replacement kits for our printers and photocopy machines.

**Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:** And how many are those?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** We will have to give you that figure because it is for the entire Ministry.

**Mr. Chairman:** Cumuto/Manzanilla.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Thank you, Chair. Hon. Minister, line Item 17, coming back to that, Training. You indicated that this is for training of staff for an integrated approach, et cetera. I just want to know, is it every single member of staff that will be trained especially in the regional offices?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** Yes. The intention is to train every single member of staff particularly in customer service, quality customer service.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** How many staff members are you looking at? And the reason I am asking is because if it is all, is this sufficient for the training?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** It would be sufficient because the major component of the cost here would be in terms of paper and provision of refreshments, because we are using our internal resources, training resources, and we are also going to be
liaising with public admin, so we will not be paying a training consultant.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Okay. And if you can let me know, later on, the number of staff that you are hoping to get.

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** Approximately 500 staff members.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Okay.

**Mr. Chairman:** Mayaro.

**Mr. Paray:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, under line Item 28, Other Contracted Services, there is a $1.6 million increase over the last 2018 financial year. What type of special services would be included under this Head?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** This would be consultancies.

**Mr. Paray:** Consultancies. In any specific areas?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** Particularly in the areas of research, and with our National Social Mitigation Plan.

**Mr. Chairman:** Member for Oropouche West, your mike is on. You have a question?

**Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:** I am good. Thanks. But perhaps I can take it one time, line 23, Fees, and I am seeing an increase of 300,000.

**Mr. Chairman:** Madam Minister.

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** Okay. These Fees are with respect to paying FCB for the services related to the food card, the debit card. We anticipate that it is going to cost us approximately $1 million just to pay FCB, and it also covers our legal costs.

**Mr. Chairman:** Item 002, Division of Aging, page 393. I recognize Naparima.

**Mr. Charles:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To the hon. Minister, Item 16, Contract Employment an Estimate of 2.183 million. And question is: How many contract officers does this relate to? The proportion of contract—

**UNREVISED**
Mr. Chairman: One.

Mr. Charles: Okay.

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: There are 25 contract positions under the Division of Ageing.

Mr. Charles: And the number of permanent officers in the division?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: No. This is only contract.

Mr. Charles: No. I know, but the proportion of contract to permanent?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: This division only has contract employees.

Mr. Charles: Only has contract officers. All right. What kinds of functions do they do in respect of ageing—the remit of ageing division?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: Okay. A lot, for example, we have 13 Inspectors, Inspector Is and Inspector IIs. These are the persons who would go out when we receive a report of elder abuse, they are the ones who would go out to investigate the report. They also go out to all of these homes for the aged to ensure that they are in conformity with the standards, so this is basically what these people do in that at unit.

Mr. Charles: Why—Is there consideration being given to making this a permanent situation, given the fact that the ageing population is increasing, and that is going to be a significant challenge in, as you know, as we go forward?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: The Ministry is currently engaged in a restructuring exercise, we are looking at the entire operations of the Ministry, and at the end of that exercise we will such a decision.

Mr. Charles: Thank you.


Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you, Chair. Hon. Minister, line Item 01, I notice that there is a decrease for travel, and I know that if you are in social welfare you
need to be traveling. Why a decrease? Is this going to impact upon the availability of social workers to effectively carry out their responsibilities?

Mr. Chairman: Madam Minister.

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: No. I do not expect that will happen. When we looked at the figures in 2018, we spent approximately $3.6 million in this area. So, we are more or less at the same figure, and if it becomes necessary, we will make the necessary transfers.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: In line Item 05, I saw that there was an increase. I was wondering if it is you were going to have the social workers utilizing their phones a little bit more as opposed to actually—

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: No. With the incorporation of the food support programme within social welfare, there is a requirement for greater phone contacts to be made with our clients, so that is one of the reasons why you would see this increase.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Line Item 22, hon. Minister, can you give an undertaking as to why there is an increase in Short-term Employment? And how many persons are currently employed? And how many persons you are hoping to bring on board?

Mr. Chairman: Madam Minister.

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: An increase in Short-term Employment?

Mr. Chairman: 22. Item 22.

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: An increase in the allocation.

Mr. Chairman: Item 22.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Yeah. An increase in the allocation.

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: Currently, we have 64 persons on short-term under social welfare, 51 of them are there because of the incorporation of the food
support programme, and 13 of them are temporary clerical assistants. This is as a result of an arrangement with the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development, but they are paid under the short-term Vote. So it is not that we intended to increase the complement of the short-term employees, but it is because of the current situation where we have not yet made a decision in terms of the final structure for social welfare.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: How soon will the Ministry be making a determination for the structure of the social welfare?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: We expect to have that finalized within the next six months.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Will they impact upon any persons who are, in fact, sourcing any assistance? Whether it will impact upon them because of a lack of functioning structure as to how you would want it?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: No. No. No. It would not because thus far we have been providing the service efficiently and effectively, utilizing the resources in this matter.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: And with the transition, would it impact upon persons who are currently receiving?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: No. It will not.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: And line Item 23, can you account for the 7 million that is for Fees?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: This is associated with our three major grants. These fees are paid to NIBTT for the printing of the senior citizens cheques, TTPost for the delivery of the cheques, and PTSC for the subsidized travel of the elderly and school children on the nation’s buses.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Is that ELDAMO?
Mr. Chairman: Pardon. What is that?


Mr. Chairman: What you said?

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: ELDAMO.

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: That is a bus service for the elderly and persons with disabilities.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. Okay. I just needed to be sure what was said. [Laughter]

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: You thought I used a “bad” word.

Mr. Chairman: Item 005, Child Development Centre, page 359. Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you. Hon. Minister, line Item 37, I noticed that there is no allocation for Janitorial Services.

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: That will be covered under GA in addition to which there is a cleaner on site.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: All right. Okay. And let us say that is for the one centre in Couva.

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: Yes.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Okay.

Mr. Chairman: Item 006, National Family Services: Item 007, Disability Affairs Unit, page 396; Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases, page 396; Item 001, General Administration; Item 002, Division of Ageing; Item 003, Social Welfare, page 397; Item 005, Child Development Centre; Item 006, National Family Services; Item 007, Disability Affairs Unit, page 398. Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies, page 398; Item 003, Non-Profit Institutions, page 398 and 399. I recognize Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Hon. Minister, line Item 31, Contribution to Non-Profit
Institutions of approximately 13 million, and you have listed a number which we all support that these institutions must be given some help. How do you determine what value you are putting each one to these institutions? Some may argue for more, some may argue for some, some would feel that they are not getting enough. How does your Ministry determine the value you put towards their help?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** These organizations when applying submit proposals. These proposals are reviewed and assessed by the persons who operate in the non-governmental organization unit, and a decision is then made with respect to how much should be granted.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** And do you have a trend? Say last year you gave X and this year you feel that you can give a little more. Is there anybody to evaluate the work that they do in terms whether you feel that it is justified or you can give some further help to them?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** The NGO unit monitors. We also have a monitoring and evaluation unit that also engages in monitoring of these organizations. They are also required to submit their audited financial statements every year, and it is based on an assessment of all of those things that a decision is made, and this is subject to Cabinet approval. So after we at the Ministry would have gone through the proposals and come up with a recommendation that has to be submitted for Cabinet’s approval.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Well, it is something commendable. I mean, the Ministry should continue to do that. But do you get all your audited accounts?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** In most instances in terms of these NGOs, we have been getting the audited financial statements.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** All right. Thank you, Minister.

4.00 p.m.
Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you, Chair. Hon. Minister, line Item 32, can you expound upon this line Item please?

Mr. Chairman: 32? What page you on?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: She is on 399.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: 399.

Mr. Chairman: 399, okay.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Is there anything brought forward?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: The Retiree Adolescent Programme is intended to assist adolescents, particularly those at risk, by utilizing the expertise of retired persons who worked with them, they mentor them, they provide the guidance to support them. And the intention is both would positively impact each other.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: So, where is this actual programme held?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: We have several centres throughout Trinidad and Tobago. I can provide you with where the centres are subsequently.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: And how many persons are actually partaking in this in terms of retirees? And how were they identified to be mentorship or partnership, to be a part of it?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: I would have to provide the information with respect to the numbers to you. But what happens, the regional coordinator is responsible for interviewing prospective retirees before they come onto the programme. So, it is done by regions in the areas where we have these programmes being run.

[MRS. ANNISETTE-GEORGE in the Chair]

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: So, if a retiree is interested, do they apply? How is it done? Yes, I know that the regional person does the interview, but how do I make myself available to say that I want to be a part of the programme?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: You can write the Ministry and inform us of your
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interest in participating in the programme.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Do you get a stipend?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: Yes, a stipend is paid.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Line Item 43, again, can the Minister explain this parenting?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: These are programmes that the Ministry runs and they are held under the National Family Services. So, for example, you would find parenting workshops. We also engage in having a lot of brochures and posters getting out there, sensitizing and educating the public in terms of good parenting.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: How many of these programmes has the Minister held for this—or, plans to—for this $2 million? And is it throughout the various parts of Trinidad?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: It is throughout the various parts of Trinidad and Tobago. We are hoping to do at least 10 programmes.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: And how do you go about inviting parents to these programmes?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: We do the communication throughout the communities. There are times we may also run ads via the media, but we tend to do it centred within the communities where the parenting programme is going to be held.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: And does this differ to line Item 44?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: 44 is more specific to the family. So, what you find is, under this, we tend to have programmes, like for example, we have our radio call-in programme, “Let’s Talk”; that is one of the areas that a lot of these funds would be spent. We have also held programmes, we plan to continue holding programmes on mental health and how it impacts the family, bullying, child abuse,
domestic violence. So, we focus in those areas that are specific to the family.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: So, 43 goes out to the community, and 44 is really a media, a radio programme?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: It is more than the radio programme, because we also host seminars, and we also have outreach programmes.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: And what times are these programmes held?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: Which programmes specifically?

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Both parenting and family.

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: Well, it is held throughout—the fiscal is throughout the year.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: No, meaning that if you are inviting families or parents you would have a certain time. I mean, families might be able to come at a specific time.

Madam Chairman: What you mean, what time of the day?

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Yes, what time of the day? Oh, sorry, Madam Chair, I did not realize you were back.

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: We try to hold them after 4.00. A time when parents would be at home. But we also try to have programmes on a Saturday also.

Madam Chairman: Member for Naparima.

Mr. Charles: Thank you. Minister, in the context of the fact that we have challenges with male performance in secondary schools, at-risk youth, et cetera, and the need to encourage people to join Boy Scouts and Cadets, et cetera, perhaps there is a reason, but could you explain why, like the President’s Award Scheme has remained constant this year compared last year’s revised estimates and also the Boy Scouts Association, and the Young Men’s Christian Association? I would have thought that some kind of evidence, sorry, some kinds of—the evidence
would suggest that we put more resources in those areas in order to stop the pipeline of youths from schools to, you know, the prisons, et cetera.

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** Member for Naparima, I take your point. However, these are the sums approved by Cabinet and none of these organizations have requested an increase.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Minister, following that question you answered, under these same two headings—Boy Scouts and Girl Guides—is it time for your Ministry to consider an active pursuit of ensuring that these organizations help the Ministry of Education by getting more schools involved in Girl Guides and Boy Scouts, therefore, asking the Ministry of Finance or virement or so, to support these associations to become more driven towards assisting the hundreds of schools that we have, and helping the children there? Because these are important considerations for the school population. I am sure both Ministers of Education would probably be thinking about that.

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** It is something that we would consider, but I am also aware that the Ministry—the Gender and Child Affairs Unit under the Office of the Prime Minister, they have also been looking at these areas. So, I will collaborate with the Minister and we will have some discussions.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** It would be nice for us as a Parliament to have an understanding later on in the year that there has been significant lift in those two areas, just like the cadet force.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 006, Educational Institutions—

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Wait, I have another question.

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

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, based on the line Items of 39 and 40 where the Member for Caroni East—it is commendable
that you give these moneys and so forth, but how do you monitor and evaluate the impact of these institutions, and getting value for money? How do you measure it in terms of how does it redound to the actual functioning of the institution impacting upon the youth?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** Every organization that receives a subvention from the Ministry is required to submit reports in addition to their audited financial statements, and the persons who work in the NGO unit are also required to go out to these organizations and do assessments on their own. So, we have our internal assessments, we have the reports from them and their audited financial statements, and based on those interventions we are able to make a determination.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 006, Educational Institutions.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Just one on that topic.

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

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Minister, can that not be under Ministry of Education or tertiary education? Well, yes, Ministry of Education since they incorporate tertiary education. But adult education, why is it under your area?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** It is somewhat historical. It was under Community Development, and then it was placed under the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services because of the link between the Ministry and the vulnerable, and trying to get them out of the situation that they are in. But we have also had discussions with the Ministry of Education in terms as to where it may be better placed. But a decision has not been made thus far.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** May I make a plea for greater support for programmes like adult education, where we have a significant percentage of our population who require some more education; and a small amount like 824,000 is something for the consideration by your Cabinet to increase the amount of people participating, and
therefore some funding.

Madam Chairman: Member, may I help?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: Well, Member—sorry.

Madam Chairman: If you look at the 2019 Estimates, I think you may have misquoted that number.

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: It is actually $2.8 million. We have asked for an additional 800,000 because we intend to expand the programmes and the areas.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes, we look forward to expansion of the programme.

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: Sure.

Madam Chairman: Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you, Chair. Hon. Minister, as you raised it, that is exactly what I wanted to find out. Where are these programme located? How many adults have access to it? And, again, how many have been successfully come off of the programme?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: You would appreciate I would need to give you most of that information subsequently.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Yes, yes, absolutely.

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: But it is provided at 41 centres currently, and there are 26 different courses.

Madam Chairman: Member for Chaguanas East.

Mr. Karim: Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. Hon. Minister, while it is adult education, I know that the—correct me if I am wrong—the age limit is, you do not have a limit on—is there a limit at all?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: No.

Mr. Karim: No. And therefore some of these courses, are they aligned to needs in the society or in the community, so that they may be able to have an opportunity
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of entrepreneurship, or self-employment, or even wage employment?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** Apart from remedial where people do the CXC, Maths, English and Social Studies, it is geared based on the needs of the communities. The communities identify the areas in which they are interested, and those are the areas we tend to focus on in those specific communities.

**Mr. Karim:** Okay, and what is the—do they get an award?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** It is a certificate programme. Most of it is by NEC, National Examination Council, they are the ones responsible for certifying the programme.

**Mr. Karim:** Are they awarded the CVQ as well?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** I am informed that will be included, Member for Chaguanas East.

**Mr. Karim:** Thank you very much.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 007, Households. Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, line Item 11, is this the food card? I do not see any allocation for it.

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** The food card has always been—the allocation has always been under the Ministry of Finance.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** I saw it was under a previous headings in other books and I was wondering why it was not here. I looked at the other books. On line Item 02—before I move on to 02—11, how many citizens benefit from this programme?

**Madam Chairman:** Member, there is no allocation under this if it is 11, so I cannot see how that question can be entertained.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Okay.

**Madam Chairman:** You asked a question, you were directed to elsewhere, so there is no allocation under this at all.
Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: 02, how many senior citizens are currently on the system?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: 95,266.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: And on 08, how many persons are accessing the Disability Grant?


Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: How many persons accessed the 09 line Item?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: Thirty-eight persons currently.

Madam Chairman: Member for Naparima.

Mr. Charles: Thank you. Item 07, Payments to Registrars of Births and Deaths, and there I see the figure is only 12,195—that is in respect of how many people? I know there is one in San Fernando General Hospital, but how many throughout Trinidad and Tobago?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: No, this is with respect to payments made on behalf of our clients who cannot afford to pay for these documents. So it is really very minimal.

Mr. Charles: Good.

Madam Chairman: Item 009, Other Transfers; Sub-Head 06, Current Transfers to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies, item 004, Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies. As Members know, we go on to another book. Hon. Members, we would now move on to the Draft Estimates of the Revenue and Expenditure Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies and of the Tobago House of Assembly. 15, Trinidad and Tobago Association for Retarded Children, Lady Hochoy Home, page 541; Item 001, Lady Hochoy Home North. Member for Caroni East, you had your hand up?

Dr. Gopeesingh: I am a little unhappy with the continuation of calling these children “retarded”. The retarded home. The Home for Retarded Children, there
must be a different nomenclature that could be associated with it, and I just ask for some consideration. We did not do it, but I think we need—the Government now should consider doing it, and changing the name from “retarded” to something else.

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** Minister, I understand your concern. You have raised it before. We have been in discussions with the organization, and they said they are now currently pursuing having the name changed.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** They are now currently—

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** Yes, because previously they were not so inclined.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 002, Lady Hochoy Home South, Item 003, Penal Day Care and Training Centre; Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services, Item 001, Lady Hochoy Home North, Item 002, Lady Hochoy Home South, Item 003, Penal Day Care and Training Centre; Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases, page 542, Item 001, Lady Hochoy Home North, Item 002, Lady Hochoy Home South, Item 003, Penal Day Care and Training Centre; Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies, Item 007, Households, Item 009, Other Transfers. 41, Trinidad and Tobago Association for the Hearing Impaired. We are at page 549. Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure, Item 001, General Administration. Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Thank you, Chair. Hon. Minister, just an observation. I noticed on line Item 04, it is consistent, but I found that the electricity is pretty high.

**Madam Chairman:** 04?

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

**Madam Chairman:** We have not reached there as yet. We are on General Administration.
Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Okay.

Madam Chairman: Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services, Item 001, General Administration. Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you, Chair. Hon. Minister, line Item 04. I find the electricity is pretty high. Is there any reason why it would be so high?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: Member, I am not—

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Is it related to some sort of device that is connected to the home that requires it to be functional, because I noticed it is for the hearing impaired.

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: I am not certain. I can find out and get that information back to you.

Madam Chairman: Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases, Item 001, General Administration; Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies, Item 007, Households, Item 009, Other Transfers. 42, Trinidad and Tobago Blind Welfare Association. We are at page 555. Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure, Item 001, General Administration; Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services, Item 001, General Administration. Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you, Chair. Hon. Minister, again, for line Item 04, I noticed the other homes are not the same. It is just the hearing impaired and the blind. And again, I am asking if it is a device that would be connected to the home that sends up the cost of the electricity.

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: But the Blind Welfare is approximately 100-and-something. But we—I have given an undertaking to investigate it, so I will do so.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Maybe you could tell me how many homes are there? Is it just one home?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: With Blind Welfare or Hearing Impaired?
Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Both?

Madam Chairman: We are only under Blind Welfare right now.

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: Okay. Thanks.

Madam Chairman: Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases, Item 001, General Administration; Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies, Item 007, Households.

Hon. Members, we would now move on to the Draft Estimates of Development Programme. We are at page 166. Sub-Head 09, Development Programme Consolidated Fund, Item 004, Social Infrastructure. Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, line Item 044, can you advise how many social displacement centres that have been established?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: We have not established any thus far. We are now in the process of seeking to establish these displacement centres.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Okay, and how many centres are you looking at and the locations?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: We are hoping to commence work on two, one utilizing the old Besson Street Police Station, and one at the Transformation Development Centre in Cocorite. We will be doing this in collaboration with the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts.

Mr. Lee: Madam, line Item 112, the Street Dwellers Rehabilitation and Reintegration Project. Could you give us a status of what will be happening in that project for 2019 as compared to the expenditure in 2018?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: This is with respect to the Centre for Socially Displaced Persons at Riverside Plaza. That project is going to be completed soon. All that remains is the exterior painting of the building and completion of the
Mr. Lee: So, it was an upgrade of the Riverside Plaza?
Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: Yes.
Mr. Lee: Okay. And, one question, another question. 130, Refurbishment of Hernandez Place. It was estimated for 2018 of 2 million, no revised figure for 2018, and it has come back on the books for 1 million. Could you just enlighten us what is the plan for 2019 with the refurbishment of Hernandez Place?
Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: The refurbishment is general refurbishment, painting and that sort of thing. And a bulk of the money is going to be with respect to providing additional furniture, appliances and equipment.
Mr. Lee: So, nothing transpired in 2018?
Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: No.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you, Chair. Hon. Minister, why is there no allocation for line Item 131?
Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: This is because we are collaborating with the Ministry of Health. We are currently at the stage where we are collecting data that will inform how we move forward. So, we did not anticipate that we would require funds to be expended this year. The Ministry of Health's approach is also to utilize existing centres to commence this provision of therapeutic services.
Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: And how many existing centres are there?
Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: I would have to get that information from the Ministry of Health.
Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: And how does this differ from line Item 096?
Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: 096? I am not sure what it is you are referring to.
Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: What is line Item 096, the Development Centre?
Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: 096 has to do with the National Enrichment Centre at Carlsen Field.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Right, and the centre was geared towards assisting both persons with challenges and disabilities. So, that is why I am asking, what is really the difference?

Madam Chairman: Well, Member, there is not really any allocation under 131. I allowed you some questions on it, but there is not any allocation under 131.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you, Chair. Can you say, hon. Minister—hoping to have line Item 096 to be fully operational?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: We are at the point where we have completed all of remedial works, and as soon as the corporation signs off on the certificate of completion we can be open in one week.

Madam Chairman: Item 005, Multi-Sectoral and Other Services. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam. Madam Minister, line Item 032, Establishment of an Integrated Social Enterprise Management System/E-pass. 2018 was estimated $10 million, so I am assuming at that point in time it was a big project, and now you have identified a million dollars for 2019. Could you tell us what is envisioned for 2019 with this project?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: For 2019, we intend to go back out to tender with the expectation that we will get a service provider and then move forward.

Mr. Lee: What is this supposed to provide?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: This is an enterprise-wide system. Enterprise-wide management system. Computerized management system for the entire Ministry.

Madam Chairman: Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you. Hon. Minister, line Item 029. I see there is no
allocation, is it because it is completed?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** No, we have decided not to pursue that during this period.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Okay.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 78 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you Madam Minister, Madam PS, and your supporting staff.

*Head 48:* Ministry of Trade and Industry, $158,335,880.

**Madam Chairman:** And for the guidance of Members, we are at page 293. I will now invite the Minister of Trade and Industry to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five minutes.

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** Thank you, Madam Chairman, for the invitation to be here this afternoon for the process of deliberations of the Standing Finance Committee. The allocation to the Ministry of Trade and Industry is as follows: Recurrent Estimates, 115 million; Development Programme estimates 43,690,000 million; Infrastructure Development Fund, 34,020,000. The sums allocated are intended to be utilized in furtherance of the Ministry's broader mandate to bring about improvements in trade, in business, and investment, and in consumer empowerment. Thank you.

*Question proposed:* That Head 48 stand part of the Schedule.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Members, the sum of $158,335,880 for Head 48, Ministry of Trade and Industry is comprised of moneys proposed for expenditure under the following Sub-Heads and Items to be found in the *Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure*, the *Draft Estimates of the Revenue and Expenditure of the Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies and of the Tobago House of Assembly* and the
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Draft Estimates of Development Programme.

We shall now proceed to consider the Draft Estimates of the Current Expenditure. Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure, Item 001, General Administration. Member for Caroni Central.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Item 14, Remuneration to Members of Cabinet-appointed Committees. Could you let us know what the committees are?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** Okay, these are the National Trade Facilitation Committee, the e-Commerce Committee, and also a committee which is to be established to look after the secured collateral transactions regime.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Okay, the e-Commerce Committee, would that have a collaborative relationship with the Ministry of Public Administration and the Ministry of Planning?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** Definitely.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Okay. Second question—well no, it is in 02 so I will have to wait.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Mayaro.

**Mr. Paray:** Thank you, Madam Chairman. Minister, on line Item 01, could you identify your current staffing levels, and if you have, and what is your current vacancies at your Ministry?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** Sure. So, with regard to the establishment, there is 178 persons on the establishment, and with regard to contracted officers there are 45. With regard to the contracted officers, 45 are occupied, there are 50 vacancies. With regard to the establishment, there are 94 permanent staff, 171 vacant, 84 with bodies and 87 without.

**Mr. Paray:** Is there any particular area that as Minister that you are much interested in having filled in this fiscal year to push the policy plans of your Ministry? Any particular area that you would like to see?

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**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** Yes, particularly in the trade division, trade directorate.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 002, Weights and Measures Inspectorate.

**Dr. Tewarie:** 01, and there is a fair decrease for Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance. Is there an explanation?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** You would recall that this is being phased out by legislation, so this now would become part of the metrology unit under the Bureau of Standards.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Okay.

4.30 p.m.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 003, Consumer Affairs Division. Member for Mayaro.

**Mr. Paray:** Thank you, Madam Chairman. Minister, under 01, Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance, I just want to find out—Consumer Affairs Division is such a critical component of your Ministry. Do you have adequate staffing in that particular area of your Ministry?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** We have adequate staffing, but we will in fact be advertising positions here as well, only because we have a new consumer policy which has been approved by Cabinet. So that, there will be significant outreach and consultation as we move into fiscal 2019. And when we come to the DP, I can give you more explanations about that.

**Mr. Paray:** Okay.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 004, Research and Planning. Member for Caroni Central.

**Dr. Tewarie:** That research, if you could just indicate Minister, what is the main focus of the Research and Planning Unit at this time? What are they most concerned about?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** But that is part of the Consumer Affairs Division, and there

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is continual research and planning. And again, there is a project under the Development Programme and with a consumer survey being done, and a lot of it has to do with understanding the consumer profiles and so on. Again, it is a DP project and I will explain under that.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 005, Consumer Outreach and Protection Unit. Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services; Item 001, General Administration. Member for Caroni Central.

**Dr. Tewarie:** 05, Telephones. There was a—there may be a clear explanation, but there is a fair increase on the telephones, is there a reason?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** They are bills outstanding.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Okay. So it is to make up for? All right. 11, Books and Periodicals, I see that there is a significant decrease and I remember the Minister of Finance saying that in this knowledge area they were upgrading books and periodicals in finance. What about—is there a difference there?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** There was this—I will tell you what, there was a particular subscription to BMI, which is an intelligence research tool and we found that it is not useful—

**Dr. Tewarie:** It was not valuable.

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** So this is the reason why we have discontinued.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Okay.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Mayaro.

**Mr. Paray:** Thank you, Madam Chairman. Minister, on line Item 16, Contract Employment, there is an increase of $3.8 million. Can you identify what specific areas of contract labour that you are going to pursue in your Ministry in this fiscal year?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** Yes. There are about 16 positions which have been
advertised: Director of Investments, Director of Legal Services, Director of Industry, Assistant Director Economic Diversification, Senior Investment Specialist, Senior Research Strategist, Legal Officer II, Research Specialist, Business Reform Specialists and two Single Electronic Window Specialists.

Mr. Paray: You said that these were already advertised or it is going to be advertised?

Hon. Gopee-Scoon: Already advertised.

Madam Chairman: Member for Tabaquite?

Dr. Rambachan: Question asked.

Madam Chairman: Item 002, Weights and Measures Inspectorate; Item 003, Consumer Affairs Division; Item 004, Research and Planning; Item 005, Consumer Outreach and Protection Unit. Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases, we are at page 298; Item 001, General Administration; Item 003, Consumer Affairs Division. Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies; Item 001, Regional Bodies; Item 003, United Nations Organizations. Member for Caroni Central.

Dr. Tewarie: Item 01, United Nations Industrial Development Organization. I see an increase in the Estimates. Is it just for cost for having the organization connect with the Ministry or is there a project?

Hon. Gopee-Scoon: The thing is, there is an annual sum which is $400,000 and we owe one year. So we are hoping to be able to meet the expense of both.

Madam Chairman: Item 004, International Bodies; Item 008, Subsidies; Item 009, Other Transfers. Member for Tabaquite.

Dr. Rambachan: Thank you. Financial Assistance to ExporTT. Madam Minister, what is your evaluation? You spent almost 10 million last year, and you budget to spend 10 million again to ExporTT. What has been ExporTT’s success as an organization in promoting exports out of T&T and what new successes have
they had?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** Certainly there have been successes in terms of the increase in our exports out of Trinidad and Tobago and moreover, beyond the region. But far apart from that, there is an outreach in particular to small and medium sized exporters and new exporters. So there is considerable work going on. The increase you would see is an account of trade missions. Normally this figure is carried under the Development Programme, but because it is a consistent figure we decided to move it out from the Development Programme because it is not really a project per se, but an undertaking that is carried on year after year. So, this is the reason why you would even see an increase there. You would no longer see it under the Development Programme then.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Do you have available in the different sectors of exports, what the increases have been, so that it could be analyzed to see how effective really, this money that is being spent, is?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** We have it by country and by product. But I can give you that information.

**Dr. Rambachan:** I would really like to see it.

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** Oh, we have it and I can submit that, by country and by product.

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

**Mr. Karim:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, line Item 23, could you give us some explanation as to the increase of 3.9 million?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** The increase of 3.9 million is the provision for rebates under the Film Rebate Programme.

**Mr. Karim:** And are these rebates up to date?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** They are now up to date as you would realize we have only
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last week paid out 6.2 million in outstanding rebates. So this is a provision now for this year.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Mayaro.

**Mr. Paray:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, line Item 08, Operations of the Trade Facilitation Company in Cuba. We spent over $3 million so far on that project. Can you identify what beneficial return has Trinidad and Tobago gotten from that particular project in Cuba?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** Yeah. Cuba is a very good market. And, yes, we would have established a trade facilitation office there many years ago. We are now seeing the benefits of it. You are going to actually see the numbers, I think, from 2019 onward. Doing business with Cuba can be a little bit bureaucratic, not a little bit, it can be somewhat bureaucratic. The process of doing business as is done only through Government agencies, can be very bureaucratic. Having that office has helped us tremendously and as we go year after year in trade missions, you would find that our products are now making their way through the system and onto the shelves in Cuba.

**Mr. Paray:** Can you provide us with some documentation in terms of the actual numbers, statistics, products that are coming back to us and so on?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** Yeah. And because the registration process can be so cumbersome, what I would give you is the list of companies that are approaching Cuba, the registration, where they are in the registration process, those who have completed the registration process and are now awaiting orders and that kind—I can give you those kinds of details.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Caroni Central.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Yes, two questions Chair, 19. How far advanced is this Single Electronic Window, because if we get it right, if we complete it, it can advance our
business facilitation. [Crosstalk]

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** The Minister would like me to tell you that the window is open. [Laughter] But let me tell you, so this line Item—

**Dr. Tewarie:** Is it at full—

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** The line Item here is really for the staffing for the organization. The full project is covered in two areas: one under the IDF and one under the Development Programme. And when we get there I can give you the list of projects and so on—

**Dr. Tewarie:** Okay, where you are.

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** Yeah, that is right.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Okay, fine. And the second one, InvesTT. I have not been hearing too much about it, but I see that the funding is at a certain level; consistent. Have they been bring in investments into the country?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** We have been getting investments, not at the level we would like but we are persisting and this is for further investor sourcing. They also have responsibilities for marketing all of our parks, including, Tamana, also the new parks that will come on stream, Moruga Light Manufacturing and Agro-Processing and also the Phoenix Park. So there is much work to be done.

**Dr. Tewarie:** So the link with InvesTT is now directly with the parks, to source investment for the parks?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** That is part of their programme, but sourcing investments into Trinidad and Tobago overall would be their mandate.

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

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Just, line Item 03, the Betting Levy Board. No allocation there. Has it been removed to another Ministry or they do not need any further allocation?
Hon. Gopee-Scoon: There is to be no funding provided to the Betting Levy Board.

Madam Chairman: Member for Tabaquite.

Dr. Rambachan: Thank you. Item 23 again, the Creative Industries. You said that you had rebates of $6 million to the film industry.

Hon. Gopee-Scoon: Yes.

Dr. Rambachan: I am all for the film industry and development. I want to know, how are you measuring returns to Trinidad and Tobago as a result of these rebates? What returns are you getting by way of employment, by way of foreign exchange? What is happening, because this could turn out to be somebody’s big hobby rather than a big industry that earns money for the country.

Hon. Gopee-Scoon: I will tell you, the rebates can only be granted on the basis of work actually done and employment actually had. So that, it is only after this is—and there is a rigorous programme for justification and accounting process to ensure that you are only refunding after in fact, expenditure has taken place. So there is a verification process and a rigorous process to ensure that we are only refunding that which actually took place.

Dr. Rambachan: What is the criteria you use for refunding?

Hon. Gopee-Scoon: Okay, I could not give you all those details now, but I would actually give you details in writing on the expenditure rebate programme and how it works.

Dr. Rambachan: I am very keen on it, because, you would agree that we should earn foreign exchange out of film production and so on. I am not seeing, the evidence—

Hon. Gopee-Scoon: There is significant spend here and I will give you details of all of the films that we have done rebates for and in the various categories of

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spend.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Mayaro.

**Mr. Paray:** Thank you, Chairman. Minister, line Item No. 17, Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers Association.

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** Yes.

**Mr. Paray:** Taking into account how important our manufacturers are especially now, can you tell if there were any moneys outstanding to our manufacturers from the goods that were sold to Venezuela a couple of years ago?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** Yes, there is money outstanding to two firms.

**Mr. Paray:** Can you identify the value of that sum that is outstanding?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** I do not have the figure with me and I shall share that with you in writing.

**Mr. Paray:** Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche West.

**Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:** Thank you. Hon. Minister, line Item 16, Fair Trading Commission. I am seeing that there is an increase close to half a million. For my own edification, what is the role and function of this Commission?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** I am going to send you that in writing. The Fair Trading Commission, the increase there is for the full operationalization of the Fair Trading Commission and the legislation is finally to be proclaimed during this fiscal. I will send you some information so that you can edify—be educated on it.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Tabaquite.

**Dr. Rambachan:** On No. 17, you gave $200,000 to the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers Association for whatever reason. I suppose they use that in their own way. But I am not seeing anything here that targets a very important sector that increases employment and the possibility of import substitution which is small
manufacturers, small business and small entrepreneurs.

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** Are we on 17?

**Dr. Rambachan:** Yeah.

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** Okay. That small amount that you see there is simply support for a unit, the technical unit within the TTMA and they are—it is a small unit and they support us with regard to trade negotiations. They are involved in the process.

**Dr. Rambachan:** I understand that. But I am saying, I am looking to see how you are dealing with the small business sector, because the Manufacturers Association, they are the medium and large—

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** Yeah. But the question you are asking does not relate to the line Item here. The line Item here is only for trade support, support for trade negotiations.

**Dr. Rambachan:** So there is nothing specific in your Ministry for small business?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** Yes, of course, through the ExporTT and our overall support for the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers Association as well. But definitely through ExporTT with co-financing arrangements, a range of other facilities as well and programmes that are available to, particularly, the small manufacturer and medium-sized manufacturers. Again, under the Development Programme I can give you the list of the programmes that are conducted through ExporTT that will benefit the small manufacturers, in particular.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 010, Other Transfers Abroad. Member for Caroni Central.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Yes, Caribbean Export Development Agency, 03.

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** Where are we?

**Madam Chairman:** 03.
Dr. Tewarie: Yes.

Madam Chairman: On page 300.

Dr. Tewarie: Yes. When I look at the numbers here I see a subvention for an allocation for 2019. Was there a rethink between 2017 and ’18, or was there a reason for it?

Hon. Gopee-Scoon: These are outstanding amounts for three years, we just have not met our commitments to Caribbean Export.

Dr. Tewarie: Okay. So it is catching up.

Hon. Gopee-Scoon: Yeah.

Dr. Tewarie: And the CARICOM Competition Commission, is it the same issue?

Hon. Gopee-Scoon: Actually the very same thing, three years outstanding amounts due to the Caribbean Competition Commission.

Madam Chairman: Sub-Head 06, Current Transfers to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies; Item 004, Statutory Boards. Hon. Members, we will now move on to the Draft Estimates—

Dr. Tewarie: Just a comment on 06, Bureau of Standards.

Madam Chairman: Member, remember we are going in to 06 in detail.

Dr. Tewarie: We are going there now?

Madam Chairman: Yes.

Dr. Tewarie: Okay, sorry.

Madam Chairman: That is okay. Hon. Members, we will now move on to the Draft Estimates of the Revenue and Expenditure of the Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies and of the Tobago House of Assembly. 44 - Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards, page 435: Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure; Item 001. Member for Caroni Central, is your question here?

Dr. Tewarie: I am not at the page yet.
Hon. Gopee-Scoon: 435?
Madam Chairman: Yes.
Hon. Gopee-Scoon: Sorry.
Madam Chairman: Item 001, General Administration. Can we move on?
Dr. Tewarie: Yes.
Madam Chairman: Sub-Head, 02, page 435, Goods and Services. Member for Tabaquite.
Dr. Rambachan: Under Contract Employment, what kinds of persons are involved in this Contract Employment? What do they do, that we are spending 24.3 million? What is the nature of this Contract Employment?
Hon. Gopee-Scoon: There are a mix of contracted officers under the Bureau of Standards, in particular, as we reintroduce our new quality policy. There will be some additions to staff, et cetera. But it is varied number of positions across several divisions in the Bureau of Standards.
Dr. Rambachan: I am tempted to ask how they carry out their functions given some experiences we have had with them. Because you end up in a very bureaucratic situation, you get so frustrated that you do not even go back to the Bureau of Standards. And I can give you written evidence of it. So that is why I am asking, do these people really carry out the functions that they are designated to carry out? For example, with new vehicle companies and so on; people who bring in equipment; the quality of some of the electrical material that is being rejected by the inspectorate that comes in from China, for example. What are they doing to track the quality of things that are being dumped in this country?
Madam Chairman: Member, maybe the specifics of that you can ask in a question rather than—
Dr. Rambachan: Yeah, maybe, but I have to raise it because the public interest
here is not being protected by the Bureau of Standards in the way that I think it should be protected.

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** This is a regulatory agency and you may have a view, there may be a position, there may be a particular instance that may have driven you to this position. But generally, the Bureau of Standards does the job that it is supposed to do. And as a matter of fact, it is heavily involved now in the new national quality policy, which is to improve the overall national quality infrastructure which is looking after standards and assessments, metrology and that kind of thing. So this is a big programme that will take us into 2030.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Do they look only at local production or imports also, to come into the country?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** Both actually.

**Dr. Rambachan:** And then what kind of testing do they do and on what regular basis of things coming into the country, to know whether these things meet the standards that they have set and that they are not dumped? For example, Madam Minister, there are people who will tell you that products coming from China, you can talk to the manufacturer in China and he will stamp you if you want stamp grade one or grade two or what, and they will come into the country. But it is not necessarily the grade, right? That happens. And importers know that in this country. How are you protecting the consumer against that kind of thing happening?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** Well, what you are talking about with respect to the border, is not only the work of the Bureau of Standards, it is also the work of Customs and other agencies, health, depending on the item that is being brought in and so on. So you would have to be a little more specific for me to respond to you to see where the issue is, but border control and improvements at the border are our focus.
and that too is being looked at under the Single Electronic Window, with the various agencies connected.

**Dr. Rambachan**: Like plastic cabbage? I will bring you an example. I have it.

**Madam Chairman**: Detail of the question and the response, I am sure you can find another opportunity where the specific focus is on that.

**Dr. Rambachan**: Ma’am, with due respect to everybody, I just want to say this, right? Our people in Trinidad are not being protected by the agencies that are supposed to protect them against these kinds of practices. And this country is a dumping ground for a lot of things that should not be here.

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon**: So Member, Member, you are making a very broad statement. If it is that you have particular issues I certainly would want to attempt to answer that. It is the business not only of the Bureau of Standards as I have said to you, it is the business of the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries, Customs and Excise. So if you are very clear on what you are asking, I would be happy to provide those details.

**Dr. Rambachan**: Sure. I will send you the cabbage.

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon**: Cabbage? I will let the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries respond to that. But the allegations that you are making are very serious ones and it is very—but it is very broad-based. So, be specific and we will respond to you.

**Dr. Rambachan**: Sure.

**Madam Chairman**: Thank you. Member for Oropouche East, I so like you to join the conversation.

**Dr. Moonilal**: Ma’am, I am following this cabbage. [*Laughter*]

**Madam Chairman**: Yeah, but you know the Standing Orders, you know them very well. Thank you. Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases; Item 001,
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General Administration; Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies; Item 007, Households. Member for Oropouche East.

Dr. Moonial: No, Ma’am.

Madam Chairman: Item 010, Other Transfers Abroad. 45 - Trinidad and Tobago Racing Authority; Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure; Item 001, General Administration; Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services; Item 001, General Administration; Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases; Item 001, General Administration; Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies; Item 007, Households; Item 009, Other Transfers.

Hon. Members, we shall now move on to the Draft Estimates of the Development Programme. Sub-Head 09, Development Programme, Consolidated Fund, page 119; Item 003, Economic Infrastructure. Member for Mayaro.

Mr. Paray: Thank you, Madam Chairman. Minister, line Item 016, Enhancement of the SEW. We have spent, at the end of 2019, we would have spent $46 million on this SEW. And over the last three years we have slipped from about 71, I think, to right now, we are at 121 in the Ease of Doing Business Index. What would you account—if any, outside of the SEW, that may account for this slide or are there deficiencies in the SEW that need to be addressed in order to reverse that slide that we are experiencing in the Ease of Doing Business, here in Trinidad and Tobago.

Hon. Gopee-Scoon: Thank you, I am just trying to find—what Item are we on?

Madam Chairman: 016. We are on page 119.

Hon. Gopee-Scoon: Yeah. Thank you. Your specific question is—your specific concern is the fact of the fall in the Ease of Doing Business and what is our approach to it. There are five areas in which we are doing comfortably well, under the Ease of Doing Business. There are others which we are not and we have taken these and we have also addressed particular matters under the Single Electronic

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Window. You would recall that we engaged with the IDB and took a loan for $25 million and there are a number of projects that are now being done. Ideally, these things are not overnight, so that we are undertaking the work. The reason for the fall is not because we are doing nothing, but it is because other countries are really accelerating their efforts and therefore we have fallen in terms of our positioning. But there are a number of contracts that we have already executed in 2018, under the extension of the Single Electronic Window and there are those that will continue into 2019. By 2019, we will begin to have some deliverables and then you will begin to see the improvements under, both on the Global Competitiveness Index and also on the Ease of Doing Business Index.

Madam Chairman: Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Minister, line Items 005, and 007 and 011. These three areas for International Market Development, Promotion and Marketing Assistance and so on—your very small funding or little or nothing for these three major areas which are required to carry the country internationally, which you are speaking about. But why is there such minimal funding for these three major areas?

Madam Chairman: Well, 005, that is one?

Dr. Gopeesingh: 005, 007 and 011.

Madam Chairman: There is nothing under 005.

Hon. Gopee-Scoon: Okay, let me start with 005. You would recall that when we were doing the Recurrent Expenditure there was an increase of about $500-and-something-thousand and I told you that this appeared to be more of a reoccurring expenditure rather than a project. And therefore, 005, you would find that it is now carried under, for 2019, under the Recurrent.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Oh, it is carried under Recurrent.

Hon. Gopee-Scoon: Yes. So the trade missions activities will continue. This has
been heightened in the last year. We are working along with the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers Association and also with ExpotTT and we are going to continue the work, especially moving extra-regionally.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** So, 007 and 011 are the same areas or are they under Recurrent Expenditure?

**Hon. Gopene-Scoon:** 007. I mean, I want to give you the details but when you do not call them in order, it forces me to have to—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Sure, all right, I will guide you. 007.

**Hon. Gopene-Scoon:** But I can tell you that in last year’s budget we announced a Research and Development Facility and we have actually implemented that. So we have actually—it is a three-tiered facility where a company or a person conducting a particular exercise can access the fund. It takes you from the idea stage to feasibility to commercialization and we have actually granted in 2018, three grants were allocated—one to the Moruga Hill Rice, two to Safety Net Limited and three to Trinidad and Tobago Fine Cocoa Limited. And again we have, under fiscal 2019, another million dollars is extended and we are inviting applications for this Research and Development Facility.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** And the 011, to enable competitive business in T&T.

**Hon. Gopene-Scoon:** 011.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** That is no longer there.

**Hon. Gopene-Scoon:** Yeah. That was under the 10th EDF and that is now closed off, we are now approaching the 11th EDF.

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

**Dr. Moonilal:** Thank you very much. Just to focus on 017 first, the New Economic Zones Development - Moruga. There is no provision in 2019. Could you indicate if this project has been completed and what is the nature of the
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project?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** Because it is now carried under the IDF.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Okay, so you will find it in the IDF?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** You will find it there.

**Dr. Moonilal:** The next question at 019, Development of the Music Industry. You have $1 million. Is this the idea in the budget of singing on the corner, promoting culture on the streets, type of thing? What exactly is this? Because I do not think that $1 million is sufficient for industrial development with this aspect of culture. What would the $1 million be used for, primarily?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** Minister, your very cavalier description of the work of MusicTT is not appreciated. And I can tell you that—

**Dr. Moonilal:** I appreciate that.

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** No, I am being very serious. I can tell you the $1 million will be divided into four projects, one being the Live Music District which was started in 2018, the pilot project which was started in 2018, and there are significant benefits to that programme.

5.00 p.m.

We are also going to continue the Artiste Development Programme, also the Music Tech Platform and also Music Export Academy. These have overall benefits in terms of building capacity in the music industry, gearing our artistes up for export.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Could you indicate, in the Live Music District Project, the number of bands or individuals or artistes who have benefited? And undertake, not now necessarily, but give us a list—

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** I am going to tell you now.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Sure.
Hon. Gopee-Scoon: Under this programme, which was a pilot programme, there were 363 performances across the City of Port of Spain; 167 artistes would have signed up for this programme. However, the artistes have to be chosen by the venue owners and the venue owners would have picked those which they prefer. So, obviously, less artistes would have been chosen. Sixty-eight artistes were chosen and would have found work under the pilot project of the Live Music District.

Dr. Moonilal: So you had 363 performances in Port of Spain, as you say?

Hon. Gopee-Scoon: Yes.

Dr. Moonilal: At how much venues?

Hon. Member: How many.

Hon. Gopee-Scoon: They would have been about 30 venues or 28 venues.

Dr. Moonilal: Could we get the list of venues, please?

Hon. Gopee-Scoon: I can give you the list of venues.

Dr. Moonilal: And the list of artistes?

Hon. Gopee-Scoon: And the list of artistes.

Dr. Moonilal: And the moneys or stipends paid to the artistes pursuant to this programme.

Hon. Gopee-Scoon: All of the details would be provided to you.

Dr. Moonilal: Thank you so much. And likewise, the second matter you raised is another development programme, Music Export, is it?

Hon. Gopee-Scoon: Yes. [Interruption]

Madam Chairman: May I have a little order so I can hear the Member for Oropouche East?

Dr. Moonilal: Was Diego Martin North/East one of the performers?

Madam Chairman: Member for Oropouche East, you go ahead.
Dr. Moonilal: Ma’am, he is disturbing me. The next matter concerning the development to the film industry, if we could have a breakdown on the projection for $1 million. What the $1 million is aimed to do? What do you propose to do with it to develop the film industry? Because you must have an idea of what is to be done.

Hon. Gopee-Scoon: Yes. 021: Development of the Film Industry, you want a breakdown of the projects?

Dr. Moonilal: Proposed work that would entail the $1 million.

Hon. Gopee-Scoon: Okay. The first project is to develop our Trinidad and Tobago locations. It is called “Unseen and Expected”, and we are going to spend $650,000 on that particular project. There is also another project called “Film Friendly”, which is to increase Trinidad and Tobago’s attractiveness to international productions by improving the ease of doing film business, and we are spending $25,000 on that.

There is also the operationalization of a movie site which is a data model and the digital platform. We will spend $25,000 on that. There is also another project, “Film Festival Partnerships” which we will spend $150,000 on, and that is developing audiences and particular aspects of the industry.

We will also do stakeholder engagement where we would spend $110,000 on that, and also there is going to be further training with regard to facilitating membership in the Association of Film Commissioners International. Then there is going to be access to online training through the AFCI University. And that is the breakdown for the $1 million. I can send you in writing if you want it, but I just called it out for you.

Dr. Moonilal: That would be appreciated as well. But could I ask if these programmes, particularly with the film industry, and so on, are also being done in
collaboration, coordination, with the Ministry of Tourism where the Minister outlined a very exciting theatrical district development on a website to promote the theatre, and so on, in Trinidad and Tobago—if this is done in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism as well?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** But I am happy to note that you have found it exciting.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Yes, yes. It is a website-based district.

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** And I can understand that this is new to you. But there is a strong correlation—

**Dr. Moonilal:** I love the theatre.

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:**—between music and film and theatre and showing off our country as being rich in culture.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Sure. We appreciate that. So you are collaborating with the Ministry of Tourism?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** The Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Community Development and the Ministry of Trade and Industry have a strong collaboration in the promotion of film and music and generally our culture.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Indeed. Thank you.

**Mr. Paray:** Thank you, Chairman. Minister, line Item 304: Export Capacity-Building. There is a $2 million allocation. Could you give us a little synopsis in terms of what this project entails in terms of what is it attempting to solve?

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** You want to know, in particular, sorry?

**Mr. Paray:** The Export Capacity-Building project, a little synopsis on what are you targeting as an issue to fix with this particular project.

**Hon. Gopee-Scoon:** What we are targeting, really, is building export capacity and, of course, building our international competitiveness of our local firms. We want to ensure that they become more sustainable as well. So, generally, it is
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concerned with many trading programmes for exporters and co-financing, and so on. But let me give you some details, perhaps, of what—would you like what has happened in 2018 or what are we going to do in 2019?

Mr. Paray: What are you going to do in 2019?

Hon. Gopee-Scoon: In 2019, there are a number of activities, including the Export Competitiveness Programme where 20 companies are targeted for export support. There is the International Standards Programme where eight companies are targeted for compliance. There is the Information Dissemination Seminars where four seminars will be conducted. There is co-financing to 20 companies. And, again, in these cases, it is largely the smaller companies that will benefit from the co-financing arrangements. Then, of course, there are Exporter Training Sessions. So there will be 20 sessions conducted, but a number of firms would attend these export training sessions. Then, of course, there is export to new markets, where five companies would be chosen, and we would be working with those five companies to help them develop their ability to export to new markets.

There is also the International Trade Specialists Programme where 25 persons would be invited to participate in this Export Academy Programme. There is also the execution of the “Proudly Made in Trinidad and Tobago” initiative, which is a significant initiative where we are encouraging the local public to buy local.

Mr. Paray: Minister, there is a group called the Complete Caribbean Group. It is an IDB agency that did a report earlier this year and they identified five major areas where Caribbean countries are weak in their export capability, and they identified them as: poor access to finance; long waiting times; heavier cost to export your goods; poor infrastructure; poor public service support. Is your Ministry taking these five or six areas into consideration when looking at fixing
some of these items to push our export markets?

Hon. Gopee-Scoon: Definitely. And it really informs how the agency is to improve itself. And I can tell you that I work very closely with the board. We need to improve. We are benchmarking ourselves against some really high-performing export agencies in Latin America. So that the pressure is on exporTT to really develop themselves to really become high performing. And all of those matters will be taken into consideration. We have done those exercises and they form the basis of improvement works.

Dr. Tewarie: I want to get something later on. That is at 06. Is that okay?

General Public Services.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So just now. So—

Hon. Gopee-Scoon: Can you help me? What page are you on?

Madam Chairman: That is under—one minute, hon. Minister. Item 005: Multi-Sectoral and Other Services. And the Member for Caroni Central is at page 121 under 06. Which Item, Member?

Dr. Tewarie: 020, that is the new project on—

Madam Chairman: Implementation of the National—

Dr. Tewarie:—National e-Commerce Strategy. And if you could give us an idea of what is going on there now.

Hon. Gopee-Scoon: The National e-Commerce Strategy is actually a new project. This was only approved by the Cabinet in 2018. So that the objective is to create an enabling environment that really facilitates and promotes e-commerce for local businesses. In fact, it helps the small producer, in that it becomes—if he gets engaged in e-commerce, he is into a virtual marketplace. So it is particularly important for the small manufacturer. Again, so the strategy is to promote e-commerce for local businesses to serve their domestic and international consumer
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markets.

So there are several activities for 2019. As I said, it is new. So the Ministry is the implementing agency and the Ministry will develop programmes to promote domestic firms to have a presence and to conduct business online. It is also to build awareness among the private sector, especially the micro and medium enterprises, and domestic and international traders, about e-commerce and the value of getting involved in e-commerce.

It is also to do with surveys to determine the number of persons that are actually utilizing e-commerce. It is also to set up a consumer affairs portal that is managed by the Consumer Affairs Division with regard to e-commerce. It is also to conduct public meetings and lectures to consumers and suppliers about unfair trading practices and unfair contract terms, and it includes also, media advertising campaigns on this particular—on the e-commerce issues as well. So you would find that in the early part of fiscal 2019 there will be a roll-out of stakeholder meetings, and so on. There will be a committee to guide those consultations.

Dr. Tewarie: All right.

Madam Chairman: Infrastructure Development Fund. Item 005: Multi-Sectoral and other Services. We are at page 214. Item 005: Multi-Sectoral and other Services.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 48 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, hon. Minister. Thank you PS. Thank you other members of the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

Head 65: Ministry of Foreign and Caricom Affairs, $263,300,000.

Madam Chairman: And for the interest of Members, we are at page 325. I will now invite the Minister of Foreign and Caricom Affairs to make a brief opening
Hon. Moses: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the Ministry of Foreign and Caricom Affairs continues to work assiduously as it fulfils its mandate to represent the interests of Trinidad and Tobago and to support the advancement of the country’s domestic development agenda in pursuit of attaining Government’s Vision 2030 goals.

The Ministry’s strategic engagement with stakeholders and partners locally, regionally and internationally, as well as active participation in the multilateral fora, will focus on yielding the greatest possible tangible benefit and on providing a fitting buttress for our efforts towards Trinidad and Tobago’s socio-economic growth.

In seeking to safeguard the country’s position on the world stage and, indeed, to lift the profile in developing arenas and spheres globally, the Ministry of Foreign and Caricom Affairs has been mindful of the country’s challenging economic circumstance and, by extension, financially constrained operating environment. The Ministry has exercised prudent management of funds during the last fiscal year and will retain such an approach into the 2018/2019 fiscal year.

Madam Chair, the Ministry of Foreign and Caricom Affairs has undertaken an assessment of its activities and will make adjustments as appropriate and where necessary to ensure continued proper and prudent financial management while delivering required services and support to stakeholders in the various jurisdictions in which it serves. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: Thank you.

Question proposed: That Head 65 stand part of the Schedule.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Members, the sum of $263,300,000 for Head 65, Ministry of Foreign and Caricom Affairs, is comprised of moneys proposed for
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expenditure under the following Sub-Heads and Items to be found in the Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure and the Draft Estimates of the Development Programme. We shall now proceed to consider the Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure. Sub-Head 01: Personnel Expenditure. Item 001: General Administration. Member for Naparima.

Mr. Charles: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have two questions in this area. Question one: Item 28, Minister, page 325, normally the word is “remuneration” to Cabinet-appointed committees for Trinidad and Tobago. And they have used the word “representatives”. And the question is: Why this change here? And to whom—representatives—does the $1.2 million apply?

Hon. Moses: I did not get it. Madam Chair, I am not in a position to follow—

Madam Chairman: Okay, so the first question is, why is the Item named the way it is named and not—

Hon. Moses: Which Item is it?

Madam Chairman: Item 28 under 01, 001.

Hon. Moses: Yes, I am with you now. Remuneration to Cabinet-appointed Representatives for T&T, instead of—as opposed to?

Mr. Charles: Cabinet-appointed committees, which is the norm we have been seeing. It may be a typo. I do not know.

Hon. Moses: Cabinet-appointed—

Madam Chairman: Page 325.

Mr. Charles: Item 28.

Hon. Moses: And the Item we are dealing with—

Mr. Charles: Could it be a typo?

Hon. Moses:—is, as it occurs there. That is what it is. Thank you very much.

Mr. Charles: So it occurs. Well, to whom does it refer, the representatives?
Hon. Moses: Through you, Madam Chair, perhaps I can respond, if it is deemed appropriate?

Madam Chairman: Yes. If you are in a position to respond, please do. So two questions—

Mr. Charles: No, this is one question, actually.

Madam Chairman:—why the name is different from what you have seen in other Ministries?

Mr. Charles: Right. And I am informed the name is as it should be.

Madam Chairman: Right. And the second question is?

Mr. Charles: Who are the representatives involved in the $1.2 million.

Hon. Moses: Madam, through you, those appointed by Cabinet.

Madam Chairman: Minister of Finance, you have something to add?

Mr. Imbert: Sports ambassadors.

Mr. Charles: Oh, sports ambassadors. Okay. Very good. I accept that. Item 01, the Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance, and it is $19 million and it says in the explanation: “Includes provision for vacant posts with incumbents.” Could the Minister identify some of these vacant posts with incumbents in the Ministry of Foreign and Caricom Affairs?

Hon. Moses: Vacant posts, incumbents? Madam Chair, such information could be provided subsequently.

Mr. Charles: Accepted.

Mr. Padarath: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, same line Item, please; line Item 28, Remuneration to Cabinet-appointed Representatives to Trinidad and Tobago.

Madam Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Padarath: The Minister of Finance has indicated these are for sports
ambassadors. Would the hon. Minister be kind enough to indicate who these sports ambassadors are and the breakdown of the remuneration please?

Mr. Imbert: Brian Lara and Hasely Crawford.

Mr. Padarath: And what is the breakdown of the remuneration?

Dr. Rambachan: US $7,000 a month.

Mr. Imbert: It is approximately the same each. Approximately the same amount each.

Mr. Padarath: Could you give us further details on that?

Mr. Imbert: Yes, in due course.

Mr. Padarath: Now?

Mr. Imbert: No.

Mr. Padarath: In due course? Okay.


Mr. Charles: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I have four questions on 04. There is allowances, monthly-paid officers. And the first question is: What type of allowances are included under this Sub-Item?

Madam Chairman: That is 04?

Mr. Charles: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Thanks.

Mr. Charles: The allowances monthly-paid, $19 million.

Madam Chairman: Minister?

Hon. Moses: Madam Chair, primarily foreign service allowances to personnel posted abroad—home-based members of staff, that is.

Mr. Charles: Question two: How will the decrease in allocation—and the decrease is $1.5 million—how will the decrease in allocation affect employees who receive the allowances? Are we speaking about a reduced number of people,
or reduced—a quantum of allowances?

**Hon. Moses:** Madam Chair, through you, in our current circumstance, we think this number is appropriate and it would be defined in large measure by the number of recipients that potentially would benefit in this year, 2018/2019.

**Mr. Charles:** All right. Question three: What categories of workers are paid from this Sub-Item?

**Hon. Moses:** Madam Chair, I take it the Sub-Item being referred to is the one of allowances, monthly-paid officers?

**Mr. Charles:** Yes, monthly-paid, $19 million.

**Hon. Moses:** And as I intimated earlier, it relates to foreign service allowance and that allowance is applicable to home-based members of staff at foreign missions.

**Mr. Charles:** And this is contract officers and permanent officers?

**Hon. Moses:** Madam Chair, through you once again, the answer is yes.

**Mr. Charles:** Right. Question four: According to page 42 of the Auditor General’s Report for fiscal 2017, and I quote:

> Travelling allowances were not paid to officers as required by Regulation 18 of the Civil Service External Affairs Regulations, 1977.

Sub-question (a): Were all officers paid their travelling allowances in fiscal 2018?

**Mr. Imbert:** What Item is that?

**Mr. Charles:** That is the same Item—Item, Allowances.

**Mr. Imbert:** Really?

**Madam Chairman:** But is that under—

**Mr. Charles:** This is traveling allowances, because travelling allowances is a subset of the $19 million allowances, monthly paid. In other words, were travelling allowances paid in fiscal ’18? And is the intent to pay it in 2019?

**Madam Chairman:** So you are under—
Mr. Charles: I am under 002, 04, Allowances, and I am asking the Minister if in respect of the subset of travelling allowances, were they paid last year and will they be paid this year, if not? Well, I know “is not”.

Mr. Imbert: Well if “yuh” know, why “yuh” asking?

Hon. Moses: Madam Chair, with your permission, I do not want to sound eager to respond to hypothetical situations, but the quanta have not been defined in a clear way so as to enable payment, and that there is where it resides and has been for a long time. We are working assiduously to resolve such a problem.

Mr. Charles: So you are giving an assurance that you are working assiduously and that it will be paid in fiscal 2019?

Hon. Moses: Madam Chair, once more, the Ministry of Foreign and Caricom Affairs default position is one to assiduously follow all matters under its remit.

Mr. Padarath: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, under line Item 01, under 002, Overseas Missions, if the Minister will be kind enough to indicate what is the current complement of established staff as opposed to contract officers at these overseas missions. He may not have it in front of him, but if he can provide it to us, it will be most helpful.

Hon. Moses: With your authorization, Madam Chair, I am able to furnish such a request. The total number of locally recruited members of staff at our overseas missions amounts to 124, while the number of officers amounts to 71.

Mr. Padarath: I am not sure if the hon. Minister understood the question properly, Madam. What I am asking is that those that are on the establishment, as opposed to those that are contract officers, if we can get the proportion of those. Because the hon. Minister spoke about locally recruited staff, which would then mean staff with respect to each mission—the locally recruited staff of those missions compared to the contract officers and those that are on the establishment.
That is what I am asking.

**Hon. Moses:** Madam Chair, such information can be provided subsequently, but in an earnest goodwill gesture, perhaps I can give a rough figure, and it would be about six persons less than the 71. So all told, about 65 persons, to about 6. Sixty-five of them permanent, six contract. Rough figures. Subsequent, certainly we can make the information available to the Member.

**Mr. Padarath:** Thank you, Minister, for the effort. I do look forward to the undertaking of being able to be provided with actual figures. So thank you for that undertaking.

**Hon. Moses:** Madam Chair, just by way of a further contribution, I do not take umbrage to that effort.

**Hon. Member:** What?

**Hon. Moses:** But nonetheless, we can continue in the good spirit in which the answers are being conveyed.

**Madam Chairman:** Sub-Head 02: Goods and Services. Item 001: General Administration. Member for Naparima.

**Mr. Charles:** Two questions. Question one: Item 08, Rent/Lease Office Accommodation Storage. For 2019, $1.352 million has been allocated. Could the Minister advise us as to which building or buildings this expenditure relates to?

**Hon. Moses:** Yes. With your authorization, Madam, allow me to—I can furnish that information. Just one second. I have it right here. Madam Chair, for the rental cost of warehouse facilities at Dundonald Street, Port of Spain, the figure is $552,000. Parking at Government Parkade and Hyatt Regency parkade totals—that figure is $800,000.

**Mr. Charles:** But there is an additional $500,000 unaccounted for if that comes up to $800,000.
Hon. Moses: Madam Chair, just one second.

Mr. Charles: But you could supply it afterwards.

Mr. Imbert: He said 552 for Dundonald Street and 800 for the Parkade and Hyatt Regency—totals $1,352,000. He told you that.

Mr. Charles: He did?

Mr. Imbert: He did, yes.

Mr. Charles: Well, thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: Member for Naparima, are you finished?

Mr. Charles: No, I have a question. Item 16, Contract Employment, 5.28 million, and the question is: How many additional persons, if any, are expected to be hired in fiscal 2019? And a follow-up question afterwards.

Hon. Moses: Sorry. Please, the Item is, once again?

Mr. Charles: It is Item 16, Contract Employment, page 326.

Hon. Moses: Item 6-0?

Mr. Charles: 1-6.

Hon. Moses: Oh, 1-6.

Mr. Charles: Sorry for not being clear.

Hon. Moses: No such is contemplated, Madam Chair. The figure in respect of 2019 is meant to cover the projected needs of the Ministry, always conditioned by our current economic situation.

5.30 p.m.

Mr. Charles: Okay. Okay I will accept, but a follow-up question. In terms of contract employment, how does the Ministry ensure value for money in this area?

Hon. Moses: The Ministry, as I intimated earlier, works assiduously and is very thorough. They are at in this instance to ensure that moneys are well spent and value for money is foremost in all of our activities. That is our approach.
Mr. Padarath: Thank you, Madam. Hon. Minister, line Item 27, which deals with Audit of Overseas Missions. Can the hon. Minister indicated—

Hon. Moses: 25.

Madam Chairman: 27?

Mr. Padarath: 25, sorry. My apologies. You are right, Ma’am. Line Item 25, Audit of Overseas Missions. Would the hon. Minister be able to share with us which missions are earmarked for audited in this financial year?

Hon. Moses: Madam Chair, such a definition is contingent upon our analysis of this situation, and in a dynamic environment such as the one we are experiencing, we certainly will be guided by the amount of funds that have been made available. [Desk thumping]

Mr. Padarath: Thank you, Ma’am. Just so that I am sure that I am on the same page as the hon. Minister—

Hon. Moses: The page is 326.

Mr. Padarath:—the hon. Minister is saying to me that under line Item 25, Audit of Overseas Missions, that at this time the Ministry does not even know which missions will be audited in this financial year; and if not, could the Minister explain exactly what he means by what he said?

Hon. Moses: Thank you very much. I already said but I wanted to add as an adjunct to what I have already said, not that I have taken umbrage, but please let us continue the discussion as we should.

Mr. Padarath: Ma’am, I am asking legitimate questions. I have no intentions of being offensive to the Member.

Madam Chairman: Member for Princes Town, I do not think there was any hint that you were not asking legitimate questions. I think your question was asked and answered.
Mr. Padarath: Certainly, Madam.

Madam Chairman: Item—yes, Member for Princes Town.

Mr. Padarath: Thank you, Madam. Madam, line Item 34, University Graduate Recruitment Programme. I know the hon. Minister of Finance gave us an explanation in terms of why the project itself took so long to get off the ground, but the question is under line Item 34. In the meanwhile, seeing that Government has indicated that this programme will come on stream this year, could the hon. Minister indicated whether or not they have identified in the Ministry which specific areas, would there be a multilateralism, diplomacy, international law and treaties? Which specific areas will be geared to toward the graduate training programme under the Ministry?

Hon. Moses: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. This is a system-wide policy initiative and certainly the waiting of the use of such will be and continues to be defined at the level of the Ministry.

Madam Chairman: Item 002, Overseas Missions. Member for Naparima.

Mr. Charles: Item 21, Repairs and Maintenance - Buildings. There is a $6 million increase in this year’s estimates, is there a mechanism where maintenance of buildings abroad are identified for repairs? In other words, how do you come up with this increase this year as opposed to last year, $6 million?

Hon. Moses: Increase?

Mr. Charles: It is Item 21.

Madam Chairman: Page 327.

Hon. Moses: Yes, I am there.

Madam Chairman: Not you, Minister. For everybody else.

Hon. Moses: Oh, my apologies.

Madam Chairman: It is okay.
Hon. Moses: Madam Chair, the increase I am not sure is from $2 million to $8 million. Historically, the figure has been much higher, $15/16/12 million per year. I would have furnished such information.

Mr. Imbert: Member, if you look at 2017 actual it was 10.136 million. The 2018 original allocation was 12 million. The revised expenditure which is based on an estimate is 2, which means they were not able to spend what they were allocated. So they have now received an allocation of 8 which although it is notionally an increase on the revised, it is actually a reduction on the original of 2018.

Mr. Charles: But I am asking on what basis does this figure come up?

Mr. Imbert: Budget Division would allocate these funds based on a needs analysis and a request coming from the Ministry of Foreign and Caricom Affairs, and this is what the Budget Division would believe is an adequate provision for the coming year.

Mr. Charles: Okay. The question stands, but consideration should be given in future because I have been there, done that, and seeing how buildings have deteriorated and they ought not to.

Mr. Imbert: We should put more?

Mr. Charles: Not put more, but do it on the basis of some factual basis, some template of the condition, the actual conditions of the buildings.

Mr. Imbert: Well, I think that is how it is done, eh.

Mr. Charles: I do not think so, but that is—

Mr. Imbert: All right, if you say so.

Hon. Moses: Madam Chair, just by way of adding, the hon. Minister of Finance put it well, on a needs analysis basis. As I would have indicated last year at a similar sitting, some of the buildings are old historical buildings and, consequently, high levels of expense shall require and sometimes in a mandatory fashion the

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facades on such buildings need to be maintained, and across a number of countries the total figure historically has been much higher, meaning $12/15/16 million. So this figure, as the hon. Minister of Finance would have pointed out, the actual expenditure in 2017 would have amounted to $10 million. So although it appears there as an increase of $6 million, in fact it is an appropriate figure. As regards the actual system how we go about it, the rigour to which I referred earlier would apply on needs assessment.

Mr. Charles: Madam Chair, to the hon. Minister, and this is a not a trick question. This is as an interest in the country. There used to be an Inspector of Missions and that person would go around and check on the buildings and the extent to which they have deteriorated. There are four buildings that were purchased for staff in the PRUN mission, could the Minister give us some idea of those buildings and if they have deteriorated or not?

Madam Chairman: Minister, could you give that in writing?

Hon. Moses: Which line Item?

Madam Chairman: Would you give that in writing?

Hon. Moses: The line Item?

Madam Chairman: I think it is only under Repairs and Maintenance - Buildings.

Hon. Moses: Which buildings?

Madam Chairman: Yes.

Hon. Moses: We can furnish that. We can furnish that information.

Mr. Karim: Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, I am on line Item 08, Rental/Lease - Office Accommodation and Storage. Does that figure include the proposed new embassy and trade office in the United Arab Emirates?

Hon. Moses: My response to that is no.

Mr. Karim: So can I ask a follow-up question? Is it intended as is written into
page 136 of another document, line Item 058, that you will establish this embassy in 2019?

**Hon. Moses:** Madam Chair, what I can say is that page 136 treats with matters related to that, but characterized as the hon. Member has detailed it, I cannot share that sentiment. The specificity about this year and so on, that is what I cannot share, but in details information relative to that issue.

**Mr. Karim:** But are there plans to establish that embassy in 2019 fiscal?

**Hon. Moses:** Madam Chair, I am afraid that we have jumped onto to another—

**Mr. Karim:** No, I am asking in the context of rent/lease, line Item 08.

**Hon. Moses:** But I said I have responded earlier. It is not—

**Madam Chairman:** Member, you ask if this related to leasing of a building and the answer was no.

**Hon. Moses:** I responded.

**Mr. Padarath:** Thank you, Madam. Madam two questions, but first I will deal with line Item 21, Repairs and Maintenance - Buildings, a follow-up to Naparima’s question. Would the hon. Minister be able to share with us who is the person with responsibility to inspect these missions? Who is currently holding that position of Inspector of Missions?

**Hon. Moses:** Madam Chair, I am not sure I am following. 21—Head 65, 02 Goods and Services; 002 Overseas Mission, 21 Repairs and Maintenance - Buildings, but I am being confronted with a request here that seems to be inappropriate or misplaced even.

**Mr. Padarath:** Madam Chair, 21 deals with the maintenance and repairs of these buildings, and the position in the Ministry of Inspector of Missions has to deal specifically with repairs and maintenance of these buildings.

**Madam Chairman:** That would most probably come under Personnel, not Goods
Mr. Padarath: Madam, I will move on then with respect to Head 19 and Head 27, Official Entertainment and Official Overseas Travel. With the document before us we do not have the fortunate experience of having it broken down per diplomatic mission. These are just really big sums that will represent smaller allocations. Could the hon. Minister say whether or not there are current work programme projections that will give you a breakdown of how these Votes will be spent in the next financial year; and if so, would he be in a position to provide it to us?

Hon. Moses: Madam Chair, that level of detail per mission is—I could endeavour to provide the information if we have it in that format, Madam Chair. That is what I can say.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases; Item 001, General Administration; Item 002, Overseas Missions. Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies; Item 001, Regional Bodies. Member for Princes Town.

Mr. Padarath: Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, line Item 03, the Grenada Consular and Trade Office. If the hon. Minister can share with us some of the benefits we have derived over the last financial year, or those projected for this current financial year with respect to this particular vote, please?

Hon. Moses: Madam Chair, there are strong fraternal links that our country shares with Grenada. Being fellow members of Caricom allows us to continue with this initiative which predates this current administration. As a matter of fact, it has continued over a period in excess of 15 years I would think, and that the benefits that would have accrued to us during the last administration continues and has in fact been strengthened with our renewed focus and Caricom matters. So we are reaping the benefits of region and integration process, and we thought it
appropriate even in our current situation to continue with that initiative. Dare I say, other initiatives that have found merit have attracted the attention of this Government in the interest of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Padarath: Thank you, Madam. Madam, on that same 03, I am not disputing Trinidad and Tobago’s links with Grenada, my specific question has to deal with the Grenada Consular and the Trade Office. The trade component is what I am most concerned about, not particularly the consular component. So my specific question is with respect to the trade office, what specifics in terms of this particular expenditure can Trinidad and Tobago look forward to in the next financial year in the area of trade?

Hon. Moses: Madam Chair, with your permission, of course, should I respond?

Madam Chairman: Yes.

Hon. Moses: Thank you very much. They are part and parcel of the same entity and, as I intimated earlier, if anything such links have been strengthened inclusive of the trade component.

Mr. Charles: Thank you, Madam Chair. Item 02, Association of Caribbean States, the ACS, an increase of 1.470. Is this an increase allocation or something other than that to explain this increase?

Hon. Moses: Madam Chair, Trinidad and Tobago’s contribution towards the Association of Caribbean States is comprised of essentially two components. One towards the rental of office space and the other part treats with quota subscriptions or assessed contributions, and the apparent increase here from 26 to 33 involves—overtime, of course, increases in the fees payable to the organization as well as the component treating with rentals.

Madam Chairman: Member for Princes Town?

Mr. Padarath: No.
Madam Chairman: All right. Thank you. Item 002, Commonwealth Bodies; Item 003, United Nations Organisations.

Mr. Charles: Item 11, United Nations Information Centre - Rental of Office Space. Minister, will you confirm that we pay the rent for the UN Information Centre; and is the decrease a result of a reduction in the rent?

Hon. Moses: Madam, through you, the information made available to me and that does not suggest a weakened faith in the numbers, but the figure on this document, actual disbursements of expenditure 2017, involved the two payments of arrears that were made good in the year 2017. That explains the apparent reduction relative to the 21,000.

Mr. Charles: Yes, and dealing with the 2019 estimate compared to the Revised Estimates 2018 which is the best information we have available about 21,000. So it is a reduction more or less. Okay. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Item 007 Households; Item 009, Other Transfers. Yes, Member for Naparima.

Mr. Charles: Trade Treaties Secretariat, my understanding is that Trinidad’s bid to chair the Arms Trade Treaty was not successful—I think it was Switzerland got it instead—and, therefore, the question would be asked why a $31,000 allocation for something we were not successful at?

Hon. Moses: Madam Chair, we are not in the habit of taking up our marbles and running off. It is mandatory. We still need to pay and to meet our international obligations, and that is not towards lobbying or canvassing for support in being the host of the Secretariat, but rather our contribution to the body, the organization. So that is a payment not towards the securing of the Secretariat, but rather to that body.

Madam Chairman: Item 010, Other Transfers Abroad. Member for Princes
Mr. Padarath: Thank you, Madam. Under line Item 08, Contribution to Disaster Relief, there is an allocation of 1 million. However, if we look at the 2017 Actual there is nothing, in the 2018 Estimates nothing, in the Revised Estimates, obviously nothing. Could the hon. Minister expand on this particular line Item in the context that nothing has been provided for 2017/2018, and when come to 2019 there is a $1 million allocation under this particular Vote?

Hon. Moses: Madam Chair, nature acts as it does and our beloved country conceivably can be in need of assistance in the future. This Item is intended to cover contributions to specific countries. It is a voluntary contribution and in our, not estimation, calculation, it is moneys well spent if only but to safeguard our future, and indeed our neighbours given the natural catastrophes that seem to be coming at us with ever increasing frequency.

Madam Chairman: Member for Princes Town. Sorry, Minister. Member for Princes Town.

Mr. Padarath: No, it is quite all right, Madam.

Madam Chairman: Member for Naparima.

Mr. Charles: Thank you. Item 01, the ACP Secretariat Budget, and I see an increase of $140,000. Given the fact that we have the OAS, and we also have the group of Latin American and Caribbean countries at the UN, and given the fact that we also have SELA, is the Ministry doing a review or has done a review of the ACS, its relevance to justify this increase—

Hon. Members: ACP.

Mr. Charles:—ACP, sorry—of $140,000?

Hon. Moses: Madam Chair, the organizations cited have remits and the membership that are so diverse and differ so vastly, that focusing specifically on
the ACP Secretariat, which is based in Brussels, and in the context of the renegotiation of the Cotonou Agreement, we have so decided that this is a figure that would be will spent and would secure the position of the country in the international—

**Madam Chairman:** Somebody has a device that is offending.

**Hon. Moses:**—and would justify the position of Trinidad and Tobago in the international community and our obligations as a signatory to that body.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Naparima, your question has been answered?

**Mr. Charles:** Yes, it is.

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

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, just coming back to line Item 08, Contribution to the Disaster Relief, you had indicated in your statement about other members, is this a contribution that is made within a pool of countries?

**Hon. Moses:** Madam Chair, if I could extract with the best will in world, if I could extract the trust as I am given to say of the question, each sovereign country takes its own decisions and in the case of Trinidad and Tobago, we have allocated this sum to such eventualities. Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Members, we will now move on to the Draft Estimates of the Development Programme. Sub-Head 09, Development Programme - Consolidated Fund, page 136; Item 005, Multi-Sectoral and Other Services, page 136. Member for Princes Town.

**Mr. Padarath:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Line Item 60, Re-Establishment of a High Commission in Barbados. If we look at the 2017 a small sum was spent and similarly in 2018, however, in 2019 $1 million has been allocated under this particular line Item. Could the hon. Minister indicate what is the status of the re-
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establishment of a High Commission in Barbados, one, and secondly, if the hon. Minister will be able to say whether this figure reflected here will complete that re-establishment process?

Hon. Moses: Madam Chair, through you, on the last occasion I would have shared information that a mission had been completed a visit to a fact finding mission as it were to Barbados and we would have secured adequate information relative to office accommodation of that Ministry to treat with other administrative and logistical matters, and we were in a position to progress on this issue. I would also add that subsequently in the intervening period, the dynamism in our neighbourhood has allowed us to embark on treating with this matter in a different way and, subsequently, this figure reflects that reality.

Mr. Karim: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Hon. Minister, I return to line Item 058.

Madam Chairman: 058?

Mr. Karim: Yes. In 2018 you had a 1.5 million allocation—it was not utilized—in 2019 you have the same allocation, what is it intended to do in this fiscal year, please?

Hon. Moses: Madam Chair, through you, some of the elements that I just intimated respecting in regard to the mission in Barbados whose validity here as well, we have witnessed some changes, geopolitical dynamism, in that part of the world, and that would have allowed us to treat with the matter in a different way. Subsequently, decisions at a governmental level have confirmed that this sum would be adequate to treat with this matter or any other matters that are likely to be different to the one on this bit of paper.

Mr. Charles: Thank you. Minister, item 005, 136, 600 estimated in 2018, but only 245 so far, as we know, spent. The estimate in 2019 is $800,000. Could the
Minister tell us what this Item is supposed to achieve in the Ministry of Foreign and Caricom Affairs?

**Hon. Moses:** My humblest apologies. I am not sure if I am following you.

**Madam Chairman:** Member, just guide me, what number.

**Mr. Charles:** It is Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay. Yes.

**Hon. Moses:** Okay, and the question being, my humblest apology once more. Madam Chair, through you, if I can—

**Mr. Charles:** No, what it is supposed to achieve specifically in the Ministry.

**Madam Chairman:** But is it 800—

**Mr. Charles:** It is 800,000.

**Madam Chairman:**—or 500,000?

**Hon. Moses:** It is 5.

**Madam Chairman:** That is why we are not following, hon Member.

**Hon. Moses:** 005, 500.

**Mr. Charles:** Oh, it is 500,000. Sorry. Okay

**Hon. Moses:** Madam, through you, Chair, the intention is to treat with a elaboration of a strategic plan for the Ministry, training, and I would like to share that there are some peculiar requirements that need to be filled relative to different levels of personnel in the Ministry, and in order to fill the gaps we need to seek outside assistance, outside of the Ministry, and this sum is intended to cover such activities.

**Mr. Charles:** And Item 019 on the Establishment of a National Diaspora Unit which is critical, 300,000. What is the intent to achieve by this expenditure? Is it to employ staff, to establish—

**Madam Chairman:** Which one are you on? Development of a National Diaspora
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Policy—

Mr. Charles: 019.

Madam Chairman:—or Unit? Which one?

Mr. Charles: All right. 009, sorry. The $300,000—am I correct?—what is that?

Hon. Moses: Ma’am, we have just treated with that. Madam Chair, we have just treated with that matter.

Mr. Charles: We just treated with that?

Hon. Moses: 009.

Mr. Charles: Is it supposed to develop a policy and no allocation for a unit, so I take it we still at the policy stage, and if we still at the policy stage then what is the 300,000 supposed to deliver?

Hon. Moses: Madam Chair, I just responded to that line Item 009, Development of a National Diaspora Policy amounting to 300,000, and I said it is intended to cover the development of a strategic plan for the Ministry of Foreign and Caricom Affairs, training, and to meet certain peculiar requirements staff wise. That is the 300,000. The other line Item, 019, Establishment of a National Diaspora Unit, there is no allocation for the year 2019. And perhaps I could help by way of edification is that given our straitened circumstances we intend to marshal the resources currently at the disposal of the Ministry in house to treat with that secretariat which would act as a focal point for strengthening the linkage with the diaspora and as well as promoting projects that would benefit in a mutual way, the diaspora and Trinidad and Tobago.

6.00 p.m.

Madam Chairman: Member for Princes Town.

Mr. Padarath: Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, just a follow-up with respect to that same line Item 009: Development of a National Diaspora Policy;
that is what the line Item says: Development of a National Diaspora Policy. If we look at 2017: 205,223 was spent; nothing for 2018; but in 2019, there is an allocation of 300,000 for the Development of a National Diaspora Policy. My question is: Already having spent 205,000 in 2017, does the 2019 figure of 300,000 reflect the completion of the National Diaspora Policy?

Hon. Moses: Madam Chair, linked though they are, one refers to the year 2019 and the other to 2017. Not going the route of being gratuitous but the 205,223 figure covered other activities, for example, the registration system for nationals abroad and certain issues that are linked to the diaspora issue. But that is an apart, that is not—what we are treating with is 2019 and I would have responded to that before.

Madam Chairman: Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a couple of line Items. The first one, 028. Hon. Minister—

Madam Chairman: Excuse me, number please.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: 028. I noticed that there is no allocation. Is this reflective of this line Item being—the construction being completed in Abuja?

Madam Chairman: There has been no allocation since 2017.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Yes I know. I am asking if there is no allocation because it is completed, the construction is completed. Is it?

Madam Chairman: Member, I would not allow that question. I am sure that question—something with that would have been asked in 2018 based on what there is. Next question.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Well, I was just asking for the others.

Madam Chairman: Next question, please. If you have another question.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Everything else because there is no allocation.

Mr. Charles: It is 325.

Madam Chairman: We are at page 225, Item 005, same book. Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you, Madam Chair. I do not know if the hon. Minister can give an update as to how this 2 million will be spent for line Item 001. Please, thank you.

Madam Chairman: Minister, 001.

Hon. Moses: Yes, I am with you but I am not sure of the question. What is the question?

Madam Chairman: How would this money be spent?

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: You have $2 million for 2019 and I just want to know if it is specifically for relocation of the Ministry. So I am asking, you know, at what stage has it reached, you know? Are you outfitting? Have you relocated? What it is that we can expect in 2019 with the 2 million?

Hon. Moses: We have neither relocated or outfitted anything and the intention is what it says there but I can say that further to the elaboration of these Estimates, decisions at the governmental level have been such that this figure would contribute to going a long way towards the construction and outfitting of the headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign and Caricom Affairs.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Construction? All right. Thank you.

Hon. Moses: I did twin it with another element, of course, the same outfitting thing. Thanks.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: I understand that. I was just saying that there was no information of construction, you said relocation. So this is why I am just reiterating

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what you said as in construction. Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Members, the question is that the sum of $263,300,000 for Head 65, Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, stand part of the Schedule.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 65 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you, Minister, thank you, PS and other technocrats. Might I ask, do we embark on Head 67? Yes.

*Head 67:* Ministry of Planning and Development, $335,037,000.

**Madam Chairman:** Head 67, Ministry of Planning and Development, $335,037,000 and for the assistance of Members, we are at page 333 of the Recurrent Book. I will now invite the Minister of Planning and Development to make a brief opening statement not exceeding five minutes.

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. The Ministry of Planning and Development is a centre-of-government Ministry responsible for supporting Ministries, Departments and agencies in the formulation of policies, plans and strategies that are necessary for the development of our country. We lead the development planning process and are central to public policy formulation.

The Ministry of Planning and Development is in the process of ensuring that Ministries deliver robust national development planning that is needed through the *National Development Strategy 2016—2030*, the *Vision 2030* plan. The Ministry of Planning and Development is responsible for data and information management which are at the core of development planning and allows for monitoring and evaluating the country’s performance. Part of this responsibility lies with Government’s ability to administer institutional transformations which improve
public sector performance and strengthen the oversight accountability and autonomy of independent institutions.

Madam Chair, the Ministry of Planning and Development streamlines Trinidad and Tobago’s access to and use of development resources, including loan resources and technical assistance from institutions such as Inter-American Development Bank, the Caribbean Development Bank, the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme in pursuit of achieving national development priorities and foreign policy objectives.

Within its purview are: the Environmental Management Authority, the Chaguaramas Development Authority, the Institute of Marine Affairs, the Central Statistical Office, the Advisory Town Planning Panel and the Green Fund Advisory Committee. The Ministry is the coordinating entity for the San Fernando Waterfront Redevelopment Project and this project is one of the largest regeneration projects in Trinidad and Tobago to date and aims to revive the economic, social and cultural vitality of the city of San Fernando.

Madam Chair, with my Permanent Secretary and other senior members of staff, we are at the disposal of the Committee.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you.

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

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Members, the sum of $335,037,000 for Head 67, Ministry of Planning and 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*, the *Draft Estimates of the Revenue and Expenditure of the Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies and of the Tobago House of Assembly* and the *Draft Estimates of Development Programme*. We shall now proceed to consider the *Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure*. Sub-Head 01:
Personnel Expenditure, Item 001: General Administration. We are at page 333.

Member for Caroni Central.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Item 06, Minister, to you, Remuneration to Board Members, could you identify some of the boards?

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** Certainly. We have the Board of the Advisory Town Planning Panel; the board of the CDA. Those are the two boards under this Ministry. We also have the CARIRI board.

**Dr. Tewarie:** What about the institutions such as—

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** And we also have the Institute of Marine Affairs and the EMA.

**Dr. Tewarie:** IMA and EMA. What about boards like the Economic Development Board? Is that under you?

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** That is, but as you know, that board no longer exists.

**Dr. Tewarie:** That has been disbanded. So has the Council for Competitiveness for some time aback.

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** For some time now.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Right. And what about the tripartite committee?

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** That does not exist under us. NTAC, you are talking about?

**Dr. Tewarie:** Yes.

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** Even though the Minister of Planning and Development chairs that, it exists under the Ministry of Labour.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Okay.

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** Yes.

**Dr. Tewarie:** All right. Also Vacant Posts—Salaries, that is 08, 1.3 million is allocated in 2019, it was not used in 2018. Can you explain?
Hon. Robinson-Regis: Certainly. As has been said by, I think, perhaps nearly every other Minister who has appeared before this Committee, funding is requested in anticipation of posts being filled and that is the norm and has always been the norm. So this figure is an allocation of funds that needs to be in this Vote to facilitate payment of salaries and COLA in the event that Service Commissions fills the vacant posts.

Dr. Tewarie: No, that is in a different section, I will wait.

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Madam Chair, may I volunteer some information to the Committee? I suspect that when the boards, like the Economic Development Advisory Board and so, are mentioned, those are not boards in themselves, they are Cabinet-appointed committees as is NTAC. So we have several Cabinet-appointed committees which are different from boards.

Dr. Tewarie: Okay.

Madam Chairman: Item 003: Technical Co-operation; Item 004: Central Statistical Office. Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Hon. Minister, would you be kind enough to give us an idea of the amount of employees within that CSO office to the cost of 23 million, if you have it? 01, the CSO.

Madam Chairman: Page 334.

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Just a second, please.

Dr. Gopeesingh: If you do not have it, Minister—

Hon. Robinson-Regis: There are approximately 300 members of staff in the CSO.

Dr. Gopeesingh: And they are full time?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Yes

Dr. Gopeesingh: Any vacancies at all?
Hon. Robinson-Regis: Yes, there are vacancies.

Dr. Gopeesingh: How many?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: I do not have that figure.

Dr. Gopeesingh: You know why? Because there are always questions about the work that the CSO is doing. We just want to have an understanding how fully staffed they are.

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Sure, I can provide that information.

Madam Chairman: Item 005: Urban and Regional Planning Division; Item 006: Green Fund Executing Unit. Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Minister, I see line Item 14 is Remuneration to members of Cabinet-appointed Committees. Is that different from a unit that looks after the—that is a committee. Is that different from employees who are looking after the Green Fund?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Yes, it is. As I was indicating to the Member for Caroni Central, there are boards and there are Cabinet-appointed committees. In the Ministry of Planning and Development, the Cabinet-appointed committees are: the National Co-ordinating Committee for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol, the National Co-ordinating Committee of the Implementation of the Persistent Organic Pollutants Project, the Green Fund Advisory Committee, the Planning and Facilitation of Development Act Committee, the Committee for National Statistical Institute of Trinidad and Tobago and the Vision 2030 Task Force.

Dr. Gopeesingh: So the management of the Green Fund will come under the Ministry of Finance?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: The Green Fund falls under the Ministry of Planning and Development. However, when there is a need to allocate funds, the Minister of
Planning, after getting advice from the Green Fund Advisory Committee applies to the Minister of Finance for the funding to be allocated, so it is a process. But the Green Fund falls under the management of the Ministry of Planning and Development.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 008: Project Planning and Reconstruction Division; Item 009: Environmental Policy—

**Dr. Tewarie:** Just now, Project Planning.

**Madam Chairman:** Under 008? Member for Caroni Central.

**Dr. Tewarie:** No, sorry, Ma’am, it is under 009.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 009: Environmental Policy and Planning Division. Member for Caroni Central.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Yes, the same question related to Cabinet-appointed committees, 14, are these different committees?

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** It is the committees that I spoke about with the persistent—yes, same committees.

**Madam Chairman:** Sub-Head 02: Goods and services, Item 001: General Administration. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

**Mr. Lee:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, line Item 23, Fees, the Revised Estimate in 2018 was 7.5 million so it is a decrease of 7.3 million. Could the Minister explain what was the rationale for this decrease or what was the extraordinary fees in 2018 revised?

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** You are on Item?

**Mr. Lee:** 23, Fees, page 336, line Item 23.

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** Under Fees, the decrease of 7,340,000, this was in order to facilitate a one-off payment to be made by the CDA. There was a court matter involving in-site developers against the CDA. The CDA was ordered to pay the
sum of $15,557,188.04, which represented a debt interest and cost to June 23, 2017 which was the date of the judgment, together with interest to be decided by the court after the date of the judgment. The Ministry, in conjunction with the CDA, paid the debt.

**Mr. Lee:** Okay. I was just wondering why they were not on the books of the CDA as opposed to the Ministry.

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** Because the CDA did not have the funds and so the Ministry, in conjunction with the CDA, had to pay the debt.

**Mr. Lee:** Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Caroni Central.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Yes, just 37 and 43—well, one is an increase, the other one is a decrease. Increase for Janitorial and decrease Security Services.

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** Both of them are decreases if I am not mistaken.

**Dr. Tewarie:** The top one—yeah, both are decreases. Is there a reason?

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** What had happened is that there were some outstanding payments that needed to be made and we made those in fiscal 2018, consequently, there would be a decrease in the amount that we need for 2019; and similarly, we paid bills in 2018 so we do not need as much money in 2019.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Okay. So it is not a personnel issue?

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** No, it is not.

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

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Item 34, Minister, I am happy to see you are allocating some funding under the University Graduate Recruitment Programme, but as we went through this exercise, some of the Ministries did not allocate, you have allocated as the Minister of Planning. Could you give us some comments why some have not allocated and some have allocated? When really we have—as one of your
Standing Finance Committee

2018.10.15

colleagues indicated, we have over 1,000 young graduates applying in energy for jobs and so on. Could you, as the head of, really, planning—could you give us some elucidation?

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** Really speaking, we had anticipated that most, if not all Ministries, would allocate but once the programme is up and running, Ministries will be given the requisite funds to pay.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** And as you are the planning person for the Government, how do you see that? You feel you want to get it going?

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** Yes, it is important for us to get it going. We said that about two budgets ago that this was an important programme, but in order to ensure that we had the programme running effectively, we had to put things in place to make sure that that was so. A number of aspects of the programme needed to be fleshed out. We have reached the point where that has taken place and so Ministries who are clear in the direction that they are going to use these university graduates have made the allocation this year.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Thank you.

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** You are welcome.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 002: Library Service Unit; Item 003: Technical Cooperation; Item 004: Central Statistical Office. Member for Caroni Central.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Yes, 08, Rent/Lease - Office Accommodation and Storage, I want to ask if the CSO is, at this time, in one location or it is still in more than one location?

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** There is one main location and there is one smaller location, but eventually, everybody would be in the same location. So the idea is to have everybody together. But of course, Madam Chair, we are moving towards the National Statistical Institute and that would necessitate everybody being in one
Madam Chairman: Member for Caroni East, you have a question?
Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes. The Minister mentioned that National Statistical Institute, if I may be permitted—
Hon. Robinson-Regis: But could I also indicate that under this heading, apart from office accommodation, it also reflects storage which would be a different site.
Dr. Gopeesingh: I was just trying to get some information on the National Statistical Institute and when it is going to commence.
Hon. Robinson-Regis: Well, as you know, there is a Bill currently on the Order Paper and immediately after the budget, we anticipate that that will be the matter to be debated.

Madam Chairman: Member for Caroni Central, another question?
Dr. Tewarie: Yes, 16 Contract Employment, there is a jump there. Well, I mean the 2019 is not that much in terms of a jump but the 2018, the Revised Estimate was quite significant. Contract Employment involves what level of staff there?
Hon. Robinson-Regis: That is the question? Sorry.
Dr. Tewarie: The question is: What level of staff has been hired or you anticipate to hire with this allocation?
Hon. Robinson-Regis: The increase is in the order of $75,000.
Dr. Tewarie: For this time?
Hon. Robinson-Regis: Yes.
Dr. Tewarie: Because there was a big jump in 2018 as well.
Hon. Robinson-Regis: Yes, but that is really to maintain the levels of staffing that we have because quite a number of these positions are contract employees.
Dr. Tewarie: All right. Could you indicate the level of contract? I mean, are they more research type or are they more on-the-ground type?
Hon. Robinson-Regis: We can provide that subsequently.

Dr. Tewarie: Yes, okay. Thanks.

Hon. Robinson-Regis: You are welcome.

Dr. Tewarie: And Short-term Employment, is that for a specific project or generally?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: As you would know as a former Minister of Planning, in the CSO in particular, there is sometime need for Short-term Employment depending on whether we have a specific project to do and so it would be reflected.

Dr. Tewarie: So it is project related?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: And you would know that we have the census coming and the household budgetary survey, that is also coming, so we have to be prepared.

Dr. Tewarie: Okay. I am all right there.

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Okay.

Madam Chairman: Item 005: Urban and Regional Planning Division; Item 006: Green Fund Executing Unit; Item 008: Project Planning and Reconstruction Division; Item 009: Environmental Policy and Planning Division. Sub-Head 03: Minor Equipment Purchases, Item 001: General Administration. We are at page 342. Item 002: Library Service Unit; Item 003: Technical Co-operation; Item 004: Central Statistical Office; Item 005: Urban and Regional Planning Division; Item 006: Green Fund Executing Unit; Item 008: Project Planning and Reconstruction Division; Item 009: Environmental Policy and Planning Division. Sub-Head 04: Current Transfers and Subsidies. We are at page 344. Item 001: Regional Bodies; Item 002: Commonwealth Bodies; Item 003: United Nations Organizations.

Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Hon. Minister, in the UNDP programme, we have a contribution of 8.5 million. That is an annual contribution it would seem?
Hon. Robinson-Regis: Yes, it is.

Dr. Gopeesingh: And how does that compare with other Caribbean countries? Are they part of it or? Why is that figure so high for us?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: You would recall that we host the UN and its agencies here, so as a result of the fact that we are the host, we contribute a larger amount because we have to assist with the rental and those kinds of things as the host country.

Dr. Gopeesingh: For UNDP, for the Caribbean?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: For the Caribbean, yes.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Do the other Caribbean countries contribute towards the UNDP as well?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: I suspect that there is a contribution but because of the fact that we host, we would have a larger contribution and also, Trinidad and Tobago has graduated and as a consequence of that, Trinidad and Tobago has a specific responsibility to the UNDP agencies that are here.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Thank you.

Hon. Robinson-Regis: You are welcome.

Madam Chairman: Item 004: International Bodies; Item 005: Non Profit Institutions; Item 006: Educational Institutions. Member for Fyzabad.

Dr. Bodeo: Thank you. Minister, with regard to the allocation to CARIRI, 01, I am just curious as to when those allocations are made, whether there is any requirement by the Government for deliverables during the particular year or is it just across-the-board allocation in terms of linking to what the Government’s needs are because it is research and so on.

6.30 p.m.

CARIRI is research and development and so agencies will—apart from the
Ministry of Planning and Development, other Government agencies and other Government ministries will ask CARIRI to do work on their behalf. But also, private institutions also ask CARIRI to do work on their behalf. So CARIRI is a hybrid because it is a Government agency, but it also charges fees for the work that it does.

**Dr. Bodeo:** Right, but the research and the output is linked to the progress of the country and—

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** Yes it is.

**Dr. Bodeo:**—and developmental needs of the country.

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** Yes, it is. And also too, some of the work that is being done by the Universities of the West Indies and the University of Trinidad and Tobago and, of course, CARIRI goes outside and gets work, so that they can collect fees.

**Dr. Bodeo:** Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** You are welcome.

**Dr. Tewarie:** CARIRI, does it now have a board, Minister?

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** A board was appointed by the Cabinet. However, there is a concern that has been expressed by the Solicitor General that there needs to be an amendment to the CARIRI Act because of the fact—because of about three factors. One, that there is no longer a relation—well CARIRI no longer has a regional remit. The other countries that are supposed to be part of the CARIRI have not been participating in terms of paying fees or anything like that. And there is a requirement in the legislation that there should be someone appointed from the region. And there is also an issue as it relates to the IDC which has been defunct for quite some time.

So, we will have to come to the Parliament to have the CARIRI Act
amended to allow for the change.

**Dr. Tewarie:** What about a CEO, I know that the last CEO retired.

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** Yes, retired, has recently—and, of course, the CEO’s appointment is linked to the appointment of the board. So we are in a kind of a catch 22 situation.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Okay. Is it going to be able to manage its mandate?

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** Yes, because we do have someone who is running the day-to-day operations and, of course, the legislation allows for the Ministry through the Permanent Secretary and the Minister to continue to allow the work to take place and for payments to be made to staff and so on.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Okay.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 007, Households.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Yes, this issue 03, the Settlement to Cane Farmers. I mean, have we made any progress on that?

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** Yes, could I go ahead?

**Dr. Tewarie:** Of course.

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** Payments are being processed on acceptance of offer by the cane farmers. Payments were allocated into two categories as follows; the first payment in tranche one and the second payment is tranche two and three.

For fiscal 2017/2018, 228 cheques have been created and paid out to the value of $4,336,928.92. Based on the trend for the past fiscal year, we anticipate 210 payments to be agreed upon in fiscal 2018/2019 with an approximate value of $42,809,031.36. However, there is a possibility of an increase in payments should there be an influx of those cane farmers who obtained Letters of Administration. This figure represents the approximate balance of outstanding funds.

Could I also indicate, Madam Chairman, in fiscal 2014/2015, a total of 2,567
contracts were processed by the Ministry of Planning and Development and the total amount paid out was $19,343,504.89. In fiscal 2015/2016 a total 237 cane farmers received payments and as at 2016 the Government of Trinidad and Tobago as we know, revised the payment. A total of four cane farmers accepted the offer during that year and the total paid out amounted to $2,223,399.88.

In fiscal 2016/2017 a total of 164 tranche one payments were made, whereas 491 accepted the 53 per cent offer with the total expenditure being $14,437,993.78. In fiscal 2017/2018 a total of 55 tranche one payments were made and 173 applicants agreed to the revised offer. The total expenditure was $4,336,928.92.

In total, Madam Chair, the number of cane farmers is 3,481. The total number of cane farmers who accepted the offer of under—in tranche one, under $12,000, was 1,153. Forty-three contracts have been processed and paid in full. Over 12,000, 2,328 cane farmers are eligible. Twelve have been processed with partial payments and for tranches two and three, the same 2,328 are eligible, 173 contracts have been processed and paid in full.

In all, 228 cheques have been made. The number of cane farmers that accepted tranche one is 3,023 the number of cane farmers that have accepted the 53 per cent of tranches two and three is 668. The total payout in tranche one is $24,382,542.64. The total payout for tranches two and three is $15,959,284.82.

But, Madam Chairman, may I indicate that several of the cane farmers have relatives who now need Letters of Administration to collect on behalf of—what would have been eligible for some of the cane farmers who are deceased and we are awaiting the submission of Letters of Administration.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Okay, but there is one other problem which is the revised decision is being challenged by some cane farmers. Based on just a cursory understanding of the numbers that you outlined it seems to me that that would be about 2,500—I am
using a loose figure, 2,500 farmers. So, the question is, is the Ministry going to insist that this matter be settled in court or would the Ministry be willing to find a more amicable solution?

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** But, we have talking with several cane farmers who have come and indicated that they are willing to accept. The matter has not actually gone to court, because quite a number of the cane farmers have indicated that they are willing to accept the payment.

**Dr. Tewarie:** The matter has not gone to court?

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** No. Not as far as I am aware. No. There was a pre-action protocol letter but we have not seen anything further.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 009, Other Transfers.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** The Basel Regional Centre. Could you just give us a little explanation what that does here?

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** Okay. The figure that you are seeing reflects the payment of salaries and other operational expenses of the centre. Trinidad and Tobago hosts the regional centre for the implementation of the Basel Convention and so the centre is located here and we do the research and everything that is necessary for this particular region.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Thank you.

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** So we have the honour of having the centre being located in Trinidad and Tobago.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 010, Other Transfers Abroad.

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** Could I just indicate that the Basel Centre deals with the issues of biological diversity; the Rotterdam Convention, the Montreal Protocol and all those—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Biological list—
Hon. Robinson-Regis: Biological diversity and the Rotterdam Convention. So it is quite an important centre and it is an honour for Trinidad and Tobago to host it for the region.

Madam Chairman: Sub-Head 06, Current Transfers to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies. Item 004, Statutory Boards. And we now go on to the—Member, that is always the summary sheet. Yes? Okay.

Hon. Members we will now move to the Draft Estimates of the Revenue and Expenditure of the Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies and of the Tobago House of Assembly. New book, page 485; 02, Institute of Marine Affairs; Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure; Item 001, General Administration, page 485; Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services; Item 001, General Administration, pages 485 to 486; Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases; Item 001, General Administration; Sub-Head, 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies; Item 007, Households; 49 Chaguaramas Development Authority, page 494; Sub-Head 01, Personnel Expenditure; Item 001, General Administration; Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services; Item 001, General Administration; Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies, page 495; Item 007, Households; Item 009, Transfers.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Can we go under that? There is an area called Summary of Income and Expenditure 217/219. Madam Chair, I just wanted to ask—

Madam Chairman: Where are you?

Dr. Gopeesingh: The same page, page 492.

Madam Chairman: Page 492? We are at page 495.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Wow.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Members, we will now move on to the Draft Estimates of the Development Programme. Sub-Head 09, new book. Development Programme, Consolidated Fund, page 138; Item 001, Pre-Investment, pages 138 to
Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, line Item 006, Relocation of Squatters. 2018 was estimated $5 million for that project. Could you say what happened in 2018—and then you estimate another 5 million in 2019. Could you give us the status of that?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: This project we are still in the process of talking with the LSA with regard to this relocation of squatters.

Mr. Lee: Have you identified what location these squatters are presently—

Hon. Robinson-Regis: As I said, we are talking with the LSA to determine—

Mr. Lee: So, this is just like a provisional figure?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Member for Caroni Central.

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Because when we do the—

Madam Chairman: Sorry, sorry Minister.

Hon. Robinson-Regis:—because when we do the relocation we have to do site planning, physical infrastructure development and construction of homes and so on. So we are still negotiating with LSA.

Dr. Tewarie: Minister, 006, I was not clear on that. It is just a quick question. Are you saying you are negotiating on which locations or did you identify a location?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: I did not identify the locations.

Dr. Tewarie: Okay. So, that is not clear yet. Okay. And on 003, I see that there is an allocation for 2019. How is that project going?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: It is going well.

Dr. Tewarie: Okay. So how much of the country has now been covered?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: I think Port of Spain has been completed. Quite a number
of areas have been completed. But, as you know, because of the nature of this project it is not a fast moving project. But it is a project that has been continued consistently because of the importance of the project. And it is necessary particularly given what happened recently.

Dr. Tewarie: I appreciate the importance of the project. 008, Plaza San Carlos. that is related to the San Fernando Waterfront—

Hon. Robinson-Regis: San Fernando Waterfront Redevelopment Project. Yes.

Dr. Tewarie: Okay. And what is going to be attempted here for the $10 million? Along the lines of what was identified in the budget speech?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Item 004, Social Infrastructure, pages 140 to 142; Item 005, Multi-Sectoral and Other Services. Member for Caroni Central. 142 to 146.

Dr. Tewarie: Well, I was on page 140, Ma’am. I do not know if you will be willing to consider?

Madam Chairman: Item?

Dr. Tewarie: Special Listing of the Unenumerated Rural Areas in preparation for Census 2021.

Madam Chairman: 023?

Dr. Tewarie: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Page 140; line 023?

Dr. Tewarie: This is correct. Now, I notice there was an allocation in 2017, but nothing after that. Is there a reason?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Because it was completed.

Dr. Tewarie: It was done?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Yes. Okay, and CSO Physical Transition to New Facilities. Is that part of what you said, of trying to get them into one place?
Hon. Robinson-Regis: Yes. In addition to that, specifically, the library needs to be outfitted and accommodated and the technical staff.

Dr. Tewarie: Okay. And well the budgetary survey—okay, I realize that is going to be done. And the conduct of pre-census activities for 2020, I see an allocation here for 2019, and I just wanted to ask, when the last census was conducted it was scheduled for the year, I think 2010—

Hon. Robinson-Regis: “Um-hmm”.

Dr. Tewarie: And what happened is that, because it was an election year, it then started in 2011. Right? We are going to have the same situation here, if you try to start in 2020. It is going to be an election year, we do not know what month it is going to be, and I just wondered, since you are pre-planning, whether it might not be better to shift it by one year?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Well, we have not determined that that would be necessary but we are planning for 2020.

Dr. Tewarie: Okay, so you are going ahead with 2020?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: At this point. Yes.

Dr. Tewarie: Okay.

Madam Chairman: Item 005, Multi-Sectoral and Other Services.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Line Item 036 and 35, Development at Five Car Parks in Chaguaramas.

Madam Chairman: Just assist us. What page are you on, please Member?

Dr. Gopeesingh: 142.

Madam Chairman: 142. Thank you very much. 035 to the bottom of the page.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yeah. Minister, 4 million was allocated in 2018 but you do not have a figure for revised estimate, but you are going to go ahead with the project. And you have allocated—
Hon. Robinson-Regis: That is the car parks project?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes. Two million?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Yes. The allocation is for 2 million and that was to initiate work.

Dr. Gopeesingh: For the car parks.

Hon. Robinson-Regis: For the car parks. Yes.

Dr. Gopeesingh: All right. Nothing was done last year despite that there was an allocation? Because I do not see you have a revised estimate here.

Hon. Robinson-Regis: No.

Dr. Gopeesingh: All right. The same for the Chaguaramas Golf Course Phase I, 3 million was allocated in 2018.

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Yes.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Obviously, nothing has—

Hon. Robinson-Regis: The funding is to conduct critical repairs to the club house, specifically, the ceiling and the decking as well as other remedial works on the greens and the acquisition of specialized minor equipment for use on the golf course.

Dr. Gopeesingh: 1.5 million?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Infrastructure Development Fund, page 227 of the same book. Item 003, Economic Infrastructure, pages 227 to 228.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Chairman. Page 227 to the Minister, Land Development Reclamation of the land at King’s Wharf North, 18 million is estimated, has—I mean 2018, 8 million has been estimated. What is the status of that project?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: As I said when I opened and was said in the budget
debate, this project is being managed by the Ministry of Planning and Development. So we are in the process of making sure that all agencies are working together. We have moved to get the reclamation licence and that is where we are with that particular aspect of the project. The reclamation has not actually started.

Mr. Lee: So, the 18 million that is allocated for 2019 in your budget allocation or your explanation is to fund what aspect of this project?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: The reclamation, the project management, the removal of the PTSC from the site where it now exists, and there are certain other aspects of the project that need to be funded at this time, because we want to move the project ahead as quickly as possible.

Mr. Lee: So this is like a first phase?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Yes it is.

Mr. Lee: Okay.

Mr. Karim: Madam Chair, I am on page 228.

Madam Chairman: Okay. Fine. What that means, you are not in 003?

Mr. Karim: No. I am going to be on 004 when you get there.

Madam Chairman: Item 004, Social Infrastructure.

Mr. Karim: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, might you be able to give us some details of line Item 002, please?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Yes, sure. A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the Ministry of Planning and Development and the East Port of Spain Company, in order to—for the East Port of Spain Company to act as a project manager. But this—we are now in the process of finalizing the terms of reference for a geo-technical study of the site.

What we are recognizing is that there is a need to ensure that in particular for
the East Port of Spain area that the communities in that area are rehabilitated. So that this will be a relationship between the Ministry of Planning and Development, the East Port of Spain and we are also talking to the IDB.

Mr. Karim: Okay. Madam Chair, is this intended for any other communities?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Yes. That will take place, but right now it is East Port of Spain which has been languishing for several years, in terms of the redevelopment and because Port of Spain is the capital city, we are starting with East Port of Spain.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Chair. Page 229 to the Minister, under F 016, Construction of the Ministry of Planning and Development Tower which is a new project.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So, Item 005, Multi-Sectoral and Other Services. Thanks for pushing us forward. Item 005, Multi-Sectoral and Other Services, page 229.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Chair. 016, to the Minister, Construction of the Ministry of Planning and Development Tower, which is a new project listed here for $3 million. Could you elucidate what this is about, this new project?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Certainly. Madam Chairman, through you. As Members may know, the Ministry of Planning and Development does not have a home. The Ministry of Planning and Development now resides in the Ministry of Finance. And so after many years we have decided that it is necessary for the Ministry of Planning and Development to have its own building and this $3 million allocation, as we said, is a new project and the allocation is to facilitate the procurement of a project manager, a special purpose company, as a project manager for the execution of designs and design briefs for the construction of this building.

Mr. Lee: Have you identified a location for this new building of the Ministry of
Planning and Development?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: As you know where the CSO building was, does belong to the Ministry of Planning and Development. So that most likely will be the location.

Mr. Lee: Okay.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Members, the question is that the sum of $335,037,000 for Head 67, Ministry of Planning and Development stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 67 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Thank you, PS and other technocrats.

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Madam Chairman: Okay, so I want to thank Members for their efficiency and participation today. This Standing Finance Committee is suspended to Tuesday the 16th of October, 2018, at 10.00 a.m. Good evening, safe journey home.

6.57 p.m.: Standing Finance Committee suspended.